Abstracts

Slavery, Authorship and Literary Culture

Maison française, Columbia University, New York, January 24-26, 2019

Thursday, January 24

Simon Gikandi **Art After Slavery: Blackness and Early Modernism**

Early modernism and blackness have always had an intimate, but troubled, relationship: Intimate because it is hard to imagine a modernism without blackness either as a sign of difference or identity; troubled because modernism is always surrounded by the suspicion that its turn to blackness in the name of the primitive or exotic was opportunistic—an alibi for sustaining domination in the aesthetic realm. But in order to take the full measure of modernism, we have to go beyond primitivism and locate the movement in a complex moment defined by the afterlife of slavery. What was the effect of the end of slavery on forms of art and systems of representation? This lecture will reflect on what freedom—its promise and its betrayal—meant in the aesthetic sphere.

Friday, January 25

Session 1: Archives/traces I

Patrick Barker **Black Medical Labor, Print Culture, and Slavery's Archive in Colonial South Carolina**

In late November 1749, a sixty-seven-year-old African named Caesar journeyed twenty-three miles from Beach Hill, South Carolina, to North America's slaving capital, Charles Town, to claim his freedom. Accompanied by his enslaver, colonial militia captain John Norman, Caesar offered the colony's legislature his "secret" cures for poison in exchange for his freedom from slavery and a modest pension every year until his death. The legislature uncharacteristically listened to the appeal, eventually granting Caesar his demands, while parting with an unusually large compensation fee paid to Norman for his loss of Caesar's "knowledge" and "skill" as a "doctor." Following Caesar's manumission, the *South Carolina Gazette* published Caesar's poison cures verbatim, reprinting them once again just a year later because of "so great a demand" for the first issue. Caesar's cures were reprinted in newspapers, almanacs, medical handbooks, and housewives' manuals throughout the Atlantic World for

more than a century, while his caricature is alleged to have adorned a prominent antebellum druggist's store-front by the mid-nineteenth century.

This paper considers how colonial and metropolitan print cultures, as well as visual forms of expression depicted Caesar, his cures, and manumission from the mid eighteenth century onwards. It argues diverse representations of Caesar's manumission and medical knowledge, across imperial boundaries, space, and time, worked to silence the political struggles of Caesar and African-born enslaved healers like him, sensationalizing a rare tale of manumission while subduing the violence of slavery, the African origins of revered medical knowledge, and the precarity of black healers' lives under colonial slavery. By re-piecing fragments of Caesar's life before and after freedom from the colonial archive, this paper re-situates Caesar's successful freedom appeal and the print legacy it spawned within the violent power, gender, and social dynamics of slavery in colonial British North America's first black majority colony. In doing so, it probes strategies for grappling with both archival abundance and scarcity in narrating the political and intellectual histories of the enslaved.

Simon H. Sun **Tea, Slavery, and the American Revolution in Landon Carter's Diary (1752-1778)**

Thanks to the distinguished historian Jack Greene, the diary of the leading Virginian planter Landon Carter of Sabine Hall has been available in print since 1965, which was carefully examined in a 2004 monograph by Rhys Isaac. Comprehensive as Isaac's work is, the entries in the diary about the use of all kinds of tea in the plantation have been given little, if any, attention. This research brings them to the focal point, arguing that recording the use of local herbal teas in the medication of his dependents, including the slaves, served to construct the author's self-image as a merciful patriarch, although, in the slave cases, it was no more than a necessity to keep costs low. Moreover, the dichotomy of Chinese teas for himself but local herbal teas for slaves reinforced the center-periphery relationship within the plantation, a relationship that was significantly challenged in the American Revolution, a brief egalitarian moment during which Carter rebelled against his own mother country and vowed to abandon her symbol, Chinese teas, for good. One assumes that the dichotomy would resume in the 19th century Sabine Hall after the egalitarian moment passed. (189 words)

Session 2: Archives/traces II

Nathaniel Millett **Law, Genealogy, and the Lived Experience of Enslaved Natives on the Edge of the British Caribbean**

In the 1820s, British officials became aware that many residents of British Honduras (modern Belize) owned native slaves. An ensuing investigation yielded hundreds of pages of native testimony and, incredibly, a series of six generation-long family trees that traced the lineages of

the enslaved indigenous people. The family trees were constructed to ascertain if the natives' ancestors had been enslaved prior to the formal abolition of indigenous slavery in Jamaica in 1776. This was because Jamaica's slave laws extended to British Honduras. These documents, which were published by the British government and are complimented by archival materials held in London and Cambridge, detail family structure, marriage patterns, occupations, religious beliefs, and habitation patterns among other aspects of the enslaved natives' lives. Likewise, the natives' testimony directly captures their voice and thoughts. A critical analysis of this text and related documents that is informed by ethnohistorical and anthropological methodologies sheds extraordinary light on the most intimate contours of native life within the British Caribbean over a 75-year period.

Sarah Abel and Gísli Pálsson

Bio-graphies, in the broad sense: The curious case of Hans Jonathan (1784-1827)

Microhistorical and biographical accounts of lives of enslaved individuals have abounded in recent decades. Centring on exceptional women and men, whose stories are reconstructed through 'against the grain' readings of colonial documents, these works seek to give voice to those whose identities were systematically effaced by the transatlantic slave trade. At the same time, new genetic techniques have been hailed as offering unparalleled insights into the identities of the enslaved, even in the absence of written documentation. Based on genetic samples collected from skeletal remains or contemporary descendants, these studies use DNA to reconstruct the identities of historic individuals by tracing their geographic origins and biological kinship networks.

This paper examines a case of Hans Jonathan (1784-1827), a man born in the Danish West Indies and later brought to trial in Copenhagen for attempting to claim his own freedom, who ultimately escaped to Iceland, where today he is succeeded by nearly 1000 living descendants. Whereas in life he left behind only a few written sheets, including an elegant signature on some local store receipts, Hans Jonathan's story has recently been 'written' in two very different forms: first, in Gísli Pálsson's biography *The Man Who Stole Himself* (2016, University of Chicago Press); and second in a 2018 study published in *Nature Genetics* by scientists from deCODE genetics. Our article explores how diverse 'texts' have been brought together to reconstruct elements of Hans Jonathan's life and identity (colonial court files, family trees, biobank entries), and the implications of this example for imagining alternative ways of writing microhistorical narratives. We also examine the numerous political ramifications sparked by the publication of these parallel 'bio-graphies', which hint at growing challenges to the silence surrounding the themes of slavery and racism in the national histories of Denmark and Iceland.

Session 3: Abolitionism

Jennifer Stinson **'That's the Man for Me': The Textual and Musical Abolitionism and Civil Rights Activism of Lewis Washington**

This paper combines historical and musicological approaches to examine African American abolitionists' and civil rights advocates' performative strategies, as well as the entrance of their work into nineteenth-century print culture. The latter occurred via the following conduits: first, white abolitionists' descriptions, within their own memoirs, of African American abolitionists' music, lyrics, stage presence, and spoken statements at antislavery meetings; second, white newspapers' notices concerning "colored people's" meetings and concerts, some of which were written by white editors and others of which were penned by African Americans themselves. The paper focuses upon Lewis Washington, who escaped bondage at the nation's capital in 1842 and subsequently lived in Rensselaer County, New York, Waukesha County, Wisconsin, and Pierce County, Wisconsin. He pursued activism in all these locales, in addition to touring extensively across New England and the Midwest. In the 1840s, Washington performed at Liberty Party meetings; in the 1860s, he led a "Meeting of Colored People of Pierce Co." and appeared at a Colored People's Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota; in the 1870s, he sang spirituals with his family in Pierce County. This paper addresses authenticity and mediation on several levels. It interrogates these texts' representation of Washington's activism, with special attention to the political aims and literary voices of the men—S.A. Dwinnell and Chauncey Olin—who transcribed and described what he sang and said at abolitionist meetings. The paper not only analyzes the lyrics Washington sang but also traces the origins of his melodies to explore how his choices of familiar and transgressive material mediated between audience's sympathetic and hostile impulses. Finally, the paper explores the debates over authentic African American music into which Washington's performances of spirituals entered in Reconstruction era.

Mags Chalcraft-Islam **'I come not to make peace. Truth is my arrow, stained by Africans' blood' Robert Wedderburn's theatrical voice**

Robert Wedderburn's unrivalled capacity to synchronise discourses, principally between enslaved West Indians and the English working poor, established him as a key exponent of discourses of the Black Atlantic. Although his ambivalent attitude towards literacy remains a complicating factor, he nonetheless focused almost exclusively on the oral mode to 'stage' himself as an ex-enslaved ultra-radical in the metropole, employing theatrical performativity to antagonise the hegemonic literary establishment. I intend to show that Wedderburn's orality can be described in terms of creolisation, and that he applied a creolising principle to his unique interpretations of Christianity and radicalism. Unlike other producers of freedom narratives, Wedderburn never endeavoured to demonstrate 'civility', calling himself an 'oppressed African', always citing his mother as his primary influence. His oratory drew on an

'intertextual' self, syncretising West African and West Indian influences; as such he creolized and carnivalized both discourses and spaces, deploying a parodic, dialogic voice to destabilise notions of fixed products in literature and culture. This voice emerges from the super-syncretic folk culture of the Caribbean, deploying carnivalesque laughter as a corrective to spiritual pretence, and contributing to both Wedderburn's charismatic delivery and his core communitarian, proletarian abolitionist ideology.

Serena Mocci **Creating a New Abolitionist Literature for Children: Lydia Maria Child's *The Juvenile Miscellany* (1826–1834)**

Before being known as one of the most important American abolitionists of her time after the publication of her antislavery work, *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833), in 1826 Lydia Maria Child had founded a periodical for children, *The Juvenile Miscellany* that, through short stories, poems and puzzles, provided amusement and imparted moral lessons to young girls and boys. Despite its enormous popularity, the magazine failed in 1834, as soon as Child espoused the abolitionist cause. Indeed, after her meeting in 1830 with the young abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, she decided to devote her literary talents to African-Americans' emancipation.

The paper aims to analyze *The Juvenile Miscellany*'s new orientation after 1830 in favor of abolitionist principles through the analysis of Child's first antislavery stories, as 'The St. Domingo Orphans', 'Jumbo and Zaire', 'William Peterson, the Brave and Good Boy' and 'Mary French and Susan Easton', which will be the foundation of her later antislavery political thought. The paper therefore explores Child's early use of children's literature as a political instrument to create a multiracial egalitarian America by educating young minds in a republic that had declared that all men were born equal but had kept in slavery 'that class of Americans called Africans'.

Session 4: Cinematic representations of slavery

Steven W. Thomas **Cinematic Slavery**

Within the history of cinema and television, there is a history of movies about slavery, from D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915 to Nate Parker's *The Birth of a Nation* a century later. In 1977, *Roots* was one of the most popular television programs of all time according to Nielsen rating data. My presentation will build upon and expand upon an essay I published last year on "Cinematic Slavery" where I analyzed how cinematic form encodes different ideological memories about slavery. In that earlier essay, I demonstrated how filmmakers from different ideological orientations and different geographic locations (including Cuba, Senegal, Ethiopia, and Italy as well as the United States and England) engaged in debate and made very intentional decisions about how the art of film represents the trauma of slavery. Their decisions

for how to represent the past were influenced by their concerns about their own political present. In this paper for the workshop at Columbia, I want to raise questions about new experimental directions that professionals in the television and movie industries are taking in the popular representation of slavery.

Rojo Robles **DIVEDCO Liberation: The End of Slavery in an Institutional Early Film of Puerto Rico**

With the online release of the *División de educación a la comunidad* (DIVEDCO) films in the last decade, an important chapter of the history of film in Puerto Rico was re-discovered. Since the DIVEDCO film unit was part of a significant state-sponsored project of community development, cultural modernization, literacy, and art education, most of the scholarly research has focused on the project's implication with the *Estado Libre Asociado*'s (Commonwealth) ideology. With this in mind, I propose an in-depth look at the DIVEDCO's film *El resplandor* (Luis Maysonet, 1961) on the abolition of slavery in the Island. This film shares paradoxical representations of the agency and resistance of slaves. While the film focuses mostly on the victimhood and presents abolition in 1873 as a political win of a liberal *criollo* elite, *El resplandor* also connects the abolition to the revolutionary pro- independence movement, while also presenting everyday moments of rebellion and solidarity among *cimarrón* slaves. My research will establish a dialogue with the investigations of scholars of Afro Puerto Rican culture and will focus on issues of state-driven representation.

Saturday, January 26

Session 5: Self-writing I

Marilyn Miller **Authorial Assertion and Coercion in the Works of Juan Francisco Manzano**

Nineteenth-century Cuban poet Juan Francisco Manzano was an exceptional colonial subject with privileged access to the domestic spaces inhabited by his slaveowners as well as the textual spaces presided over by the lettered white society of his time. Alternately celebrated as a pioneering voice in Afro-Hispanic discourse and denounced for over-identification with white privilege and a lack of common cause with his fellow enslaved Americans of African descent, Manzano represents one of the most contentious relationships between author and text in all of Latin American literature.

Already a published poet by the time he was pressured by reformers to write the story of his life in slavery, Manzano complained of severe writer's block tied to the task of reliving the unrelenting physical and psychological traumas he had experienced. Even within the pages of

that commissioned autobiography, Manzano sought to establish an authorial reputation based on his poetry and other creative endeavors, rather than on his status and experience as an enslaved person. His first published texts were poetic works, and it was the emotional recitation of an autobiographical poem that compelled the members of an elite Cuban literary salon to collectively purchase his freedom. This essay considers various political and literary patrons in Manzano's orbit, and examines how they simultaneously grant him a space in which to exercise his personhood as an author and retain that space for their own projects and platforms.

Doyle Calhoun — **(Im)possible inscriptions: silence, suicide, and slavery in Ousmane Sembène's *La Noire de…***

This presentation examines the tensions between inscription and voice— silence and servitude— that are staged Ousmane Sembene's depiction of neoslavery in his 1962 novella *La Noire de…* and its eponymous 1966 film adaptation. Drawing on Spivak's theorization of suicidal resistance as a message inscribed on the gendered body, I argue that Sembene figures the suicide of Diouana— a Senegalese maid hired away to Antibes— not only as a watery death, but also as a writerly one. Moreover, through the space of suicide itself (the bathtub), Sembene distills a racialized discourse on hygiene and positions Diouana's death at the intersection of two models of neoslavery. That the idea for the novella emerged from a report in a French newspaper puts Sembene in conversation not only with Flaubert (who found inspiration for *Madame Bovary* among *fait-divers* reports) but also with the work of contemporary scholars like Marisa Fuentes who attempt to give voice to enslaved women who have been silenced by historical archives.[1] By taking up the report of a maid's suicide and restoring a certain 'thickness' to this abandoned trace, Sembene models an ethical, and alternative, act of reading, which necessarily takes the form of a kind of (cinematic) writing.

Jeanette Zaragoza-De Leon — **The double invisibility of James Kaweli Covey as reveal by his letters: as slave and court interpreter of the Amistad Case in 19th century USA**

This paper analyzes eight letters written by James Covey, the most known interpreter of the Amistad Case. As enslaved African children during the 19th century, Covey entered slavery at a young age. Shortly thereafter, the Joint Commission intercepted his vessel and returned him back to Africa, but not to his village. The courts assigned him to a missionary-coastal school where he learned English through Christian education. Five years later, Capt. Fitzgerald recruited him as sailor to the Brig *Buzzard* chasing enslaving ships, until they docked in NYC ports in 1839. Abolitionists, desperately seeking to find an interpreter, found Covey to mediate linguistically in the impending trial of the African-*Amistad* captives. After the abolitionists won the trial in favor of the Amistad rebels in January 1840, Covey struggled between staying with

them or sailing with the brig. The following two years Covey wrote eight letters. What do they reveal about his role and experience as interpreter in a divided country along pro and anti-slavery politics. How much agency did he have to stay or leave. How did his background equip him for this case. This paper encases his identities within the 19th century colonial historical period of Spain and the USA.

Session 6: Self-writing II

Katharine Griffin **Anglo-American Exchanges of Black European and American Writings in the Late-Eighteenth to Mid- Nineteenth Century**

In the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century, black European and American writers wrote their autobiographies and fugitive slave narratives to reveal the cruelty of slavery. These writings became beneficial to the abolitionist movement within Britain and America. British and American abolitionists consistently shared these writings across the Atlantic, and as a result, these writings were instrumental in the abolition movement in both countries. In other words, black European writings were instrumental in the American abolition movement, and vice versa. Olaudah Equiano's autobiography provided the framework for future black American autobiographies and fugitive slave narratives. In turn, these black American writings demonstrated the cruelties of American slavery both in the United States and Britain. This paper will examine the ways that black European writings by authors such as Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince influenced the American abolition movement, and how black American writings from authors Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Samuel Ringgold Ward shaped the ways British viewed abolition in the early- to mid-nineteenth-century. Such an examination will demonstrate that it was a reciprocally beneficial exchange in the transatlantic abolition movement of the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century.

Raquel Kennon **"It is Essentially Her Own": Orality, Transcription, and Editing in *The History of Mary* Prince**

The third assertion, "related by herself," in the titular triad of the 1831 slave narrative, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*, situates this first narrative to recount the life of a black woman in England within the oral register. As Thomas Pringle (1789-1834), Scottish abolitionist and Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society, writes in his opening prefatory paragraph: "The idea of writing Mary Prince's history was first suggested by herself. She wished it to be done, she said, that good people in England might *hear* from a slave what a slave had felt and suffered" (emphasis added, 251). Pringle further notes that an authenticating letter from Prince's late master "induced [him] to accede to her wish" and attend to "the more immediate object of the publication" (251).1

Despite Pringle's abolitionist intentions, traces of his overzealous editorial hand—which he calls "pruning"—surface throughout the text to reinforce dichotomies of power between

colonizer and colonized, lettered and unlettered, free and enslaved. His striking equivocations and qualifications in the Preface such as the troubling pronouncement that "it is essentially her own" reveal the anxieties of conforming Prince's story into the conventions of nineteenth century anti-slavery pamphlets and slave narratives, on the one hand, and a concern with presenting the veracious story of Prince's slavery in Bermuda, Antigua, and ultimate freedom in England, on the other. With the publication of Moira Ferguson's revised edition in 1987, scholarly attention has focused on myriad questions related to authenticity, authorship, agency, censorship, voice, and language.

This paper advances the study of these key themes by exploring the complex layers of editing and mediation implicit in the staunchly abolitionist project of converting Prince's oral storytelling to the written page. Published between the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act and the 1834 Slavery Abolition Act that emancipated enslaved Africans in the Caribbean, *The History of Mary Prince* exists as a crucial historical and literary document. I reexamine the editorial relationship between Thomas Pringle (editor), Susanna Moodie (transcriber), and Mary Prince as a poignant example of nineteenth century editorial practice to expose the tension between its specific political antislavery aims and the purported accuracy of Prince's "history." Does Prince own her story? Is the narrative a work of collaborative writing or overt appropriation of her autobiography? Drawing from the prominent scholarship,2 I offer a close reading of the editorial project detailed in the Preface and salient scenes in the narrative that demonstrate how Prince manages to break free from Pringle's intensive editing and Moodie's excision to reveal her distinctive "Creole" voice that readers can, indeed, hear.

Lotte Pelckmans **Fugitive narratives: the multifaceted infrastructures of 'slave' testimonies in Niger**

This paper proposes an anthropological take on authorship and 'slave literacy' by analyzing the reconfigurations of oral narratives into legal testimonies in contemporary West African anti-slavery court cases. These are cases filed by people who are descending from slaves in a post-abolition era, but who continue to be categorized and discriminated against as if they were still slaves. Most cases start by oral narratives of abuse, which are then transferred to anti-slavery organisations such as Anti-slavery international based in London and Timidria based in Niger. The focus will be on how the narrators make claims in their own set of normative references and how, where and why these norms come to be at odds with both the soft and hard infrastructures defining the legal testimony.

By hard infrastructures I refer to the legal context, e.g. the formal requirements for making an oral narrative into a testimony (translation, linear time frames, genre) as well as the structural context of the establishment of written, legal documentation, files and court hearings. By soft infrastructures I understand more social interactions, e.g. the normative and

discursive mouldings and reconfigurations of slave narratives in the course of their production, through interactions with activists, journalists and experts.

I will look into various instances of censorship, i.e. focus on what is left out by comparing original voices of the narrative and their translation & transformation into a legal testimony. The authorship of the testimonies is thus necessarily 'polyphone' in nature: their production and (re-)configuration speaks back to global human rights constellations, regional politics and individual re-membering of post-slavery in West Africa.

Session 7: Literary cultures after slavery

Aline Rogg **'Our Friends in Poetry': Collecting African-American Literature in New Orleans**

New Orleans' nineteenth century afro-creole literary community is known for contributing several landmarks to the African-American canon and for its precocious civil rights activism. This paper explores the group's recording of manuscript and printed literary writings in the midst of repressions against formerly enslaved people and their descendants, repressions that impacted their ability to make their writings public. In this paper I trace the generation, transmission, and survival of three collections of texts: the anthology of poetry *Les Cenelles* (1845), Pierre-Aristide Desdunes' manuscript ledgers (1866-1894), and Rodolphe-Lucien Desdunes' *Nos hommes et notre histoire* (1911). I argue that the practice of maintaining private archives of African-American writings not only ensured access to these texts today, but that it also incited the creation of further, if mostly confidential, writings. As I will suggest these writings contrast with both the group's own published works and the widespread production of white authors, particularly in their engagement with the topic of slavery. By looking at textual collections as part of a local history of publishing, dissemination, and archiving in French-speaking New Orleans, the paper highlights the role of communities and personal interactions in countering processes of silencing.

Chelsea Stieber **Refuting Colonial Discourse and Creating New Subjectivities in Early Postcolonial Haitian Pamphlets**

This paper focuses on the possibilities of reiterative speech acts to challenge and displace authority, as Judith Butler has framed it in "Restaging the Universal" (Verso 2000). I am looking specifically at early post-independence Haitian writing (pamphlets, broadsides, and political proclamations from Jean-Jacques Dessalines's empire and Henry Christophe's state-turned-kingdom) which deployed recitation and reiteration in order to refute colonial discourse and mobilize new claims of legitimacy and subjectivity. I argue that the privileged form of early post- independence Haitian writing is the refutation pamphlet, common in the 18th-century Atlantic print public sphere, and which early Haitian writers appropriated and adapted in order to contest the legitimacy and presumed authority of the colonial system writ large.

Through a close reading of postcolonial Haitian refutation pamphlets, I ultimately aim to challenge David Scott's seminal argument on CLR James's "vindicationist Romanticism" in *The Black Jacobins* by tracing a much longer history of vindicationist writing back to the texts of the Haitian Revolution itself.

Gretchen Long — **Writing Slavery Down: African American Handwriting in the Early Years of Freedom**

While most slaves heard about emancipation through conversation, through what Booker T Washington called the "grape vine telegraph", or through oral proclamation, the business of freedom brought with it a flurry of paper and for many, the new experience of taking pen in hand, if only to form an X at the bottom of a page. Letters requesting help in finding relatives sold away long ago, marriage contracts with spouses whom the law only recently recognized as such, contracts with white land owners, depositions about sexual violation and violence, land ownership, health and commerce—most African Americans signed nearly all of these papers not with a signature, but rather with an X, their Mark.

My paper investigates African American penmanship and signatures in the earliest years of freedom. The paper will begin to sketch out handwriting's place in African American politics and culture. I am particularly interested in documents newly freedpeople wrote that referenced their experience of enslavement.

Session 8: Writing insurrection

Jonas Ross Kjærgaard — **The Role of the Nation-State in the Transatlantic Print Culture of the Haitian Revolution**

The Haitian revolution (1791-1804) caused a major rupture in the colonial world and it was the object of much writing and debate in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century U.S. and Europe. According to the recent work of Marlene Daut (*Tropics of Haiti*, 2015), a "transatlantic print culture of the Haitian revolution" developed in these years and its different international contributors came to share a set of standard tropes that merged with a "pseudoscientific theory of racial difference". In my talk, I will discuss Daut's methodology and its relation to the "silencing thesis" of Michel-Rolph Trouillot. Based on a French (Charles Pigault-Lebrun) and a U.S. (Leonora Sansay) example, I argue that Daut underemphasizes the importance of national differences in the transatlantic writings about the Haitian revolution. The talk ends by asking whether a re-evaluation of the role of the nation-state in this transatlantic material gives cause to reconsider how a pseudo-scientific theory of race develops within the global narratives of the Haitian revolution.

Flaminia Nicora — **Rebels without stories: colonial and postcolonial perspectives on the literary representations of Nineteenth Century's Jamaican slave insurrections.**

As the official site of Jamaica's government confirms, contemporary Jamaica looks back to slave insurrections in order to identify the country's 'national heroes', deliberately rooting its present into the resistance against British slavery. Nanny of the Maroons, Sam Sharpe, George William Gordon and Paul Bogle were protagonists of the major rebellions that took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, but never became protagonists of historical novels, since the representation of Jamaican slave insurgency in the British world was mainly confined to travelogues and personal narratives, as Matthew "Monk"Lewis's.

This paper explores some aspects of the literary representations of Jamaican slaves' rebellion moving from some XIXth century narratives to contemporary re-appropriations of the topic of slavery in twentieth and twenty-first century novels, both Jamaican and British.. The analysis of the representational strategies highlights how slavery and its fictional representations play a role in the construction and revision of national histories.

Amanda Brickell Bellows **Radical Literary Representations of Russian Serfs and American Slaves on the Eve of Emancipation**

This paper considers the efforts of four radical writers who, with varying degrees of success, employed strikingly similar strategies to transform Russian and American public opinion about serfdom and slavery on the eve of abolition. By comparing the works of these four authors, we find surprising consonances between their singular, daring representations of African American slaves and Russian serfs at a moment when the future of slavery and serfdom remained uncertain.

Russian poet Nikolai Nekrasov and playwright Aleksei Pisemskii, and American authors Martha Griffith Browne and Louisa May Alcott, produced original works of fiction, poetry, and drama that humanized the experience of bondage in distinct ways. Aristocrat Nekrasov and slaveholder Browne used sentimental language and imagery to encourage audiences to sympathize with the oppressed bondsmen, whereas noblemen Pisemskii and Northern abolitionist Alcott helped audiences imagine serfs and slaves as integrated citizens through radical portrayals that depicted loving interracial or inter-estate relationships. A comparative analysis of these literary depictions of serfs and slaves provides deeper insight into the emancipatory imagination and shared strategies of four abolitionists from diverse backgrounds.