

Resistance to Slavery in Caribbean in the Colonial Period and “New Slavery” in the Present

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Abstract:

This paper examines slavery in the colonial period in Caribbean and forms of resistance to it, and it proposes the existence of “new slavery” in the current global situation.

Following Lester’s *To be a Slave*, I define as slavery a situation that force people to (1) be traded, (2) be forced to perform unpaid work and, (3) have their identities taken away. Looking at the historical case of Bussa’s Rebellion in Barbados in 1816, I argue that although resistance to slavery through armed rebellion caused extraordinary physical and psychological damage to the slaveholding planters, it resulted in violent revenge upon the slaves. Reflecting on Maryse Condé’s *Moi, Tituba sorcière...noire de Salem*, I suggest that, although escape may seem like a negative way of resistance, it was useful and practical for slaves to run away from the system of slavery.

Turning to the present, I insist that slavery still exists, albeit in a changed form, through, for instance, prostitution, exploitation by multinational corporations, and the “appropriation of identity” by multiculturalism or *négritude*. Today, if we choose a violent way for resistance, it is called “terrorism,” and it is revenged by nation. Since capitalism and globalization, as well as the violence linked to them, penetrate the whole world, we cannot escape from them and we cannot find objects to resist.

Keywords:

black slavery, resistance, Barbados, rebellion, escaped slave.