EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

OUR AIMS

This is the first of two volumes on children in slavery—a subject that has only recently become the focus of academic research. Scholarly attention has up to now centered primarily on adult male slaves, first in the Americas and the Caribbean, then in Africa, and more recently on women in slavery.[1] Throughout the known history of slavery, children were in a minority. However, as the chapters in these volumes show, at least for the transatlantic, Indian Ocean, and internal U.S. trades, they were increasing in numbers and importance from the late eighteenth century as slavery in its classic form came increasingly under attack. Moreover, it is possible that children currently constitute a large proportion of the victims of the various forms of "modern" slavery. Our aim here is to provide comparative examples of child slavery, from the eighth to the twentieth centuries. Child slavery is surely the most pitiful form of slavery, since children are the most malleable of slaves and have the least powers of resistance. Most slave children, however, have a high degree of adaptability, which, as will be seen, was and is central to survival in a world in which they were, and still are, valued and thought of as trade goods, possessions, and generators of wealth, rather than as human beings with needs of their own.

We have space in these two volumes for only a few examples of the role and fate of child slaves. Whole regions, and whole sections of the economy in which children were, and still are, enslaved, remain to be explored. This is a pioneer work and we hope that other scholars will follow us in the search for information on this little-known subject.

OUR SOURCES

Apart from the uses to which children were put, how they were affected by their slave experiences has been little researched, and our sources are often sketchy. Children did not keep diaries or other records of their lives and treatment while in bondage. Adult slaves, particularly freed slaves, recorded facts about their childhood, but their reminiscences, albeit highly valuable, are filtered through later experiences. However, there is some firsthand information on those children who were freed from captured slave ships or

slave caravans and handed over by the British to missionaries in Sierra Leone, East Africa, and India after the trade became illegal, during the nineteenth century. There are also the accounts of those who, at the same time, sought refuge with the European colonial authorities, particularly if, as in Mauritius, a protector of slaves had been appointed. More recently, there are the stories of children who fled to British consulates in Arabia, or to British officials in the Persian Gulf states, where slavery was legal until the 1960s. The last country to outlaw slavery was Oman, in 1970. Unfortunately, the full accounts of these children's experiences in Arabia were either unrecorded or not sent back to the Foreign Office by British officials. However, future research on the ground will surely yield much valuable information.

Slavery took many forms, some crueler than others. On the one hand, unknown numbers of children in many lands have, over the centuries, been torn from, or even sold by, their natal families, taken far from home, often resold—sometimes many times—and raised among strangers. They were often overworked, poorly fed and housed, and exposed to sexual abuse, cruelty, disease, and other dangers. Their welfare has always been subordinated to the interests—economic, political, or social—of their owners. Child slaves were, and sadly still are, the defenseless victims of poverty, wars, raids, and trickery, as well as greed and a thirst for power. However, as the following chapters show, this picture of brutality and suffering must be modified by the fact that for some children life in slavery was preferable to a life of poverty at home. Moreover, some boy slaves were trained to wield power and some girl slaves ended up leading lives of luxury. Sadly, they represented a small minority of the children in bondage.

DEFINITION OF SLAVERY

A number of the contributions to this volume underscore one of the major problems in comparative slavery studies: the definition of *slavery*. In the conventional historiography that has focused on European forms of bondage, a reasonably clear consensus has arisen as to the meaning of the term. This consensus is assisted by the common linguistic origin of the term *slave* in most European languages. A slave is generally taken to constitute a chattel, deprived of civic rights, and whose status is inherited by his or her children. Further definitions have concentrated on the social death and the ubiquity of violence in the slave experience. However, it is becoming increasingly evident that there existed, notably in the non-Atlantic world, many different forms of bondage, which changed according to time and place and which often overlapped with one another. These systems, some of which are examined in this volume, at times approximated to the Atlan-

tic concept of slavery but often differed significantly from it. Slaves were not always chattels or deprived of basic civic rights; they did not always pass their slave status on to their children; and some could rise to positions of considerable wealth and influence. Such systems thus challenge researchers to reexamine the meaning of slavery through the adoption of more holistic and comparative analytical paradigms.[2]

THE DEFINITION OF A CHILD

Our first task here is to define what we mean by a child. Today, the United Nations and many Western countries define a child as anyone under the age of eighteen. However, this is not a universal yardstick. For instance, the age of consent to marriage for girls in some countries is as low as twelve. The legal age at which children of either sex enter the work force, are conscripted for military service, are allowed to marry, vote, or drive varies from country to country. The legal school leaving age could be an indicator of legal adulthood, but in many countries education is not compulsory, and in some countries few if any girls attend school. Many children do not have birth certificates and their age is not officially known.

The difficulty of defining childhood is even greater when discussing the past. In part this stems from the paucity of records. However, it also derives from concepts of childhood often radically different from modern Western concepts. Even in Enlightenment Europe, which stressed the capacity to reason as the test of the civilized human being, children, alongside females and nonwhite males, were considered irrational and "animal-like" and thus debarred from civic rights and responsibilities. Children required "domestication," and slavery, it was often argued, was the protected status best suited to that end for nonwhite children. The definition of a slave child was frequently determined by widely varying criteria, including "appearance" and height. A vivid example of how difficult it can be to judge a child's age by his or her appearance is provided by George Michael La Rue's chapter in this volume.[3] He describes a slave boy who arrived in the northern Sudan without parents or relations and was believed to be anywhere from three to six years old—a surprisingly large age range. In the Atlantic slave trade, foremost among the determinants of a child's age was the individual's height. In the Indian Ocean traffic it was height and apparent maturity.[4] However, in Enlightenment thinking the nonwhite remained uncivilized, even after attaining physical maturity. Indeed, physical maturity accentuated the "animallike" characteristics of the barbarian. Thus, the adult slave continued to be viewed as mentally and spiritually undeveloped and infantile; often a more dangerous and volatile version of the child slave.[5]

THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS VOLUME

There is no chronological sequence to slavery. It has taken many forms and has often overlapped with other types of servitude, some of which are still widespread. We start this first volume with a description of children in different slave trades, beginning with António de Almeida Mendes' pioneer study of children in the early Portuguese slave trade between North and West Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, and America in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This is followed by Richard B. Allen's study of the European traffic across the vast Indian Ocean, which brought victims all the way from China and the East Indies to India, the Mascarenes, and the African coasts. Next we have chapters on two different African trades in the nineteenth century: Fred Morton analyzes the East African traffic supplying markets on the Swahili coast, the offshore islands of the Indian Ocean, Arabia, and India;[6] La Rue studies the Egyptian traffic supplying slaves from the southern Sudan to markets in the northern Sudan, Egypt, and the Middle East;[7] and the first section of this volume ends with Susan Eva O'Donovan's description of children in the U.S. slave traffic between 1820 and 1860.[8]

The second section provides examples of the very varied uses and treatment of slaves in different parts of the world over time. The first two chapters discuss forms of elite slavery in the medieval Middle East. Thus Kristina Richardson deals with a form of female servitude in the 'Abbasid Empire (AD 750–1258),[9] while Gulay Yilmaz describes the recruitment and use of certain highly privileged male slaves in the Ottoman Empire between the early fifteenth and the late sixteenth centuries.[10] Kim Bok-Rae discusses the use and powers of eunuchs in the Chinese Empire as late as the early twentieth century.[11] In her turn, Pauline Pui-ting Poon describes the fate of unwanted girls in poor Chinese families who were often adopted by richer families to serve as ill-used domestic servants in a system known as *mui tsai.*[12]

The last section opens with a discussion by Pierre H. Boulle of the various uses of child slaves in late-eighteenth-century France, from playthings of the court and aristocracy to servants of a variety of owners.[13] Kenneth Morgan's chapter explains the reasons for the high infant mortality in the British Caribbean colonies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which fueled the demand for imported slaves.[14] Calvin Schermerhorn, writing on America's Southern states in the last decades of plantation slavery, paints a horrifying picture of the impact on child slaves of the selling away of their parents and natural guardians.[15]

CHILDREN IN THE SLAVE TRADES

We begin our discussion of the place of children in the slave trade with Mendes' pioneer study of children in the Portuguese slave trade in the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Originally a trade in slaves, many of them Muslim, captured in Mediterranean wars, this developed into a large-scale traffic involving slaves from both interior and coastal Africa. It linked North and West Africa and even central Africa with the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas, resulting in a "cultural and economic bridge" between the three continents. This created what Mendes sees as a "single, integrated Atlantic civilization." Since black slaves became the principal source of labor, he sees them as "the main agents of social change" in all three regions. He begins by tracing the changing sources and role of slaves in the Iberian Peninsula, from Saracens—often Muslims, captured in Mediterranean conflicts, who usually served the elite—to Africans, many of them captured or kidnapped in the far interior and brought to the coast by African traders. The captured Africans were considered to be savages. They eventually permeated all levels of society and changed European attitudes toward slaves and their uses. Iberian societies absorbed large numbers of slaves and shipped hundreds of thousands to the New World. Only a small minority were children, though they were the easiest to capture and the first to adapt to their new roles. As adults, most remembered their African childhood but also saw their own future and that of their descendants as rooted in Europe or the Americas rather than in a return to their homeland, even when that became possible with the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century. Much research remains to be done on the actual experiences of children in this early European trade in Africans, in which children were a small minority of the captives. Mendes' chapter, however, provides the setting for further research.

In our second chapter, Allen analyzes the role of children in the Indian Ocean slave trade during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Sources are scarce, as Allen makes clear, so that, although this traffic predated the transatlantic slave trade by centuries, much less is known about it. Its victims were both drawn from and sold in regions as far apart as China, India, the Mascarenes, and eastern and southern Africa. The traders comprised people from all over the Indian Ocean world, including Arabs, Indians, and Africans, as well as Europeans. The children were enslaved in various ways. Many were sold by their own, often impoverished, relations. Some, sold in times of famine to ensure their survival, cost less than cats or dogs.

The slave populations of the importing areas were not self-sustaining, and children were overall only a minority of those imported. However, their proportion varied considerably according to time and place. Thus there was a higher percentage of children in cargoes from Africa than in those from India and Malaysia and, significantly, as in the case of the Atlantic trade, the proportion of children in slave cargoes increased as the trade came under attack. Numbers were also imported illegally after the

traffic was outlawed. Nevertheless, unlike the victims of the transatlantic trade, most slave children traded across the Indian Ocean were wanted as servants rather than field hands and the girls were valued for their sexual and reproductive potential. Like adults, many child slaves died on the way to their destinations. This traffic has resulted in populations of very mixed descent in former European colonies in, and bordering, the Indian Ocean. The two chapters that follow, on the slave trade in eastern Africa, illustrate the degree to which the experiences of children in these traffics could vary.

Morton describes a relatively humane part of the usually cruel trade from east-central Africa to markets either on the east African coast or, via the Indian Ocean, to Arabia, the Persian Gulf, and India. The march from the interior to the coast was arduous, with the adults shackled and the children struggling to keep up with them; they were sometimes killed if they failed to do so. This chapter demonstrates that children in the nineteenth-century East African slave trade functioned not simply as servants or laborers but also as small capital, used by traders to settle debts, establish credit, and as bargaining chips in other transactions. The value of these slave children appreciated the longer they remained in the interior, for they grew bigger and more useful. Typically separated from their parents, they subsequently identified with their masters. They might change hands several times and take months or even years to reach the coast, where they were primarily bought for domestic service. Some remained in eastern Africa but others were sold to slavers and taken on to Middle Eastern and other Indian Ocean world markets.

By contrast, La Rue, writing on the period between 1820 and 1835, discusses the terrible experiences of children bought or captured in the southern Sudan and bound for markets in the northern Sudan, Egypt, and the Ottoman Empire. Those who survived the grueling journey to the markets in the north were used to pay off soldiers, kept as slaves in the northern Sudan, or sent for sale to Egypt and the Middle East, where they usually ended up as domestic servants. Many were orphaned en route, as their enslaved mothers or other relatives died from disease, starvation, ill treatment, or simply the rigors of the journey. As in the Atlantic trade, children who arrived at their destination showing pockmarks were more valuable than those who had not previously contracted smallpox, as the latter would prove more vulnerable should an outbreak of the disease occur.

La Rue concentrates on the story of a little orphan called ʻAli, an extraordinary figure who, although he had survived the long and difficult journey, and like his companions was filthy and covered with vermin, managed to retain an aristocratic air, a happy countenance, and impeccable

manners. Hence he was thought to be the child of a ruling family—although nohing is known of his background. As noted above, his age was variously estimated as three or six. He was, apparently, unusually resilient. It was believed that the trader who owned him was anxious to sell him because he was clearly Muslim and, under Islamic law, should not have been enslaved. He charmed William Holt Yates, a member of the British Royal College of Physicians and an abolitionist, who bought him for research on phrenology. At a time when science was often invoked to justify racial inequalities, this chapter shows how science (including the pseudoscience of phrenology) could be invoked to disprove the charge that Africans were innately inferior to Europeans. 'Ali was sent to school in England, where he appears to have been much liked, and became a leader among his peers. Sadly, he died of whooping cough at the age, estimated by his British acquaintances, of six—which if correct would have made him three to four years old when purchased. His is surely a unique story in the history of the particularly inhumane trans-Saharan slave trade.

The children in all these trades were acquired in a number of similar ways. Many were captured in wars and raids—alone, with their parents, or with siblings and friends. Some were captured in the far interior, others near the coast. Poverty-stricken parents and relatives also sold their children to better their fate or, in times of famine, to save their lives or feed the rest of the family. Others were sold by debtors to their creditors if they failed to repay their debts. Some were kidnapped and sold by unscrupulous relatives. Others were exacted as tribute by chiefs, who sold them to dealers. Some were acquired in the far interior and forced to make a long and arduous trek to the coast. Others were captured by coastal people in local raids.[16]

We have no chapter on the transatlantic slave trade after the sixteenth century, but that topic is amply covered in other, more conventional accounts of the history of the slave trade. Suffice it to note that research on this traffic is plentiful and that the databases are constantly providing new material. They clearly show that children were only a fraction of the slaves transported. They were not the slaves of choice, because buyers had to wait, often many years, before they were old enough to become fully fledged field hands—the job for which most of these slaves were wanted. Only in the nineteenth century, in the cocoa plantations of Latin America, were they especially valued because their small fingers were more nimble at picking beans from the pods than those of their elders. However, from the late eighteenth century the New World demand for children grew, and they became an increasingly important part of slavers' cargoes. Several reasons are suggested for this. One is that, although the number of children born

in the New World was an important factor in the proliferation of slaves, as Morgan's chapter makes clear, the infant survival rate among slaves was very low in the Caribbean.[17]

O'Donovan, writing on the internal market in the United States, underlines the rise in demand for native-born children in the last decades of slavery—between 1820 and 1860. This gave rise to a trade in children that formed part of the Second Middle Passage—the movement of a million slaves from the Atlantic coast and upper South, some short distances, some into the Old Southwest. This process preyed particularly hard on children who were frequently separated from their families.[18] When combined with slave hiring, the number of separations grew even greater. Children, O'Donovan shows, were viewed as especially desirable for "manning" plantations because they were less likely to run away. They did not have the experience of adults and were more easily exploited. Indeed, in the last years of slavery children became the slaves of choice precisely because of their vulnerability, since they had not acquired the "run away & fortune-making natures of men."[19]

EXAMPLES OF THE USES AND TREATMENT OF SLAVE CHILDREN THROUGH THE AGES

The second section of this volume gives examples of the very different uses of child slaves through the ages. They illustrate the wide variety of roles performed by slave children of both sexes, besides their ubiquitous use as unskilled labor and as domestic servants.

Richardson's contribution is the first of two exclusively discussing girls. She describes a very particular type of female slavery—the recruitment, by force, of young girls as entertainers for Middle Eastern rulers and other wealthy patrons during the 'Abbasid era (ca. AD 750–1258). These girls, whose ages when recruited are not known, were chosen because they were both young, hence trainable, and "entrancingly beautiful," with sex appeal. Since Muslims could not legally be enslaved, many of these girl slaves originated outside the Islamic heartland, from areas such as India and Ethiopia, although some were recruited from the local slave population. Such girls fetched high prices, and their value increased as they were given an expensive education, being trained in poetry, music, and Arabic to perform for elite males. They thus occupied an intermediate position between the secluded sphere of women and the visible sphere of male belletrists. The essay provides significant evidence that these young women, who were hired out as performers, as well as prostitutes, "exploited their sexuality and their proximity to the politically powerful" to their personal and material advantage.

The road to success for these girls was to become the concubines of their owners, who sometimes freed them. The most successful were those who bore their master a child. By Muslim law, they could not then be sold, and the child usually acquired free status.[20] However, most singing girls remained slaves, many despised as prostitutes.

Yilmaz discusses the *devşirme*—a particular group of male slaves conscripted from the early fifteenth century from among Christian Serbs, Greeks, and Albanians living in the Ottoman Empire, to serve as administrators and soldiers. Every three to four years, peasant boys from within the Ottoman domain were forcibly recruited to become "servants of the sultan." They had to be between ten and eighteen years old, able-bodied, handsome, clever, unmarried, uncircumcised, well brought up, and of "good birth." To ensure that the land would still be cultivated, only one boy could be taken from each family and, in any given year, only one from every forty families. Some parents tried to prevent their sons from being conscripted, although others asked that they be chosen.

This fascinating essay explains why the Ottomans adopted this system and challenges many misconceptions about the devşirme. The boys were taken to the capital, given Muslim names, circumcised, and converted to Islam. Those considered the most talented were trained as palace servants while the rest became janissaries. Yilmaz describes the careful training given to both groups. The most successful were eventually promoted to the higher grades of the army and administration; the rest were drafted into the sultan's army. Devşirme might fill all posts from grand vizier to laborer. Those who rose to positions of influence were thus vitally involved in what Yilmaz calls the "power dynamics" of the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, population increase, sharp inflation due to the influx of American silver, and military developments in Europe (including the use of firearms) caused the empire to change the system by "opening the doors" to Muslim commoners. Yilmaz attributes this to the sultan's desire to change the power relations within the ruling elite.

The chapters by Richardson and Yilmaz clearly deal with children destined to become privileged slaves with opportunities for advancement denied to most persons in servitude. Nevertheless, they were slaves, with no control over their futures, and were trained to fill particular niches—social in the case of the singing girls; political and military in the case of the devşirme. Slavery in the Muslim world was governed by Islamic law, which forbade the enslavement of fellow Muslims and urged owners to treat their slaves well and even to free them. Actual treatment, however, depended on the use to which the slaves were put. While slave servants were on the whole

treated better than those in plantation colonies, there were many exceptions. Conspicuous among them were the small boys used for pearl diving in the Red Sea far into the twentieth century. They were not only exposed to constant danger but were often harshly treated.[21]

In the next chapter Kim focuses on those eunuchs who served the emperor of China as slaves until the overthrow of the empire in 1911. Other eunuchs made up the retinues of nobles and princes in both China and Korea. Although little is known about their early years, we include them in this volume because they were prepared for a life of servitude as children. Most were boys whose parents had them castrated in order to promote their chances, as slave eunuchs, of rising to positions of power and influence at the imperial court. Castration was usually done in infancy or early childhood, as survival rates were higher than for boys castrated later in life—although there were boys who had themselves castrated in adolescence. It would seem that child eunuchs must have had an education that prepared them for high office, but sadly little is as yet known about this. The most successful eunuchs rose to positions of considerable power: a few ruled through pliant emperors. And some attempted to regain at least some normalcy by adopting children to create families of their own. However, they were always at the mercy of the emperor and court politics. They could at any time fall from favor and, as Kim shows, could lose their lives. In sum, Kim's chapter offers an important insight into the "adoptive system" for recruiting eunuchs and will hopefully pave the way for more research into the experiences of child victims central to the "making" of eunuchs.

Pauline Pui-ting Poon, writing about Hong Kong in the early twentieth century, looks at the "mui tsai" system. This was a type of bondage closer to modern slavery.[22] The chapter is included here as it was a form of slavery designed for, and in theory limited to, children. It was originally developed to save the lives of unwanted girls. The survival of Chinese families depended on sons, who looked after aged parents and performed rituals to the deities. Girls were often considered an unnecessary burden since they had to be kept until they could be married—when they joined their husbands' families. To save the lives of those female infants, whose parents either could not or would not support them, a custom developed whereby they were transferred for a small fee from their natal family into a richer one. Originally, when the two families remained in the same village, the treatment of the children could be monitored, but as people moved, many of these girls were ill treated by their adoptive parents and the most unfortunate were traded—some more than once.[23] To all intents and purposes such girls were slaves. In the worst cases they were worked at all hours, given jobs beyond their

strength, isolated in the household, and often almost starved. Their servitude, theoretically at least, ended when they grew up and their adoptive family was supposed to arrange a suitable marriage for them. One advantage these girls derived from the system was that their feet were not usually bound—so that, unlike their mistresses, they were not crippled. However, this meant they were often bought as hardworking wives by poor men. The stigma of having been a mui tsai was so great that even in the late twentieth century many former mui tsai tried to hide the fact from their children.[24]

Poon discusses the attempts made by the British colonial government in Hong Kong early in the twentieth century to regulate the system. The government's efforts were always limited by its desire not to alienate the Chinese elite, on whose goodwill and support the colonial rulers depended. On the other hand, welfare organizations were constantly exhorting the colonial government to greater efforts. Poon also discusses the efforts by the Hong Kong Chinese, who were anxious to reform the system. In particular, she considers its uses and abuses and the impact of a Chinese organization—Po Leung Kuk—organized to fight for the girls' rights. The British eventually demanded that the girls be registered and visited by welfare workers. In China this form of child slavery ended only after the communist government was established.

Boulle, writing about slaves in late-eighteenth-century France, deals with child slaves in a very different setting. He begins with a description of slave children who were treated as playthings of the royal court and aristocracy, supplanting monkeys and toys. This opens a discussion of the fate of nonwhite children in France. There were twice as many male as female "colored" children, the largest group being between the ages of eight and twelve. Most nonwhite children were not playthings but were destined to be domestic servants or trained for a particular job, such as wig making, and dressmaking for girls, and cooking and grooming of men's hair or wigs, for boys. Surprisingly, such apprenticeships normally excluded carpentry or other occupations essential to colonial economies, possibly indicating a more intimate slave-master relationship. Most children of African descent were registered as slaves, as were the darker children of East Indian descent. Some were born in France of mixed parentage; others were children of planters, often by mulatto mothers, who were sent to France for their education by their white fathers—who sometimes accompanied them.

Legally, only plantation owners could bring slaves to France, and these slaves had to be returned within three years. However, the laws were brazenly flouted, especially by the elite. Many child slaves were imported by officials, naval officers, and particularly slave traders, to become servants,

interpreters, and cabin boys. As they grew up, some successfully appealed to courts for manumission. Some were freed by their owners and left to fend for themselves in France. Others simply absconded. Boulle suggests that male owners who freed their slaves did so because they feared they might develop relationships with their wives, who had petted them in childhood. Parallel fears on the part of French women may also account for the greater number of girls sent back to the colonies once they reached maturity.

Morgan's contribution to this volume addresses a very different and much better known theme: the very high mortality rate of slave infants in the British Caribbean—which in turn necessitated a continuous supply of imported slaves. He offers an extremely compelling explanation for high slave mortality. In 1790 nearly half the slave children born in the West Indies died before the age of two. Morgan compares these appalling statistics with the much lower death rate of infants in Britain at the same period. He dismisses the theory that the deaths were due to mothers willfully neglecting their children because they were unwilling to condemn them to a life of slavery, or to bear the extra burden of looking after them, or because they were more interested in "amorous adventures." Rather, he attributes the high death rate chiefly to unhygienic conditions in the slave quarters, to insufficient diet for slave mothers and children, and to medical ignorance. He suggests, for example, that African practices that mandated that a baby's clothes remain unchanged for three days after birth, and that the child not be nurtured until it was nine days old, contributed to the high mortality rate. However, he emphasizes that slave mothers normally looked after their children as best they could in the appalling circumstances in which they lived.

Schermerhorn's chapter, with its very apt title "Left Behind but Getting Ahead," complements that of O'Donovan on the antebellum South in the years leading up to the Civil War and the legal end of slavery. Where she is concerned with the trade in infant and child slaves, he discusses the impact on native-born slave children of the separation, through sale, from their parents and other relatives or guardians. He focuses on the Chesapeake, where the children were separated from their parents, who, as young adults, had been traded west and south. These parentless children became an increasingly large proportion of the remaining population. Left to fend for themselves, they formed successive bonds with networks of caregivers. First they turned to grandparents and extended family members or even bonded with the children of their owners. Subsequently, they learned to form networks of ever-changing "informal kin" in place of families. Churches sometimes functioned as such networks, even though slave pastors were also liable to be sold away.

As each generation reached its "prime," it was sold or hired out to work far from home. Thus in their turn orphans became parents and were separated from their own children in the same fashion. Tragically these children and subsequently their offspring came to think of themselves as property with a cash value rather than as human beings. The tragedy of their lives is alleviated only by the picture Schermerhorn paints of their strength, strategic know-how, and resilience in the face of one inevitable parting after another. His account turns a history of endless sorrow into an inspirational tale of the strength of the human spirit and the ability to overcome tragedy. With its stress on agency, as well as victimization, this chapter effectively rebuts the argument that slavery had devastating effects on children, inflicting what the historian Nell Painter has called "soul murder."[25]

This volume, with its studies of childhood slavery, invites further research into a fascinating, if harrowing subject. Our opening section on the slave trade is a tale of horror, deprivation, and sadness. Even the relatively good treatment of children on the transatlantic voyage compared to the suffering of their parents,[26] and of those attached to traders in East Africa, described here by Morton, does not mitigate this picture. It merely shows that persons involved in all branches of this cruelest of trades could be humane if it suited their purposes.

The next section comprises examples of different forms of slavery. Our samples have been chosen, first to show the reasons why children were bought, even when their labor might not cover the purchase price for many years; and second to illustrate the wide variety of children's experiences of bondage. Some forms of slavery, such as that practiced in the Southern United States, were based simply on the owners' need to make a profit—no consideration being shown for the child victims of the system. There doubtless were considerate owners but the system did not encourage or reward such sentiments. By contrast, in the trade in Chinese child slaves, the treatment of the mui tsai varied according to their owners. Other forms of slavery, as shown in the contributions in this volume on the devşirme in the Ottoman Empire and the eunuchs in imperial China, could open the way to high political office and influence. By contrast, the singing girls of the 'Abbasid Empire were apparently a solely cultural phenomenon, with no political or monetary significance, except that the girls could be hired out as prostitutes. In all three of these cases the children were relatively well treated.

It appears clear throughout that the numbers of child slaves traded increased from the late eighteenth century, as the abolitionist movement expanded, presaging the development of modern forms of slavery in which

child victims have been central. This theme will be explored more fully in the companion volume, *Children in Modern Servitude,* in which we consider examples of child servitude in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The second volume investigates in particular the transition from slavery to freedom—a transition that today is still not complete because, although the institution is illegal everywhere, children are currently being born into slavery in parts of Africa. Owners can no longer exert all their former powers, but they can, and do, treat the descendants of slaves as inferiors and in some countries still control their lives. We include some case studies of modern slavery that clearly demonstrate that the outlawing and virtual disappearance of classic slavery has not ended child servitude. These and other forms of modern bondage are being attacked by international organizations, governments, and other concerned bodies, including NGOs. Current forms of servitude involve many more children than did traditional forms of bondage, largely as the result of conventional preoccupations with adults as victims of slavery and changed circumstances—notably population growth, growing disparity between rich and poor areas of the world, and the development of modern systems of communication. As interest in child slavery continues to grow, and as research, particularly doctoral research, proceeds, more sources will surely be found and more studies will undoubtedly appear to cast more light on this vitally important subject.

NOTES

1. See Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers, Joseph C. Miller, eds., *Women and Slavery,* vol. 1, *Africa, the Indian Ocean World, and the Medieval North Atlantic* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); vol. 2, *The Modern Atlantic* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008).

2. For a start in this direction, see Gwyn Campbell, ed., *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Frank Cass, 2004); Campbell, ed., *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (London: Routledge, 2005).

3. George Michael La Rue, "The Brief Life of 'Ali, the Orphan of Kordofan: The Egyptian Slave Trade in the Sudan, 1820–35," chapter 4 below.

4. Richard B. Allen, "Children and European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean during the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries," chapter 2 below.

5. Gwyn Campbell, "Children and Slavery in the New World: A Review," *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 2 (2006): 261–62.

6. Fred Morton, "Small Change: Children in the Nineteenth-Century East African Slave Trade," chapter 3 below.

7. La Rue, "Brief Life of 'Ali."

8. Susan Eva O'Donovan, "Traded Babies: Enslaved Children in America's Domestic Migration, 1820–60," chapter 5 below.

9. Kristina Richardson, "Singing Slave Girls (*Qiyan*) of the 'Abbasid Court in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries," chapter 6 below.

10. Gulay Yilmaz, "Becoming a *Devşirme:* The Training of Conscripted Children in the Ottoman Empire," chapter 7 below.

11. Bok-Rae Kim, "The Third Gender: Palace Eunuchs," chapter 8 below.

12. Pauline Pui-ting Poon, "The Well-Being of Purchased Female Domestic Servants (*Mui Tsai*) in Hong Kong in the Early Twentieth Century," chapter 9 below.

13. Pierre H. Boulle, "Slave and Other Nonwhite Children in Late-Eighteenth-Century France," chapter 10 below.

14. Kenneth Morgan, "The Struggle for Survival: Slave Infant Mortality in the British Caribbean in the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," chapter 11 below.

15. Calvin Schermerhorn, "Left Behind but Getting Ahead: Antebellum Slavery's Orphans in the Chesapeake, 1820–60," chapter 12 below.

16. For an example see A. Diptee, "African Children in the British Slave Trade during the Late Eighteenth Century," *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 2 (2006): 183–96.

17. Morgan, "Struggle for Survival."

18. O'Donovan, "Traded Babies."

19. Ibid.

20. This was not the case in all branches of Islam.

21. See A. B. Wylde, *'83 to'87 in the Sudan,* 2 vols. (London: Remington, 1888).

22. For further discussion of modern slavery, see *Children and Slavery,* vol. 2.

23. For a firsthand account by a former mui tsai, see Janet Lim, *Sold for Silver: An Autobiography* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985).

24. Janet Lim to Suzanne Miers, pers. comm.

25. Nell Irvin Painter, *Soul Murder and Slavery* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1998).

26. Paul Lovejoy, "The Children of Slavery—The Transatlantic Phase," in *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 2 (2006): 197–217.