

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: University of Nottingham</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: American and Canadian Studies</p>
<p>Title of case study: Abolitionism Then and Now: Contributions to Antislavery Debate, Policy and Practice</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact Professor Zoe Trodd has contributed to changes in antislavery policy debate and practice at local, national and international levels—from lawyers’ societies and school teachers, to national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the European Parliament—through a series of publications, consultations, public talks, and contributions to teaching and digital resources about contemporary slavery and abolitionism. Drawing on her own research, as well as research into historic forms of slave resistance and literary abolitionism by two other professors in the UoA, she has intervened in contemporary abolitionism by advising the government bodies, NGOs and community organisations working to liberate slaves, pass antislavery legislation and remove slavery from industries’ supply chains.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research Judie Newman’s research, undertaken as Professor of American Studies (2000-present), has theorised the genre of the slave narrative, including the neo-slave narrative, with attention to the wealth of variety in the thousands of oral histories of former slaves, and hundreds of published slave narratives, also examining the genre’s influence as an abolitionist tool in the 19th century (reference 1). John Ashworth’s research, undertaken as Professor of American History (2000-present), positions 19th-century slave resistance as a key cause of the Civil War and a key factor in slavery’s abolition (reference 2). Both professors have therefore traced specific antislavery strategies that Trodd has subsequently presented to NGOs as a series of lessons that the 19th-century abolitionist movement offers to 21st-century abolitionists.</p> <p>In research undertaken and published as Professor of American Literature (July 1, 2012-present), Trodd has written the most up-to-date assessment available of contemporary slavery and antislavery efforts in Europe, with recommendations for the European Union’s future antislavery strategies, as a 30-page commissioned study submitted in May 2013 and delivered as an address at the European Parliament on July 10, 2013 (reference 4), as well as comprehensive introductions to contemporary slavery and human trafficking (reference 5). Since July 2012 she also has examined the literary and visual culture of the 21st-century global antislavery movement, a now 15-year-old movement to end the enslavement of 27 million people worldwide. For example, she has gathered and published narratives by formerly enslaved people (source 4), then offered the first and only scholarly theorisation of these narratives as a genre (the Contemporary Slave Narrative) in a paper at a public international conference in November 2012 that brought together academics and antislavery activists before an audience of 200 that included Luis CdeBaca (director of the U.S. State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons). Arguing that slave narratives need to be as central to today’s antislavery movement as they were to 19th-century abolitionism, she has revealed former slaves making themselves subjects of a story instead of objects for sale in their protest literature. In addition, she has provided the first and only examination of contemporary antislavery visual culture, in an open-access peer-reviewed journal article in May 2013 (reference 3) that was featured by the Education Outreach team at the Facebook page for the Department of Public Information at the United Nations on June 15, 2013. Here Trodd identified some of the same limitations of paternalism, dehumanisation and sensationalism as dominated much of the first antislavery movement’s visual culture. Finally, the research thread that ties these multiple elements together is Trodd’s focus on what 19th-century abolitionism has offered so far—and what more it <i>could</i> offer—to 21st-century abolitionists. Across all this research, Trodd has argued that today’s abolitionists should learn lessons from the first antislavery movement’s failures, successes, contradictions and unfinished work. They should work to replace nostalgia with protest memory—memory <i>of</i> protest and memory used <i>to</i> protest—and salvage a literary and visual culture of slave rebellion and black activism, rather than slave passivity and white paternalism.</p>

3. References to the research

1. Judie Newman, "Slave Narratives and Neo-Slave Narratives," *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the American South*, ed. Sharon Monteith (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 26-38 [DOI: 10.1017/CCO9781139568241.003].
2. John Ashworth, *The Republic in Crisis, 1848-1861* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) [listed in REF2].
3. Zoe Trodd, "Am I Still Not a Man and a Brother? Protest Memory in Contemporary Antislavery Visual Culture," *Slavery & Abolition* 34.3 (May 2013) [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0144039X.2013.791172].
4. Zoe Trodd (with Kevin Bales), *Addressing Contemporary Forms of Slavery in EU External Policy* (European Union 2013) [available on request].
5. Zoe Trodd, "Slavery" and "Human Trafficking," *Sociology of Work*, ed. Vicki Smith (Sage, 2013) [DOI: 10.4135/9781452276199.n149 and 10.4135/9781452276199.n279].

4. Details of the impact

This research has informed antislavery debate, policy and practice on the part of 1) the European Parliament; 2) NGOs; 3) specific communities (of teachers and lawyers).

Influencing the debates of the European Union

Trodd's research (**reference 4**) has had an impact on the antislavery discourse of the European Union. She presented the findings of her commissioned study (**reference 4**) to the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights on July 10, 2013, then engaged in an exchange of views with Myria Vassiliadou, the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator. The study assessed the EU's antislavery efforts so far and recommended new courses of action, including an EU Directive on Transparency in Supply Chains, national anti-slavery plans and slavery inspectorates for Member States, a systematic regulation of labour recruitment agencies, a better use of historic antislavery imagery in its own reports and resources (rather than its current use of famous 19th-century icons like the crouching, pleading slave from "Am I Not a Man and a Brother"), and dozens of other recommendations centred around the suggestion that the EU shift its focus from just trafficking (the *process* of enslavement) to slavery itself, and do so with reference to earlier forms of slavery and antislavery. In response, the Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Metin Kazak, said he wanted to "underline the message of the paper that there is a clear recommendation to the EU to cease referring to trafficking as slavery and rather recognise trafficking as a method by which a minority of the world's slaves are brought to slavery" (**source 1**). MEPs then debated the value of this proposed shift. Here Trodd introduced a new element to the EU's debate on its approach to combatting contemporary slavery and human trafficking. Other policy recommendations have the potential for impact over the next two-three years.

Making suggestions to NGOs about elements of their abolitionism

Trodd presented research to antislavery NGOs about how best to translate the lessons and methods of 19th-century abolitionism and antislavery writing into 21st-century antislavery strategies and campaigns. The NGOs with which Trodd engaged subsequently changed an element of their approach. As well as her own research into antislavery imagery and contemporary slave narratives (**reference 3**), she used that of Ashworth (**reference 2**) to suggest that antislavery organisations should support grassroots organisations that empower enslaved people to take and sustain their own freedom, rather than organisations that buy people out of slavery; and that of Newman (**reference 1**) to suggest that organisations should work to gather the narratives of contemporary slaves, publish them without what Newman terms the "straitjacket" of editorial interference and authenticating testimonials by sponsors, and make the slave narrative as central to contemporary abolitionism as it was to 19th-century antislavery efforts.

- Free the Slaves (the leading American antislavery NGO) applied the suggestions based on Trodd and Newman's research into slave narratives by launching a digital collection of testimonies (**source 2**).
- The Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives (FDFI) (a high-profile antislavery NGO run by Frederick Douglass' direct descendants) applied the advice based on Trodd's research into antislavery imagery in its contributions to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History's National Youth Summit on Abolition, held on February 11, 2013, and attended by 4200

high school students and teachers from the U.S., Kenya, Canada, Pakistan, Malta and Brazil onsite and online. The FDFI president, Kenneth B. Morris (Douglass' great-great-great-grandson) participated in the panel discussion and contributed material to the summit's Conversation Kit, a document circulated a week in advance of the event. Here he applied Trodd's suggestions, quoting her directly (**source 3, p.8**). Advice to The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (NURFC) (which is both a museum about the historic underground railroad and a contemporary antislavery organization based in Ohio), shaped its contributions to the same Summit, where it applied Trodd's warning about sensationalising depictions of slavery, quoting her directly (**source 3, p.9**).

- John Brown Lives (JBL) (a human rights organisation based in upstate New York) applied the suggestions based on Ashworth's research to organize a public event in New York City in April 2013 where Trodd discussed the potential value of the John Brown method (violent direct action) and slave rebellion (central to Emancipation, as Ashworth has argued), to today's antislavery efforts. In direct response to this event and the awareness it raised, New York City declared April 7—the day of the event—John Brown Day. A councilman proclaimed at the event itself: “whereas John Brown.... is a figure of particular importance in American history who spent his life fighting against the endemic injustice of slavery and.... whereas an important event in recognition of the efforts of Mr Brown is promoting knowledge through academic discourse and educated discussion; now, therefore, April 7 is John Brown Day” (**source 4**). Creating a John Brown Day in New York that highlights contemporary slavery and the antislavery strategy of armed resistance and slave rebellion has, according to the Executive Director of JBL, “engaged the communities of New York in the freedom history of their region, promoted social justice and human rights, and encouraged people to see who else is out there working on the question of human equality today” (**source 5**).

Initiating the establishment of Britain's first antislavery taskforce

Following a lecture and seminar on contemporary slavery (based on research in **reference 4**) that Trodd delivered in May 2013 to the Young Public Lawyers Group (an industry-wide London-based network that facilitates links between public lawyers and hosts events of interest to this sector), the group (with Trodd as Advisor) established Britain's first antislavery taskforce. The London-based taskforce is initially comprised of lawyers and NGO representatives, and will also include A&E doctors, police, social workers and local government officials. The task-force is training and planning for trafficking and slavery cases, addressing and resolving areas of potential overlap or conflict, and ensuring that open lines of communication exist. As shown in the U.S., where most major cities have such a group, local taskforces smooth the movement of survivors to appropriate service providers, increase the viability of prosecutions, and raise levels of public awareness and vigilance.

Helping teachers promote antislavery awareness among students

Trodd drew primary material from her research (**references 3-5**) to publish a collection of contemporary slave narratives online at the Antislavery Literature Project (ALP)—an educational non-profit that provides free access to the literature and history of the antislavery movement (**source 6**). The collection was accessed 536,796 times (as of July 2013), with 87,336 unique visits. A “Contemporary Slavery Teachers' Resource” and accompanying website produced by the International Slavery Museum with support from UNESCO used Trodd's narratives as the basis for case studies (**source 7**) and was accessed 17,552 times online by July 2013. The resource has been used by teachers to educate students aged 10 to 14 in England and Wales on contemporary slavery as part of their education in Citizenship. Trodd also adapted her research (**references 3-5**) for numerous public talks, including in Portland, New Haven and New York in March and April 2013; for a Youtube lecture posted on February 27, 2013 that had reached 9200 views and 142 comments by July 2013 (**source 8**); and for two different 2-day courses for 50 high-school teachers in Boston about contemporary slavery in March and July 2013. The teachers went on to adapt the course content for their own teaching (which reaches around 1200 students, with average class sizes at 25 students). The teachers shared their reflections on the course and also the lesson plans they had written and used as a result, demonstrating the impact on their teaching (**source 9**). For example, one teacher had asked her students to complete a project about the products they use that are connected to slave labour, then asked the students to write letters to

Impact case study (REF3b)

newspapers about contemporary slavery. Working with students rather than teachers, Trodd also adapted her research (**reference 5**) for a Widening Participation session about contemporary slavery offered to 30 high-achieving and low-income local Year 12s in the Nottingham area (March 2013) and successfully supported the pupils in developing new knowledge and understanding. Before the session, questioning of students revealed they knew nothing about the topic. In a follow-up survey a week later, all students were able to explain important facts and figures about today's slavery (**source 10**).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. European Parliament responses to Trodd's commissioned study (viewed 12/11/13), available from: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20130710-1520-COMMITTEE-DROI>
2. Example of an NGO using Trodd's research (viewed 12/11/13), available from: www.freetheslaves.net/SSLPage.aspx?pid=386.
3. Example of NGOs using Trodd's research (viewed 12/11/13), available from: http://amhistory.si.edu/docs/NYS_Abolition_Conversation_Kit.pdf.
4. The Official Proclamation of John Brown Day in New York (available on file).
5. The Executive Director of John Brown Lives (contact details on file).
6. Link to Trodd's collection of contemporary slave narratives (viewed 12/11/13), available from: <http://antislavery.eserver.org/narratives/contemporary-slave-narratives/>.
7. Teaching resource that features Trodd's collected narratives (viewed 12/11/13), available from: www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/learning/slavery-today/contemporary-slavery-teachers-resource.pdf.
8. Link to Trodd's YouTube talk (viewed 12/11/13), available from: www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSsfw-KkNug.
9. Sample teacher lesson plans and reflections (available on file).
10. Surveys with Widening Participation Students (available on file).