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Editorial

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Editorial

Myriam Cottias and Céline Flory

- 1 The journal *Esclavages & Post-esclavages / Slaveries & Post-Slaveries* offers a platform for scientific studies that, for fifteen years, have been reinvigorating the field of research on slaveries and post-slaveries. One of their contributions has been to think of systems of slavery not as an all-encompassing totality called ‘slavery’ but as structures that came into place and developed as a function of economic, political and social conditions, beliefs (religious or otherwise), and representations, situated in time and space, in history and in political geography. ‘Slaveries’ in the plural, then, makes it possible to reflect on the differences in the exercise of domination, possession and violence, but also the similarities; the term also makes it possible to think of ‘situations of slavery’ – as George Balandier defined the ‘colonial situation’ – according to relations of power between groups of people (often racialized) and according to gender relations, according to resistance and revolts, negotiations and accommodations. This term also enables the long view, which is essential to see the shifts in forms of work, meaning and content, as well as the localized event. It makes it possible to define a heuristic position that recognizes the divergence of systems, which questions the echoes and the translations that exist between them, and which envisages their connections, between Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific.
- 2 *Esclavages & Post-esclavages / Slaveries & Post-Slaveries* is open to the present, to the consequences of slaveries and abolitions, and to the contemporary slaveries that continue. In Europe, the abolition of slavery has long been considered a sea-change, a radical break for enslaved people, the *enslaved*, from servitude to freedom, and an effacement of their experiences of subjugation; it was utopian to make such an assertion. The notion of ‘post-slavery’ enables analysis of the instances of permanence, the transformations, and the ruptures of forms of servitude, and the continuities and evolutions of the social structures that are derived from them (racial inequalities, logic of identification, etc.), whether they are concrete, symbolic or discursive. It enables analysis, for example, of the way in which the past is grasped in contemporary times through the notion of ‘memory’. The questioning of the nature of the link between slave and post-slave societies, ancient and contemporary worlds, is indicated in the title of the journal by the ‘~’ sign, borrowed from mathematical language and signifying

probability, imprecision; it leads us to reflect on slavery's links of continuity and discontinuity beyond its formal abolition. It expresses all the questions that will be addressed in the journal.

- 3 The journal is resolutely multidisciplinary, ranging from, in particular, history to geography, to philosophy, economics and anthropology, sociology, philosophy, aesthetics and the contemporary arts. It is also envisaged as an open space for writers, painters, visual artists and musicians. Its aim is to create a forum for an open science, a place for the transmission of knowledge, dialogues and exchanges between university researchers and non-academic audiences based on the complementarity between different resources – text, image, video, audio – intended to shine a diverse but convergent light on the theme of each issue.
- 4 Open to all, with content in French, English, Spanish and Portuguese, the journal is published in open access.

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