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## Runaways and strays: Rethinking (non-)human agency in Caribbean slave societies

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### Introduction

In the newspapers of Britain's Caribbean colonies from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, tiny figures can be seen fleeing across the pages. These fugitives in print accompany 'runaway' notices about such individuals as a 'Young Negro Man named FREDRICK, belonging to Mrs. *Jane Byrne*', a 'Negro Man name BUTE. He is stout and well made' and a 'negro Wench named HETTY. She is stout, has full breasts, and is supposed to be at the Ridge or on board some of the ships at English Harbour' (**Figure 1**).<sup>1</sup> Rewards for the apprehension of these runaways were offered, as well as warnings against employing them without the owner's note of permission: one cannot expect to use another's property without financial or legal consequences. Elsewhere, similar notices bring attention to other forms of property no longer in their owners' possession. Announcements of 'strays', some accompanied by miniature equine or bovine fugitives, describe a 'DARK BAY HORSE, about 13 hands high, marked on the near buttock' and a 'Brown Cow, horns sawed' (**Figure 2**).<sup>2</sup> Clearly, runaways and strays often went missing – but they were also found. Colonial gazettes carried notices of those 'taken up' and held in workhouses and pounds side-by-side, waiting for their owners to reclaim them. Failure to do so would result in the forfeiture of the property and their sale by public auction.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, *Antigua Journal*, 4 December 1798; 3 and 24 September 1799.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega* (Jamaica), 31 January 1782; *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), supplement, 5-12 October 1822.

*R U N—A W A Y for eight Months past.*

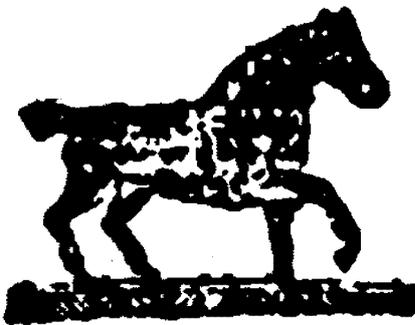


**A** Young Negro Man named **FREDRICK**, belonging to *Mrs. Jane Byrne*;—He has large red Eyes, works on board of Vessels, and on the Parade as a Porter. —Whoever employs him after this date without a *Note*, will make themselves liable for the Hire allowed for a Run-away.

*3d September, 1799.*

Figure 1: Detail from *Antigua Journal*, 3 September 1799, p. 1.

**Spanish Town, Jan. 9, 1782.**



**STRAYED** from the **GOVERNMENT PENN**, about three months ago,  
**A DARK BAY HORSE**, about 13 hands high, marked on the near buttock **P. E. S** on top. Who- ever will bring him to **CHRISTIAN DYEMAN** shall receive **FIVE POUNDS** reward. 142

Figure 2: Detail from *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega* (Jamaica), 31 January 1782, p. 3.

The notices of runways and strays – much like advertisements in the colonial Caribbean for the sale of enslaved men, women and children, horses, mules and cattle – bear troubling similarities. For example, the official Jamaican *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega* from

November 1782 carried notice of a missing runaway, Thomas Leishman, whose left shoulder was branded with the letters ‘AW’, alongside one for a grey mare whose buttock was marked ‘ID’.<sup>3</sup> As well as the common practice of branding, both runaways and strays also carried distinguishing features that bore witness to injury and punishment: ‘William, a Coromantee’ had a ‘small slit on left ear’, while a ‘Mouse-coloured He Ass’ had ‘two slits in each ear’. There was also evidence of distant origins. ‘Spanish marks’ upon donkeys (asses) and mules usually meant that they had been imported from Cuba, while ‘country marks’ on the humans indicated various West African origins.

Of course, signs of scarification and tooth-filing also point to differences between runaways and strays: humans deliberately marked and altered their own bodies and those of others in culturally significant ways that non-human animals did not. Likewise, the human runaways could explain whose property they were – or be forced to do so – and they could also dissemble. For instance, the *St. George’s Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* gave notice of a runaway who ‘pretends to be free, and calls himself Antoine’.<sup>4</sup> Yet, such differences should not lead us to overlook the similarities between runaways and strays. These go beyond formal parallels in how they were represented in colonial newspapers, and point to the centrality of the exercise of dominion and mastery in the Caribbean, based on hierarchical and exploitative property relations. Nor should we overlook the entangled nature of the lives of humans and non-human animals in colonial slave societies. To give just one example from these printed notices: ‘strayed’ animals were sometimes seized from runways, having (unwittingly?) aided in their flight.<sup>5</sup>

Focusing on the colonial Caribbean, this chapter offers an initial exploration of the *captive human-animal nexus* of which these newspaper notices are one source of evidence.<sup>6</sup> Rather than offer a detailed empirical discussion of the entangled nature of humans and non-human animals in the region’s slave societies, my intention is to suggest some possible areas for research. More importantly, the chapter surveys some of the key conceptual and theoretical debates of relevance to this area. In particular, I consider the notion of ‘agency’ that has dominated work on slavery alongside recent elaborations of this concept within the

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<sup>3</sup> *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega* (Jamaica), 21 November 1782, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *St. George’s Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, 8 June 1798, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), 3 August 1816, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> For an example of other work in this direction, see S. Seymour, Mules and ‘improvement’: Refashioning animals and Caribbean slave plantations. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), London, 2 September 2011; D. Lambert (2015) Master-horse-slave: Mobility, race and power in the British West Indies, c.1780–1838. *Slavery & Abolition*, 36, 618–641.

field of animal studies. Despite the vitality of the latter field (e.g. Skabelund, 2013; Few and Tortorici, 2013; Kalof, 2014; Roy and Sivasundaram, 2015), there has been little engagement with more-than-human approaches among scholars of slavery in the Americas, including the Caribbean. Indeed, this chapter seeks to encourage scholars within the field of animal studies to examine societies where human slavery existed and to urge historians of slavery to engage with the animal turn. While this chapter's focus is on the particular historical-geographical context of Britain's Caribbean colonies in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – that is by the time 'mature' plantation societies had developed – it also ranges beyond to consider, and draw on, work on slavery in the Americas more broadly.

### **Slavery and domestication**

Drawing attention to the parallels between the status of enslaved humans and domesticated animals in the context of both Ancient and New World slavery is not new. More than twenty years ago, Karl Jacoby noted that 'it appears that something about slavery as an institution frequently led to a blurring of the line that has traditionally separated human beings from domestic animals' (1994, p. 90). While we might question Jacoby's reference to tradition – what traditions? when? where? – his observation pertains to both the practices and discourses of slavery.

Many of the practices associated with the domestication of animals, such as whipping, chaining, branding and castration, have also been applied to humans as part of their enslavement. In both cases, the purpose was to enforce the master's control. Indeed, Jacoby argues that 'since *homo sapiens* is a social animal, like nearly every other creature successfully domesticated by humans, one can interpret slavery as little more than the extension of domestication to humans' (1994, 92). Likewise, the philosopher Steven Best does not hesitate to label domestication as 'slavery':

The 'domestication' of animals is a euphemism for a regime of exploitation, herding, confinement, castration, forced breeding, coerced labor, hobbling, branding, ear cropping, and killing. To conquer, enslave, and claim animals as their own property, to exploit them for food, clothing, labor, transportation, and warfare, herders developed broad techniques of confinement and control, such as pens, cages, collars, chains, shackles, whips, prods, and branding irons (Best, 2014, p. 7).

In order to elaborate conceptually the notion that slavery is ‘little more than the extension of domestication to humans’, Jacoby draws on sociologist Orlando Patterson’s characterisation of slavery as ‘social death’ or death deferred. Famously, Patterson defined slavery as ‘*the permanent, violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonoured persons*’ (Patterson, 2000, p. 39; emphasis in original). That both enslaved human and domesticated non-human animals are subject to ‘violent domination’ is obvious: these are precisely the techniques of control and coercion described by Jacoby and Best, and evident in the notices of runaways and strays. But Patterson’s other elements are to be found in both systems too. Examples of ‘natal alienation’ – of the forced separation and the breaking of ties of kinship and community – include the removal of offspring from their mothers and forced transportation from the place of birth (Spiegel, 1996, pp 45-58). Human beings imposition of themselves in the place of the parents of infant social animals was, of course, a key aspect of domestication.

The third element of slavery involves dishonouring, what Patterson describes as the ‘socio-psychological’ aspects of the institution. It involved the rendering of the enslaved person as worthless and without social status (Patterson, 2000, p. 37). While it may be harder to see the applicability of this to animal domestication, except perhaps in the general sense that the keeping of animals is a denial of their dignity and autonomy, the notion does encourage consideration of the more symbolic forms of denigration that characterised the captive human-animal nexus. In ideological terms, Jacoby suggests that if slavery was an institution through which human beings were treated like domestic animals, how could this be justified given that humans and livestock were not the same? The ‘easiest solution’ for those that sought to justify human slavery, according to Jacoby, was to ‘invent a lesser category of humans that supposedly differed little from brute beasts’. He postulates that this may have begun as an ‘unconscious’ distinction that arose from the likelihood that societies enslaved the members of ‘a different linguistic group’. He goes on,

As the ability to communicate through speech is one of the most commonly made distinctions between humans and animals, the captives’ lack of intelligible speech – which implied in turn a lack of rationality – most likely made them appear less than fully human. From there it was a small step to treating foreign captives like the animals they apparently resembled (Jacoby, 1994, p. 94).

From this perspective, the practice of human dominion over animals became the basis for intra-human oppression, something that would eventually be codified in the hierarchies of 'race'. In the context of Caribbean slavery, this bestialisation was also manifest in such ways as the application of discourses and practices of 'breeding' to enslaved humans and domesticated animals alike, as well as the etymological origins of 'mulatto', referring to a person of mixed African and European parentage, which was supposedly derived from the Spanish and Portuguese words for mule (Ritvo, 1987).

The rendering of enslaved humans as akin to domestic animals is a discursive move that I have characterised elsewhere as 'mastery'. In turn, it comprised two sub-elements: 'dominion' and 'paternalism'. Dominion emphasised the master's 'natural' and biblically-sanctioned right to own and control beasts and those deemed 'sub-human'. It was articulated through denigration, and whipping and branding were central to the expression of control over living property. Paternalism emphasised the master's care for captive human and non-human alike. This translated into self-justifying ideas that human slavery was a 'civilising' institution that 'rescued' enslaved people from a worse fate (in Africa) or that domesticated animals could not survive without human care. If dominion was manifest in slavery in its most brutal forms, then paternalism would come more to the fore in the development of pro-natalist and ameliorative policies, which emerged in some parts of the British Caribbean from the late eighteenth century, that were intended to reduce the reliance on the trans-Atlantic slave trade by increasing the birth-rate among enslaved people (Lambert, 2015).

Of course, ideological questions could cut both ways and the emergence of animal welfarism in the nineteenth century was closely tied to abolitionist movements. As Reinaldo Funes Monzote notes, '[t]he fact that among the supporters of such societies in England and the United States one could find many abolitionists, also fighting to eliminate slavery and the slave trade, can be seen as part of the very same (and not entirely unproblematic) process of expanding civil rights to historically marginalized groups' (Monzote, 2013, p. 222; see also Tague, 2010). More recently, the terms of this relationship between human and non-human animal have been reversed by the 'new abolitionism' (Best, 2014, pp 21-49).

Jacoby postulated that the connections between human enslavement and the domestication of non-human animals could be explained by a 'deeper connection' associated with the development of agriculture (Jacoby, 1994, p. 94). Other scholars, however, have sought to stress the differences between captive human and non-human labour. For example,

David Brion Davis has pointed out that within human slavery the roles are – potentially – reversible: the enslaved can replace and dominate the enslaver (Davis, 2000, p. 30, footnote 10). More importantly, as Jacoby himself noted, enslaved human populations have not undergone the evolutionary transformation of neoteny, whereby juvenile traits, including passivity, have become more common among domesticated animals. Despite the longevity of particular systems of human slavery, domesticated animals have been controlled and bred for much greater periods of time – though, as noted, this has not prevented supporters of human slavery from making claims about some population groups being ‘natural slaves’ (Jacoby, 1994). Overall, those scholars who connect the institutions of human and non-human animal slavery do not deny the differences, but rather insist that these are less significant than their similarities (Best, 2014, p. 32).

Jacoby’s articulation of the connections between the captivity of humans and non-human animals is helpful but can be greatly elaborated. Mainly because of his interest in origins, much of his discussion is concerned with the pre-historic. Yet, neither domestication nor enslavement were one-off activities, nor did they remain unchanged over time. Moreover, the similarities and differences between them become particularly clear and of interest to the historian when they coincide in the same social contexts, such as the European colonies established in the Caribbean prior to human emancipation. Indeed, there is great potential for the study of the captive human-animal nexus focusing on this particular historical geography. In this context, we can address a variety of questions. For example, how did notions of ‘stock’ and practices of breeding change? Or on-going efforts to ‘break’ and ‘season’ the servile labour force? How did the emergence of a culture of ‘improvement’ among British metropolitan landowners in the eighteenth century affect Britain’s Caribbean colonies, including the treatment of captive human and non-human animals?<sup>7</sup> Was there any reverse traffic in ideas or practices? How did mechanisation and industrialisation affect the captive human-animal nexus? After all, Caribbean plantations were ‘factories in the field’, agro-industrial enterprises that embodied a ‘modernity that predated the modern’ (Mintz, 1985; Scott, 2004). If the enslaved human labour of the plantations can be seen as anticipating the disciplined, routinized labour that characterised factory work, how did this

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<sup>7</sup> The controversy surrounding the proposals for the introduction of the plough is instructive here. For an initial discussion of ‘improvement’ in the Caribbean context, albeit one that did not integrate non-human animals, see Lambert, D. (2005). *White creole culture, politics and identity during the age of abolition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.41-72.

impact on animal labour and ideas about the work that animals performed?<sup>8</sup> What ideas about the status or symbolic role of animals were brought from Africa and what impact did they have?

In sum, the connections between human and non-human animal slavery that Jacoby observed suggest the value of an approach to the Caribbean colonies that addresses their more-than-human history, something that could undertaken through recourse to the perspectives drawn from animal studies. Yet historians of slave societies in the Caribbean and elsewhere have been slow to embrace the ‘animal turn’. Why might this be?

### **The ‘dreaded comparison’**

Animals are not wholly absent from the histories of Caribbean slave societies, but they have tended to feature as elements within local economies (e.g. Shepherd, 2009; Morgan, 1995). Meanwhile, environmental histories, which might be expected to consider relations between humans and non-human animals, are relatively underdeveloped in the Caribbean context and the focus has mainly been on plants (particularly cash crops), hazards and ecological ‘contexts’ (e.g. Schwartz, 2015; Morgan, 2015; McNeill, 2010; Richardson, 2004; Watts, 1987). This is not only because the available sources marginalise non-humans – an issue that historians of slavery are actually well-placed to address, as I will discuss below. Rather, a major reason why scholars have been unwilling to embrace work on animals has stemmed from the dehumanising nature of slavery itself. As Lucile Desblache puts it, ‘because enslaved black Caribbeans were treated like beasts and were considered as “not quite” human, there emerged a desire to establish strong boundaries between human and non-human animals’ (Desblache, 2012, p. 125). Unsurprisingly, this has militated against the adoption of more-than-human perspectives. If the animal turn has been controversial in other contexts, then it is particularly so in (former) slave societies. Even to mention animals in the same breath as human slavery could be seen as disrespectful, offensive or simply irrelevant.

If an understandable effort to inscribe a strong boundary between human and non-human goes some way to account for the general lack of an animal turn in studies of Caribbean slavery, then a more specific explanation relates to the foregrounding of a particular notion of ‘agency’ with slavery studies. In a highly-influential article, Walter Johnson identified ‘agency’ as the ‘master trope of the New Social History’ that emerged from the 1960s and which remains very influential in the historiography of the Caribbean.

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<sup>8</sup> See Clutton-Brock, J. (1992). *Horse power: A history of the horse and the donkey in human societies*. London: Natural History Museum Publications.

Tasking historians with the recovery of histories from below, this imperative has also characterised studies of slavery. A specific manifestation of this within work on slavery in the Americas was the backlash against the work of the American historian, Stanley Elkins, specifically his *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*. Based on what then was new research on the psychological consequences for the inmates of life in Nazi death camps, Elkins drew analogies to the ‘total’ systems of slavery in North America to argue that antebellum slavery fostered the development of an infantilized, dependent personality type among the enslaved population that he termed the ‘Sambo’ type (1959).<sup>9</sup>

Reacting against Elkins and reflective of the influence of the New Social History, as well as what Richard King terms the ‘transformation in black consciousness and a revival of interest in black history’ in the 1960s more broadly, the task of the historian of slavery came to be seen as an effort to ‘give the slaves back their agency’ (2001). The most common way such arguments have been framed has been in terms of demonstrating or discovering the ‘humanity’ of enslaved people or giving them ‘voice’. Yet, there are problems with this, not least the conflation of notions of agency, humanity and resistance in ways that tend to abstract and over-simplify the lived historical experiences of enslaved people. For example, Johnson points out that agency must surely include not only acts of resistance, but also of collaboration and collusion – as well as simple survival (2003, pp 113, 114). This stress on recovering humanity/agency within slavery studies has also had a chilling effect on conceptual innovations that call into question hegemonic and common-sense notions of humanity (Boster, 2013, p. 5), of which the post- or more-than-human approaches that characterise the animal turn are exemplary. In the context of deeply-embedded ideas about the purpose of histories of slavery, a focus on non-humans may appear to be a distraction at best, and, at worst, an abandonment of a historical project that ought to be centred on recovering the humanity of the enslaved, itself seen as an extension of the fight against oppression and injustice.

### **Speciesism – the master’s trope?**

There are clear reasons why scholars of (Caribbean) slavery may have been reluctant to embrace the animal turn. Yet, those who have made the ‘dreaded comparison’ between the enslavement of humans and non-human animals have responded strongly to what they see as a misplaced effort to defend the boundary between human and non-human. Marjorie Spiegel

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion, see Nuruddin, Y. (2003). The Sambo thesis revisited: Slavery’s impact upon the African American personality. *Socialism and Democracy*, 17, 291-338.

is clear that '[c]omparing the suffering of animals to that of blacks (or any other oppressed group) is offensive only to the speciesist', by which she means 'one who has embraced the false notion of what animals are like' (1996, p. 30; see also Whatmore, 2002, p. 32). In an echo of Audre Lorde's insistence that '*the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*' (1984), Spiegel portrays speciesism as part of the 'biased worldview presented by the masters'. She goes on,

To deny our similarities to animals is to deny and undermine our own power. It is to continue actively struggling to prove to our masters, past or present, that we are *similar to those who have abused us*, rather than to our fellow victims, those whom our masters have also victimized (Spiegel, 1996, 30).

Best puts it more bluntly, insisting that those who are 'offended by efforts to make legitimate claims and analogies' between the oppressive experience of humans and non-human animals fail to 'accept that all beings have rights', particularly 'the right to be free from slavery, torture, and violent murder, and free to live an autonomous, pleasurable, peaceful existence'. To reject such analogies, when made in 'historically informed, factually accurate, and culturally sensitive ways' by insisting on the unique nature of human slavery, is 'blatantly speciesist' (Best, 2014, p. 32). These are strong sentiments and challenging ideas, and I do not have the scope to elaborate further here. However, if we accept that the effort to establish strong boundaries between the human and non-human in the context of the history of slavery problematic (though perhaps understandable), then there is both a need and an opportunity to rethink the agency of subordinated figures in the Caribbean. Indeed, it is clear from Johnson's discussion of how the typical formulation of agency serves to conflate self-directed action, humanity and resistance that the field would greatly benefit from a more nuanced approach – as have been developed in the field of animal studies.

In a review, Chris Pearson identifies four approaches to the question of animal agency. The first is a straightforward denial that non-human animals have agency because they lack an ability to think or rationalise, and have no free will. This idea of a divide between human and animal (and nature and culture) is not universal but rather emerged in the West, with scholars variously tracing its origins to Aristotle, early Christian thought or the Renaissance. It is the basis of speciesist thought. A second approach sidesteps the question of intentionality as a requirement for agency, and instead views animals as 'history-shaping agents' (2014, p. 244). While perhaps most closely associated with Actor-Network Theory,

this approach also characterises approaches in environmental history that acknowledge how non-humans shape history (Latour, 2005). For example, John McNeill's *Mosquito Empire* offers 'an appreciation of ecological contexts and concurrent environmental trends'. He argues that the ecological changes brought about by the development of the Greater Caribbean plantation system created enhanced breeding and feeding conditions for mosquito species that transmitted yellow fever and malaria, 'helping them become key actors in the geopolitical struggles of the early modern Atlantic world, if not, strictly speaking, *dramatis personae*' (McNeill, 2010, p. 3; see also Greene, 2008, p. 8). Though McNeill does not draw on Actor-Network Theory, the distinction he makes between 'actors' and '*dramatis personae*' is precisely a model of animal agency that 'decouples agency and intentionality'. Yet, Pearson argues that this obscures a third model of non-human agency wherein 'animals can be agents when they act in purposeful and capable ways' (2014, pp 244, 247). While some argue that nonhumans cannot be agents because they lack the capacity to reason, calculate and plan, not only does this serve to conflate agency and intentionality, and prioritise linguistically-based thought, it is also based on assumptions that behavioural research on humans and non-human animals makes increasingly questionable: 'While humans are starting to look less intentional and rational, animals are starting to look more so' (Pearson, 2014, p. 248).

A final perspective takes things further, understanding animal agency as 'resistance', an approach is often inspired by the New Social History, Michel de Certeau's analysis of everyday practice and James C. Scott's 'weapons of the weak' (Pearson, 2014, p. 250; Scott, 1985; de Certeau, 1984). Pearson sees it as problematic to label nonhuman agency in this way because '[i]t risks projecting human motivations onto animals, thereby humanizing them'. Instead he prefers to use more neutral terms to describe how animals served to 'thwart' or 'block' projects and schemes (2014, p. 251; see also Gillespie, 2016, pp 122-27). My own inclination is to agree with Pearson and I think it makes better sense to use resistance to describe what some enslaved humans sometimes did in particular historical and geographical contexts – while also recognising that not what all they did was 'resistance'. This is not speciesism, but rather an attempt to maintain some terminological specificity. Indeed, I think that the second model of animal agency that he presents – animals as having history-shaping capacities – offers a useful starting-point which, evidence permitting, might be elaborated to consider the *purposeful* capacities of animals (Pearson's third model).

This, of course, raises issues about sources and methods. For historical scholars who tend to rely on the analysis of written or visual sources in order to assess motives or

emotions, the fact that animals do not leave such evidence may seem to be an insurmountable problem. At the same time, some of the proponents of the animal turn argue that ‘a creative reading of primary sources, combined with insights drawn from ethology and other animal sciences’ can provide insight into animals’ experience, subjectivity, consciousness, and motivation’ (Pearson, 2014, p. 249; see Swart, 2010, pp. 194-220). Importantly for my argument here, is that critical and creative approaches have also been vital for the study of slave societies because the sources left to historians are almost entirely those written by owners, managers, officials and, for later period in the British Caribbean, missionaries. In other words, working with an archive that has been shaped by captivity is a methodological challenge that historians of slavery are well suited to tackle. We are used to reading between the lines of planters’ journals and letters, analysing laws and regulations for evidence of official fears, reading travellers’ accounts against the grain and reconstructing everyday life under slavery through estate records. Many of the same approaches may serve to reveal the presence, effects and even purpose of animals. Likewise, such diverse and familiar sources as slave narratives, contemporary paintings and the remnants of material culture attest to the ubiquity of animals in the Caribbean landscape and the closeness of enslaved human-animal relations. Maps and surveys can be used to reconstruct the micro-historical geographies of human-animal entanglements.<sup>10</sup> In short, there are not merely *parallels* between the social status and position of enslaved humans and domesticated animals in Caribbean slave societies, rather their co-presence serves to dramatize analogous methodological questions about exploring the historical experience and agency of the dehumanised and radically marginalised. If conducted in a spirit of interdisciplinarity, the opportunities to learn from and experiment with methods across the fields of animal studies and slavery studies are considerable.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, the opportunities for rethinking the agency of subordinated figures in Caribbean slave societies go beyond the novel methods that might be suggested: there is also the issue of the substantive entanglements of domesticated animals and enslaved humans.

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<sup>10</sup> See Seymour, Mules and ‘improvement’.

<sup>11</sup> On the challenges of studying agency in multidisciplinary contexts, see S. Alpern (2012) ‘Did enslaved Africans spark South Carolina’s eighteenth-century rice boom?’ In R. Voeks and J. Rashford (Eds.) *African ethnobotany in the Americas* (pp.35-66). New York: Springer. This was in response to D. Eltis, P.D. Morgan, and D. Richardson (2007) ‘Agency and diaspora in Atlantic history: Reassessing the African contribution to rice cultivation in the Americas,’ *American Historical Review* 112, 1329-1358, itself a criticism of the ‘black rice’ hypothesis. See J.A. Carney (2001). *Black rice: The African origins of rice cultivation in the Americas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Just as I elaborated Jacoby's general argument to suggest some of the other discursive connections between domesticated animals and enslaved humans that deserve exploration, attention is also needed to the relationships *between* enslaved humans and captive animals in specific historical-geographical contexts. For example, unfree human and non-human animals laboured together at the heart of the Caribbean plantation system. Cattle provided power to drive the machinery of sugarcane processing and manure to fertilize the fields. Donkeys (asses) and mules worked to transport cut cane from field to mill, and hogsheads from estate to waterfront. Such animals had to be driven and directed, as well as fed and watered, tasks that were allotted to particular enslaved workers. They also needed to be guarded to prevent them from doing damage to crops, straying from the estate or being stolen. Certain animals also worked to maintain human enslavement: horses – elite non-human animals in Caribbean societies – helped the masters to intimidate enslaved humans and capture runaways (Lambert, 2015). Dogs too were 'agents of control' used to terrorize and track maroons and rebels, with bloodhounds specially bred in Cuba for this purpose (Desblache, 2012, p. 125; see also Franklin and Schweninger, 1999, pp 160-164). Yet, nonhuman animals might also act as means of escape from slavery – a mounted runaway might get further away, albeit also attract great suspicion if spotted. More humbly, but probably of greater significance in the long-term, were the small livestock that some enslaved people were able to keep, such as chickens, pigs or goats. Often raised so that they for sale or their produce could be sold in Sunday markets, the money earned might ultimately contribute to manumission by self-purchase or the purchase of a family member (e.g. Pinckard, 1806, vol. 1, pp 368-70; see also Higman, 1984, p. 207). Nor were human-animal relations merely functional. They may also reveal care for another being and skills acquired in husbandry, handling and riding. Of course, not all relations were ones of care: animals might be injured in acts of violence by enslaved people, perhaps borne of frustration or as part of more calculated forms of 'industrial sabotage'. Animals too might bite, throw, gore or trample such that the injured bodies of humans and non-human animals alike serve as records for the violent proximities of Caribbean slave societies.

## **Conclusions**

In Jamaica in the autumn of 1816, Swain Lungren placed a notice in the *Royal Gazette* that two enslaved brothers, Charles and Swain – presumably named after his master but known as 'Monkey' – had run away from his Smithfield estate in St. George's parish in the east of the island. Accompanying them was their elderly mother, Nancy – a name perhaps evoking the

African folkloric spider-trickster, Anansi? – and a stolen mule. It was believed that the party had taken refuge at an animal pen, where they had ‘relations’ (presumably human – but perhaps equine too?)<sup>12</sup> This vignette serves to dramatize a series of points about Caribbean slave societies that I have sought to make in this chapter, including the entanglement of human and non-human worlds; the bestialisation of enslaved humans; and how humans and non-human animals collaborated in the making – and even un-making – of slave societies. Such vignettes provide glimpses of the Caribbean’s captive human-animal nexus.

If the understandable but, ultimately, speciesist framing of human exceptionalism and agency within (Caribbean) slavery studies can be overcome, the opportunities for re-writing the histories of these societies are profound. We should start by simply recognising and describing the ubiquitous presence of domesticated animals in Caribbean slave societies. From here, it is a matter of appreciating and elaborating the entanglements of human slavery and animal domestication, be that in terms of laws, regulations and discourses, as well as specific forms of relations that were collaborative and confrontational, caring and cruel. Furthermore, it is not simply that the non-human animals found in Caribbean slave societies – and their entanglements with humans – deserve greater attention, but that the theoretical and conceptual developments that have occurred under the sign of animal studies have much to offer to research on slavery – and vice-versa. With speciesism set aside, the opportunities for conceptual and methodological sharing and cross-fertilisation are considerable. Agency, in particular, is recast not only as a property of humans, but something that non-human animals could also have, sometimes working with or against humans to maintain or undermine slavery. All this will contribute to a more-than-human history of the Caribbean that does not downplay slavery but recognises its ubiquity for those beings that laboured.

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<sup>12</sup> *Royal Gazette* (Kingston, Jamaica), 14 September 1816, p.20.

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