**Travel, slavery, memory: thanatourism in the French Atlantic**

‘Travel’ is not a word that can be easily evoked to talk about the Middle Passage, the Trail of Tears, the landing of the Chinese immigrants at Ellis Island, the forced relocation of Japanese Americans, or the plight of the homeless. Theorizing diverse journeying is crucial to our understanding of any politics of location.

bell hooks[[1]](#endnote-1)

One of the sinister and poignant features of slavery is that it is a phantom industry that leaves scant traces; its capital lies in people, long since dead, not machinery.

A.V. Seaton[[2]](#endnote-2)

In one of the inaugural studies of thanatourism and slave heritage, Tony Seaton and Graham Dann claim that there are suggestive overlaps between, on the one hand, Atlantic slavery and its afterlives, and, on the other, contemporary tourism, not least because each of these phenomena may be seen to perpetuate asymmetries of power and the persistent domination of one group by another.[[3]](#endnote-3) This is a connection evoked elsewhere, notably by Derek Walcott in his recent collection of poems, *White Egrets* (2010), where he includes an elegy to a beach that will, he fears, soon be altered irremediably by the construction of a new hotel. He compares this development to earlier, more openly violent, forms of expropriation and exploitation:

… I watched the doomed acres

where yet another luxury hotel will be built

with ordinary people fenced out. The new makers

of our history profit without guilt

and are, in fact, prophets of a policy

that will make the island a mall, and the breakers

grin like waiters, like taxi drivers, these new plantations

by the sea; a slavery without chains, with no blood spilt –

just chain-link fences and signs, the new degradations.[[4]](#endnote-4)

As Alasdair Pettinger has noted in his discussion of this text, Walcott was not the first to offer this analogy in the contemporary Caribbean.[[5]](#endnote-5) In *Paradise and Plantation*, Ian Strachan has also suggested that Caribbean hotels may be analysed as an integral element of post-emancipation societies, ‘part of the plantation’s time-tested process of wealth extraction’; he presents tourism more generally as an essential aspect of the legacies of the economic systems by which Atlantic slavery functioned – as ‘the firstborn of the plantation in terms of the social dynamics it authors’, and as a means of perpetuating the social superiority of the white population and engendering subordination and servility amongst the formerly enslaved.[[6]](#endnote-6) Dany Laferrière, in *La Chair du maître* [The Master’s Flesh] (1997) – the collection of short stories turned into a popular film, *Vers le sud* [*Heading South*], directed by Laurent Cantet – pushes this connection further through his exploration of the power dynamics and residual historical resonances of sex tourism in ‘Baby Doc’ Duvalier’s Haiti.[[7]](#endnote-7) These transhistorical resonances provide a clear context for the set of concerns underpinning this article, especially (in relation to) the links between dark tourism and slavery. Yet the main intention here is instead to sketch out and reflect on the ways in which the intersection of slavery and contemporary travelling, evident in the observation of bell hooks, illuminates a number of fields of enquiry. Most notably these include: the cultures of travel and tourism; the connections of museum and monuments; the links between travel, mobility and memory; the relationship between travel and ethics; and the importance of sites on which competing and even contradictory memories meet in configurations that I have designated elsewhere as ‘contrapuntal’.[[8]](#endnote-8)

The article is situated in relation to recent work in the field of dark tourism: the study of acts of travel to sites related in various ways to what Philip Stone has described as ‘death, suffering and the seemingly macabre’.[[9]](#endnote-9) Alternative labels for such work exist: ‘morbid tourism’, ‘Black Spot tourism’, ‘grief tourism’, or the alliterative ‘milking the macabre’. Whatever the term adopted (and each of these has different emphases and overtones, explored in the literature the field has rapidly produced), the essential yoking of a term such as ‘dark’ or ‘grief’ with ‘tourism’ has an oxymoronic force – relaxation, escape and pleasure are associated, antithetically, with a fascination for suffering and dying. Increasing scholarship has been devoted to this area, developing an academic literature that remains, as Stone comments, ‘eclectic and theoretically fragile’.[[10]](#endnote-10) Recent work has nevertheless explored the different locations and events that trigger such journeys, and has also analysed motivations, with these ranging from curiosity, voyeurism, and *Schadenfreude* relating to places with an inherent morbid interest, to more complex reasons associated with mourning, pilgrimage, and the construction of personal and collective memory. Equally, as scholars have suggested in their analyses of World War I battlefield tours (and as is also, if not more acutely, the case for slavery-related tourism), interaction with sites varies considerably according to individual engagement. Ethical issues have also been brought to the fore, and particular attention has recently been directed to what Richard Sharpley describes as ‘the rights of those whose death is commoditised or commercialised’.[[11]](#endnote-11) The practice of dark tourism is certainly not a new one, and may be traced back to Victorian cemetery and churchyard tours, trips to witness public executions, as well as to what Tony Seaton sees as an earlier ‘thanatoptic tradition’ (centred on a contemplation of death) stretching back to the medieval period.[[12]](#endnote-12) As Stone and Sharpley summarize: ‘for as long as people have been able to travel, they have been drawn – purposefully or otherwise – towards sites, attractions or events that are linked in one way or another with death, suffering, violence or disaster’.[[13]](#endnote-13) Recent studies suggest, however, that contemporary tourists are increasingly travelling to such locations in distinctively new ways, partly as a result of a desire for more ‘extreme pursuits’ (to borrow Graham Huggan’s term), but also because such journeys are associated with explorations of the nature of modernity, challenging what Sharpley calls its ‘inherent order, rationality and progress’.[[14]](#endnote-14)

In one of the founding texts of dark tourism as a field of enquiry, Graham Dann proposed in 1998 an alliterative taxonomy of dark tourist practices, outlining ‘perilous places’ (dangerous destinations from the past and present), ‘houses of horror’ (buildings associated with death), ‘fields of fatality’ (areas in which deaths occurred and are commemorated), ‘tours of torment’ (visits to attractions associated with suffering), and ‘themed thanatos’ (collections and museums).[[15]](#endnote-15) The list is informative, not least because it reflects early taxonomic tendencies in the field to catalogue, but also because it groups together very different phenomena in ways that risk eroding singularity (and may even be seen to lead to ludic trivialization). Such categories nevertheless provide a clear pathway to consideration of the sites and practices related to slave heritage tourism. They reflect the range of locations – historical and contemporary, directly and indirectly linked to Atlantic slavery – with which it is associated. In addition, they reveal the ways in which any clear distinction between historically ‘dark’ sites (such as slave castles), and those that have been – in Sharpley’s terms – subsequently and ‘purposefully constructed [as] attractions or experiences that interpret or recreate events or acts’ (such as museums and monuments associated with slavery and abolition) is blurred: often by the staging of authenticity with which both are at times related. Slavery tourism encompasses sites at which death, atrocity and suffering have occurred, as well as places associated indirectly with death, atrocity, and suffering. The Atlantic locations on which this article focuses – in the Caribbean, West Africa, and France – belong to four of Tony Seaton’s five categories of thanatouristic destinations, adapted here for the purposes of this study. They are linked directly with enslavement and slavery; they are sites of memorialisation (e.g., graveyards or memorials); they are associated with slavery but not directly related to it in historical terms (e.g., museums); and, more rarely, they involve travel to participate in, or view, re-enactments of events associated with slavery.[[16]](#endnote-16)

In categorizing slavery as ‘a phantom industry that leaves scant traces’, Seaton alludes to the amnesia and silence to which historical and contemporary enslavement were long subject.[[17]](#endnote-17) We have witnessed, however, over the past three decades, a radical transformation in this situation in the fields of commemoration, education, legislation, museography, and historiography: shifts that may all be seen as providing the context for the rise in slavery-related tourism. Much of the study of dark tourism has emerged in the Anglophone academy and is focused on the English-speaking world. In moving attention to a Francophone context, there are clear opportunities not only for the essential comparatism on which the elaboration and testing of analyses depend, but also for the identification of new examples: such as the recent phenomena of travel to the 75-mile-long complex of tunnels at Cu Chi near Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, sites associated with the genocide in Rwanda, or prison-related tourism in French Guyana.[[18]](#endnote-18) There is an increasing recognition that the histories of slavery defy restriction to national frames, and that post-slavery memories tend to evolve transnationally. Although much work on travel and slave heritage has accordingly drawn on material from across linguistic and cultural zones, considerable scholarship has focused, nevertheless, on the UK (in particular on Liverpool and Bristol), the USA (with its southern plantation houses) and Ghana (with its slave forts and castles), meaning that the distinctiveness of sites from the Francophone and Lusophone world has at times not been fully recognized. This article addresses key sites in the French Atlantic, and suggests that the ways in which understandings of them in the light of thanatourism might cast different shadows on evolving questions of slave heritage and memory in this wider geo-cultural frame.[[19]](#endnote-19)

The multiple yet interconnected sites of the French Atlantic afford a particularly suggestive set of contexts for such an investigation for they encompass: (i) metropolitan France, where, since the 2001 Taubira law, slavery has emerged as a particularly potent political subject;[[20]](#endnote-20) (ii) West African states such as Senegal, associated with iconic sites of slavery-related pilgrimage and tourism, such as Gorée Island; and (iii) the mixed histories and geographies of the so-called ‘Francophone’ Caribbean, encompassing Haiti (independent and post-emancipation since 1804, yet with a continued cultural tolerance of child slavery in the form of the *restavek*[[21]](#endnote-21)), and the so-called DOM-ROMs (the overseas departments of Guadeloupe, Guyana and Martinique, still constitutionally parts of metropolitan France, and where the legacy of slavery remains a politically volatile issue). What these examples suggest is that there has been an evolution from what may be seen as a more traditionally passive ‘sight-*seeing*’ to a more actively affective and participatory ‘sight-*involving*’ approach, as visual perceptions are supplemented with active knowing, feeling, understanding, and even remembering.[[22]](#endnote-22) Such is the logic of the first example on which this article focuses, the planned but as yet not realised ‘Memory Village’ in Haiti, announced by the ‘N a sonje’ Foundation in 2004, the year of the bicentenary of Haitian independence. In this place of ‘tri-continental encounter’, it is intended/hoped that memory could be ‘rebalanced’.[[23]](#endnote-23) The project was for an interactive site – a ‘living interactive historical village’ – where visitors would, with varying degrees of participation negotiated at the beginning of their visit, vicariously experience or observe ‘the historical re-enactment of capture, selling, shipping and enslaving African people up to the time of the revolution and the 200 years following the victory of independence in Haiti’. The zones of the site – including the reconstruction of a slave ship – would permit a progressive twelve-hour journey, culminating in a re-enactment of slave rebellion, and this would lead to walking the ‘road to resistance’, partaking in a bowl of ‘independence’ soup, and sharing in a ‘guided debriefing and personal reflection’ at the mediation monument. The aspiration to a form of memory sharing may be laudable, but the on-line reactions to what was dismissed as a theme park for those seeking exculpation from the crimes of their ancestors were predictable: shared horror at what appeared to be the trivialization of the past traumas of Atlantic slavery for the purposes of present therapy.

Common reactions to the proposed Haitian memory village, which view it as a dystopic parody of sites of slave memory, are in contrast to the official discourse surrounding the project. The conception underpinning it nevertheless resonates with on-site re-enactments and other ‘performative opportunities’ (including libations, prayers, songs, and dances) associated with certain sites in West Africa, and evident in particular at an existing tourist destination in Ghana: Slave River at Assin Manso. This was the location of the largest eighteenth-century slave market in the vicinity of the Gold Coast (the enslaved are said to have been washed here before making the final stage of their journey to the slave castles at Elmina and elsewhere), and it is now associated in particular with the reburial of two enslaved ancestors whose remains were repatriated from the United States and Jamaica in the 1990s.[[24]](#endnote-24) Assin Manso was also the place in which the celebrations of Ghana’s first Emancipation Day was held in 1998 (it was during these ceremonies that the re-interment of Samuel Carson and Crystal took place), but the modern Slave River site appears to have been designed primarily as a destination for visitors of African descent from the Americas. In addition to the ‘Ancestral Gravesite’, it contains a ‘Garden of Reverence’, a ‘Hall of Prayer’, a ‘Memorial Wall of Return’ (made of bricks and marble tiles, on which, for a fee, ancestor’s names can be inscribed), and a ‘Meditation Lawn’. As Katharina Schramm notes, local access to the site is closely policed, and when those from the neighbouring communities are allowed in, they too are guided to view the site through a ‘tourist gaze’.[[25]](#endnote-25) Although perhaps not as openly criticised as the proposed Haitian ‘Memory Village’, Assin Manso raises questions about the nature of memorial sites: the activities deemed appropriate within them, the degree of engagement by the visitor that is encouraged or permitted, and the status of these locations as zones of contact in which the local population (with their often very different stakes in the memorialization of slavery) and those visiting are permitted to negotiate (or prevented from negotiating) their co-existence.

Elsewhere in the French Caribbean, in the overseas department of Guadeloupe, the *conseil général* has recently inaugurated – in stark and sober contrast to the planned ‘Memorial Village’ in Haiti – the *route de l’esclave*, a tour of the island’s slave heritage sites. This development is partly in response to the steady decline of tourism in France’s overseas departments and regions, partly to provide a consolidated catalogue of traces of the slaving past. The booklet accompanying the launch, while providing helpful historical pointers, remains decidedly coy about a contemporary political landscape in which, as recently as 2009, the spectres of enslavement were evoked during the violent social upheaval that shook the island at the beginning of that year.[[26]](#endnote-26) At the same time, the ideological ramifications, in a French republican frame, of key events are firmly downplayed: there is, for instance, only a brief reference to the self-immolation in 1802 of Louis Delgrès, who – in a commitment to the practice rather than the rhetoric of *liberté* – preferred death to the re-imposition of slavery.[[27]](#endnote-27) The description as part of this island heritage route of a slave *cachot* [dungeon] on the Belmont estate completes this ‘heritagization’, a process that is countered by the creative attempts of authors such as Patrick Chamoiseau in neighbouring Martinique to consider the ongoing afterlives, social, cultural and psychological, of sites such as these.[[28]](#endnote-28) Slavery is respectfully but firmly packaged and relegated to the past.

Similar questions of resonance and emphasis have emerged on the other side of the Atlantic, where slave castles in over ten countries along the West African coast have become, over the past two decades, increasingly important destinations for those interested in the history, culture, and heritage of slavery.[[29]](#endnote-29) For those of the Black Diaspora, these sites are doubly rich, serving – as Rasul A Mowatt and Charles H Chancellor have suggested – ‘as both a reservoir to experience identity and historical proof of slavery’.[[30]](#endnote-30) As such, their role is to cater for a number of thanatouristic motivations, ranging from an active quest for cultural identity and belonging, to a satisfaction of curiosity regarding historical origins. In examining the operation of such sites as tourist attractions, researchers have identified an ‘exploitation of the macabre’ and even an external intervention in the local environment to ensure the projection of certain narratives appropriate for external tourist consumption.[[31]](#endnote-31) One critic is startled, for instance, by the ‘offensive whiteness’ of the repainted walls of Elmina on the Gold Coast in Ghana, and Mowatt and Chancellor suggest that visitors to such sites still seek an aura of the past, ‘sensations of smell, sound, and appearance of the brutality that occurred within their walls’.[[32]](#endnote-32) Caryl Phillips, in *The Atlantic Sound*, points to what he sees as excessively sentimentalized appropriations of sub-Saharan African locales by African-American tourists, identifying what Alan Rice summarizes as a ‘bogus emotionalism [rather] than a proper coming to terms with the past’ – an interaction that may in its extreme form be seen as re-colonization.[[33]](#endnote-33)

Privileged – and particularly eloquent among such examples – is the *maison des esclaves* [house of slaves] on Gorée Island, situated in the harbour of the Senegalese capital Dakar, a ‘forum’ at which, in Ibrahima Thiaw’s terms, ‘memory and representations are constantly contested’.[[34]](#endnote-34) The island, a commercial *comptoir* [trading post] during the slave trade era, is now seen predominantly as a *French* Atlantic site, but was equally subject at certain moments in its history to Dutch, Portuguese, and British domination.[[35]](#endnote-35) Shortly after Senegalese independence in 1960, Léopold Sédar Senghor designated the site a slavery memorial, and during the 1970s, under the stewardship of a former *tirailleur* [infantryman] Joseph Ndiaye, the building was restored to become one of the key tourist sites/pilgrimage centres of the Black Atlantic, eventually designated a World Heritage Site in 1978, and visited by scores of visitors including prominent travellers such as Pope John Paul II, Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and most recently François Hollande.[[36]](#endnote-36) Central to the attraction was the performance of Ndiaye himself. Until several years before his death in 2009, he provided an animated account of the many victims of slavery who, in his account, having been held in the building’s cramped underground dungeons had finally passed through its ‘Door of No Return’.[[37]](#endnote-37) Ndiaye’s presentation was a clear example of the shift from ‘sight-*seeing*’ to ‘sight-*involving*’ alluded to above, highlighting the overtly affective dimensions of certain strands of thanatourism. In 1995, Gorée became the subject of controversy when the US Africanist Philip Curtin used the newly launched ‘Slavery and H-Africa’ discussion list to assert the statistically minor role of the island in the Atlantic trade (‘though [it] is a picturesque place,’ he noted, ‘it was marginal to the slave trade’). Curtin went on to describe the Ndiaye project as a ‘hoax’, and the site as the ‘Goree scam’; Emmanuel de Roux repeated these accusations in *Le Monde* the following year, bringing to public attention what had previously remained a primarily academic spat.[[38]](#endnote-38) Curtin dismissed Gorée as ‘an emotional shrine to the slave trade, rather than a serious museum’, representing in his intervention a clash between quantitative historiography and a series of concerns, less empirical but nevertheless fundamental, relating to ethics, memory, and ownership of the past. What the Gorée controversy makes clear is that discussions about statistics can no longer offer satisfactory responses to debates about the afterlives of slavery in the Atlantic world. Achille Mbembe provides a mordant response to Curtin, dismissing an obsession with statistics as ‘a strategy of guilt and exoneration’, and suggests the impossibility of comprehending the significance of Gorée ‘if one considers it only a matter of numbers’.[[39]](#endnote-39)

Gorée’s status as an *île-mémoire* [island of memory] and as a Black Atlantic pilgrimage site raises questions about memory and tourism equally present (but with different emphases) in France itself, where the absence of memorial traces of slavery in the built environment has also become increasingly apparent in public debate.[[40]](#endnote-40) A response to this situation, identified in a wider European frame, has been produced by the artist, writer, and curator Lubaina Himid, whose 2009 performance piece ‘What are monuments for? Possible landmarks on the urban map’ is of particular interest for those exploring the intersections of slavery and tourism. In this work, Himid subverts, in the style of a Situationist collage, the content and tone of European city guides in order to suggest how the memorial landscapes of capitals such as Paris and London might have appeared very different were they to reflect more actively and inclusively the contributions to the cultures – to which these cities are central – of people of the African diaspora.[[41]](#endnote-41) In the pages on Paris, Himid focuses on ‘a series of memorial fountains for the lost Africans’ which she imagines in the popular district of the Canal Saint-Martin in the north of the city. This monument evokes bodies of the enslaved thrown into the Atlantic, which Himid sees as ‘invisibilized’ in much official metropolitan memorial practice, and uses this recovery to suggest an alternative presence of slavery in urban space. The canal was built by Napoleon in 1802 as a means of supplying the Parisian population with fresh water at a time when diseases such as cholera were threatening the city, and it is significant that in the same year the then First Consul of the French Republic had sent his brother-in-law Charles Leclerc to defeat Toussaint Louverture and reimpose slavery in Saint-Domingue, a resonance that amplifies the lack of recognized *lieux de mémoire* [sites of memory] relating to slavery in Paris. ‘I often wondered’, Himid writes, ‘how powerful and dignified London and Paris would be now if their citizens and politicians *had really* sanctioned and paid for such dynamically visible, beautifully located, commemorations, memorials and monuments to the people of the Black Diaspora’.[[42]](#endnote-42)

The concluding section of this article responds to Himid’s reflection on the active collaboration of different parties in the genesis of ‘commemorations, memorials and monuments’. It turns to two port locations – Bordeaux and Nantes – that are key sites on the eastern rim of the French Atlantic, where tourism has been actively linked to traces of slavery and to the accentuated (although often problematic) presence of slavery in civic memory.[[43]](#endnote-43) In each place, over the past twenty years, a combination of local activism and political circumstance has permitted different memorial and museological processes to emerge, meaning that there have been controversial and at times very constructive efforts to remember slavery and abolition in civic space, and, with varying degrees of success, to associate the often difficult acknowledgement of this past with external branding of the city as a potential tourist destination.

Over the past decade in France – in particular following the voting of the Taubira law in 2001 – there has been marked evidence of the increased importance of these former trading ports in memorial practices, seen in the identification of the visitor destination of the museum as a specific site of remembrance and recognition, and – similarly to Liverpool, but perhaps not to the same extent – in their use of slave heritage as part of the external marketing of the cities to potential visitors.[[44]](#endnote-44) In Bordeaux and Nantes, the inscription of slavery into civic, regional and national history has already been actively explored.[[45]](#endnote-45) In both cities, it is perhaps most striking that the principal municipal museums, the Château des Ducs de Bretagne in Nantes, and the Musée d’Aquitaine in Bordeaux, both of which constitute major tourist attractions, have within the past few years adjusted the emphases of their permanent exhibitions considerably, not only to acknowledge the place of slavery in the civic past, but also to attempt to highlight its legacies in the present. As such, as Stéphane Valognes has recently noted, slavery has, in each place, become ‘entangled in the new economics of culture and urban entertainment’.[[46]](#endnote-46)

To varying degrees and with different emphases, both cities reveal complex dynamics of forgetting and of remembering their associations with the Atlantic slave trade. These memorial processes, playing themselves out in the context of tourism and civic heritage, have also entailed varying degrees of active resistance to the search to uncover histories and memories of slavery. In both sites, there is also clear evidence of the instrumentalization of this past to serve political and other purposes – relating to each city’s role as destination for tourism and travel – in the present. Efforts to integrate memories of slavery into the cityscape of Nantes are long-standing, and have become part of a branding of the city as what Marie-Hélène Jouzeau dubs a ‘great industrial and colonial port’, and also overtly as a ‘port négrier’ [slaving port].[[47]](#endnote-47) Artifacts relating to the history of slavery and abolition have been displayed in the town’s museums for over a century, but it was in the early 1990s that a local association – Les Anneaux de la mémoire [the Shackles of Memory] – was inaugurated to advocate for greater recognition of the role of Nantes in Atlantic slavery. An exhibition of the same title was curated at the Château des Ducs de Bretagne, from December 1992 to May 1994, and the commitment of the organizers to displaying and exploring this aspect of the city’s history was vindicated as the event attracted over 400,000 visitors. The success of this exhibition in the early 1990s triggered lobbying for the development of a more permanent slavery museum in the city, an aspiration realized in part when, with the political support of the mayor of Nantes Jean-Marc Ayrault, a new museum of urban history was opened in 2007. Containing a series of thirty-two rooms, of which seven are devoted to the Atlantic trade, this is a museum of the city of Nantes and not (unlike the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool) one devoted entirely to slavery: the impact of the Atlantic trade is actively incorporated into an overarching chronological narrative of civic history, and it is the city’s own history that is accordingly foregrounded. The initial galleries relating to the port city before the Revolution are presented with heavy wood paneling that seeks perhaps to resemble the hold of a slave ship, a mechanism deployed in different ways in the city’s abolition memorial (of which more below). Drawing the visitor into the context of slavery without going so far as to employ the mimetic attempt to recreate audio-visually the conditions on ship seen in Liverpool,[[48]](#endnote-48) these rooms are dominated by more museographically conventional displays, including archival documents such as account books and other artifacts relating to the slave trade.

The focus is on the presence of slavery and its legacies in the municipal context, and there is a telling illustration of the ways in which the impact of the systems of slavery became evident in the material objects of everyday life. However, in the galleries on the domestic interiors of merchants’ houses, there is a clear risk of the domination of the museum’s narrative by the master’s story: the emphasis in two galleries devoted to the furniture of eighteenth-century merchants engaged in the Atlantic trade is even reminiscent of plantation heritage sites in the American south, in the presentation of which sumptuous furnishings often seem to play a more important role than the labour of the enslaved.[[49]](#endnote-49) Nevertheless, what is striking and challenging about the Nantes museum is the way in which it acknowledges openly the troubled processes that underpinned its development. Most notably, ‘L’abolition de l’esclavage’, a sculpture by Liza Marcault-Derouard produced for the sesquicentenary of abolition in April 1998 and then vandalized several days later, is integrated into the penultimate room of the museum as a clear reminder that the acceptance of Nantes’ slaving past remains a controversial and often fraught process.[[50]](#endnote-50) This transfer to the Château of the artwork, still revealing traces of the damage it suffered, highlights the ultimately disruptive role played by the museum: here is an object illustrating the city’s recent history, but also a memorial artifact that cannot but draw the visitor actively into reflection on the links between histories and memories of slavery in civic space.

Moving to Bordeaux, the history of slavery is approached, as in Nantes, in a museological context: the new slavery-related displays of the Musée d’Aquitaine again approach Atlantic history via the history of the city; and although curators from Bordeaux visited Liverpool and sought inspiration from the recent developments of the International Slavery Museum, there is again no evidence of the overt (and increasingly political) ambition to present in a single museum the global history of slavery (including contemporary trafficking and other forms of forced labour) to be found on Merseyside. Despite the claims of commentators to find a contrapuntal distinction between Bordeaux and Nantes that parallels the supposedly differing attitudes to the memory of slavery in Bristol and Liverpool, the civic history of acknowledgement and commemoration in the two cities have in fact clear similarities, not least in terms of the role of local activism in challenging the intransigence of municipal politics (characterized by what Christine Chivallon describes, in the context of Bordeaux, as oxymoronic ‘postures mémorielles’ [positionings in relation to memory] that may be seen as ‘oublieuses’ [forgetful]).[[51]](#endnote-51) As has been the case elsewhere, activists in Bordeaux have given prominence to their agenda through activities that include attempts to rename streets associated with prominent slave traders. It is clear, however that – although the consequently increased public visibility of Bordeaux’s links to slavery has made silencing that past impossible – the city has nevertheless, and more than Nantes, sought to maintain the previous memorial *status quo*. Nicola Frith describes the persistence of the ‘nostalgic issue of Bordeaux as “la ville des Lumières”, a place that had produced key enlightenment, and indeed abolitionist, figures such as Montesquieu’.[[52]](#endnote-52)

In 2009, the official celebration for the national slavery commemoration day was moved from Paris and held in Bordeaux, to mark the opening of the permanent exhibition, ‘Bordeaux, le commerce atlantique et l’esclavage’ [Bordeaux: the Atlantic trade and slavery], in the Musée d’Aquitaine. The four rooms devoted to this exhibit are focused firmly on Bordeaux itself, and initially draw the visitor into the material circumstances of the eighteenth-century city. The display seeks to reflect more clearly than is the case in Nantes on Bordeaux’s global context; on occasion, the museological apparatus also actively relativizes the role of the city, stressing the fact that Nantes predominated in the French trade, and also underlining the pre-existence of North and sub-Saharan African slavery. The specific role of the city in the slave trade is elided with a more international narrative, and economic and maritime history is moreover privileged at the expense of any assertion of questions of politics and human rights. What emerges nevertheless in the Bordeaux displays is a firm sense of the lived experience of slavery, supporting the sense that ‘the new museal space was intended to lay to rest the long-held idea that Bordeaux was suffering from amnesia’.[[53]](#endnote-53) The diorama of a plantation – similar to that created in Nantes, and a staple element of a conventional museological approach to Atlantic slavery – is supplemented, for instance, by a rich collection of iconography that illustrates not abolition but the casual, systematic, everyday violence on which the running of the plantation system depended. Finally, inspired by a similar innovation in Liverpool (where there is a ‘Black Achievers Wall’) but developing this in a different direction,[[54]](#endnote-54) the Bordeaux exhibit ends with a heritage room, including a ‘mur de la diversité’ [wall of diversity], which is in reality markedly monochrome since the faces of the city’s residents pictured on it are exclusively black. For visitors and inhabitants of the city alike, as they leave the exhibit, an unfortunate concluding impression is created: there is a suggestion that the ‘shared memory’ mentioned by Alain Juppé in his introduction to the museum catalogue remains a distant aspiration, and that the memory of slavery in the city is the concern of only a minority of its population.[[55]](#endnote-55)

In both Nantes and Bordeaux, one witnesses – with different emphases – a French reflection of what might be seen as a more international development, a ‘museological turn’ in the commemoration of slavery, a tendency that is perhaps exemplified by the international museum in Liverpool, a visit to which, as has been explored above, was particularly influential on the curators in Bordeaux.[[56]](#endnote-56) Responding to this context, Achille Mbembe has warned that the museum risks becoming a quarantined space of representational control in which the histories and memories of slavery are simultaneously constructed and constrained.[[57]](#endnote-57) Although Stephen Small has cogently developed such an analysis to associate the institution with a dominant and more generalized ‘knowledge validation process’,[[58]](#endnote-58) there is nevertheless a need to acknowledge the ways in which the museum has been enlisted to play an active pedagogical and even political role, asserting the place of slavery and the slave trade in collective memory, disseminating knowledge of them to the general public, and validating the deeper knowledge of the history of slavery that it now provides. The museological intervention represented by the Château des Ducs de Bretagne was recently augmented by the inauguration in 2011 of a complementary but distinctive project, reintegrating histories and memories of slavery into the built environment of the city of Nantes: the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery.

The memorial is located in a historically significant location, on the Nantes waterfront on the Quai de la Fosse, where the Nantes slave ships would have docked (and also where Marcault-Derouard’s sculpture was unveiled and briefly situated in 1998). The ambition inherent in selecting such a location was clearly to reject any reduction of the memories of slavery to discussion of abolitionism, and to propose a surrogate site of mourning for the victims of the Atlantic trade. The site remains a focus of political controversy, with questions raised about the identity of the artist and also the links between limited financial resources and artistic freedom; it also poses key questions about how memorials are commissioned, and what compromise is necessary in the development of such a significant project. The memorial, over a decade in preparation, was a collaboration between the Polish artist Krzysztof Wodiczko and the US architect Julian Bonder. Situating the site in a wider network, Peter Hinks notes that it is ‘the largest memorial to the Atlantic slave trade and its abolition in Europe and, setting aside such preserved slave trading forts as St. George’s and Cape Coast Castle in Ghana, it is probably the largest built memorial to the commerce in the Atlantic world’.[[59]](#endnote-59)

The Nantes memorial is composed of two parts: the *parcours commémoratif* [commemorative way], a pedestrian esplanade on which are displayed plaques listing the names of key sites in the French Atlantic and also those of vessels involved in the slave-ship expeditions that sailed from Nantes between 1672 and 1826;[[60]](#endnote-60) and the *parcours méditatif* [reflective way], an underground walkway – suggesting the hold of a slave ship, and accordingly confinement of transport by sea – but bordered by panes of plate-glass, alluding to a complementary sense of liberation, on which abolitionist texts are engraved. Bonder has described the work as ‘unveiling – uncovering as well as anchoring – histories and memories’,[[61]](#endnote-61) and as such it represents an important reflection of the dynamics of memorialization of slavery in France itself. At the same time, the success of the Nantes memorial is linked to its reliance not on the visual but on the kinetic, on the movement of the body through space. In ways that parallel a number of Holocaust memorials, the visitor travels through the memorial, descending underground and engaging in a walk along the passage bordered by abolitionist quotations.[[62]](#endnote-62) Developing what Frith sees as ‘a narrative construction based on a rebranding exercise rooted […] in the tourist trade’, Nantes has accordingly generated – in Hinks’s analysis, ‘woven closely into the fabric of civil life’ – the most recent example of a number of distinctive ‘French Atlantic’ sites of memory, of pilgrimage and of tourism relating to slavery.[[63]](#endnote-63)

There is a need to consider each of these sites more actively within the historical, geographical, cultural and political niche of their production, reflecting on the multiple audiences they aim to address. There is also an obligation to assess these locations in relation to their immediate surroundings and contexts, exploring the implications of a policing of space and a denial of the porosity of boundaries that on occasion seem to produce sites of memory for external as opposed to local consumption. We need also to acknowledge the lack of clarity surrounding slavery as the object of thanatouristic practice, with understandings of slavery ranging from abstract systems and processes to a more direct, lived experience. Finally, the notion of multiple, overlapping audiences and visitors leads to the question of competing memorial traditions that underlies this article. It is clear, for instance, that certain ‘French Atlantic’ sites – most notably perhaps Gorée – have been developed with (Anglophone) African-American visitors in mind. Also, as has been outlined, whereas emphases in France tend to be on abolition and emancipation (as well as at times an overtly ‘maritimized’ history of slavery),[[64]](#endnote-64) in West Africa and the Caribbean, the focus is on the process of enslavement, transatlantic crossing, and plantation life. The result is that tourists in mainland France or in West Africa and the Caribbean would appear to expect slavery-related ‘attractions’ to be associated with very different narratives, and to be identified with very different meanings and even affects according to the contexts of those sites. Although the sites I have discussed are charged with controversy, I suggest in conclusion that the visitor to them is best served not by excessively cautious censorship, with sensationalism, or with resort to euphemistic obfuscation, but by being given access – as is firmly the case in Nantes – to the often difficult and even divisive debates that have underpinned their development. Such an approach is rarely without controversy, but performing the dynamics and tensions of contemporary memorial practices is preferable to the sanitized or distorted narratives that these locations otherwise risk perpetuating. Permitting recognition of the symbolic importance of slave-related locations, such an approach also encourages an active response, in the context of the French Atlantic, to Edward Linenthal’s reflection on slavery heritage sites in North America: ‘conscientious remembrance’, he writes, ‘is more than a necessary expansion of a nation’s narrative. It is an act of moral engagement, a declaration that there are other [...] lives too long forgotten that count’.[[65]](#endnote-65)

**Notes**

1. bell hooks, ‘Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination’, in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992, pp 165–78, p 173. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. AV Seaton, ‘Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery: The Silences and Disclosures of Slavery Heritage in the UK and US’, *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 2.3-4, 2001, pp 107–29, p 117. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. For discussions of slavery and dark tourism, see Graham Dann and AV Seaton, *Slavery, Contested Heritage, and Thanatourism*, New York: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2001, and Alan Rice, ‘Museums, memorials and plantation houses in the Black Atlantic: Slavery and the development of Dark Tourism’, in Richard Sharpley and Philip R Stone (eds), *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*, Bristol: Channel View Publications, 2009, pp 224–46. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Derek Walcott, ‘Acacia Trees’, in *White Egrets*,London: Faber and Faber, 2010, p 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. See Alasdair Pettinger, ‘“These New Plantations by the Sea”: The Caribbean Hotel as Site of Exploitation and Scene of Writing’, available at [http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/csis2/blackatlantic/research/PlantationsByTheSea[2].pdf](http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/csis2/blackatlantic/research/PlantationsByTheSea%5B2%5D.pdf) [consulted 21 October 2013]. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Ian Gregory Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean*,Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002, pp 7, 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Dany Laferrière, *La Chair du maître*,Outremont, Québec: Lanctôt éditeur, 1997. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. On the concept of ‘contrapuntual memory’, see Charles Forsdick, ‘Colonialism, Postcolonialism and the Cultures of Commemoration’, in Charles Forsdick and David Murphy(eds), *Postcolonial Thought in the French-Speaking World*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009, pp 271–84. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Philip R Stone, ‘A dark tourism spectrum: towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions’, *Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal*, 54 (2), 2006, pp 145–60. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Philip R Stone, ‘Dark Tourism Consumption: A call for research’, *e-Review of Tourism Research (eRTR)*,3 (5), 2005, pp 109–17. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Richard Sharpley, ‘Shedding light on dark tourism: an introduction’, in Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (eds), *The Darker Side of Travel*, pp 3–22, p 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. AV Seaton, ‘Guided by the dark: From thanatopsis to thanatourism’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 2 (4), 1996, pp 234–44. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Sharpley, ‘Shedding light on dark tourism’, p 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Sharpley, ‘Shedding light on dark tourism’, p 14. See also Graham Huggan, *Extreme Pursuits:* *Travel/Writing in an Age of Globalization*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Graham Dann, *The Dark Side of Tourism*, **Études et rapports. Série L, Sociologie/ Psychologie/ Philosophie/ Anthropologie** 14, Aix-en-Provence: Centre International de Recherches et d’Etudes Touristiques, 1998. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. See Seaton, ‘Guided by the Dark’, pp 234-44. I note Stone’s concern that it may be equally valid to approach such sites, ‘multifaceted, complex in design and purpose, and diverse in nature’, in terms of a spectrum as opposed to a clearly delineated taxonomy of locations. See ‘A dark tourism spectrum’, p 150. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Seaton, ‘Sources of Slavery—Destinations of Slavery’, p 117. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. On Vietnam and dark tourism, see J Henderson, ‘War as a Tourist Attraction: The Case of Vietnam’, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 2, 2000, pp 269–80; for discussion of the case of Rwanda, see Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007; and on French Guyana, see Olivier Dehoorne and Lee Jolliffe, ‘Dark tourism and place identity in French Guyana’, in Leanne White and Elspeth Frew (eds), *Dark Tourism and Place Identity: Managing and Interpreting Dark Places*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013, pp 156–66. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. #  For discussions of the Lusophone context, see Ana Lucia Araujo, *Public Memory of Slavery: Victims and Perpetrators in the South Atlantic*, Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2010.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. The Taubira law of 2001 was a piece of French legislation which, although falling short of any initially intended commitment to reparations, recognized formally and for the first time the French duty of memory in relation to enslavement and the Atlantic slave trade. The law was named after the Socialist Party Member of Parliament for French Guiana, Christiane Taubira, and acknowledged that the Atlantic slave trade and slavery were crimes against humanity. See Doris L Garraway, ‘Memory as reparation? The politics of remembering slavery in France from abolition to the Loi **Taubira’,** International Journal of Francophone Studies, 11 (3) 2008, pp 365–86, **and** Sébastien Ledoux, ‘“Devoir de mémoire”: The post-colonial path of a post-national memory in France’, *National Identities*, 153, 2013, pp 239–56. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. ‘the practice of poor families giving away children to wealthier acquaintances or relatives is known in the native Creole as "restavek," from the French words rester avec, or "to stay with."’ Jim Loney, ‘Haiti “restavek” tradition called child slavery’, *Reuters*, 18 Feb 2010 [http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/02/18/us-quake-haiti-restaveks-idUSTRE61H3F920100218]. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. See Chris Ryan, ‘Dark tourism: an introduction’, in Chris Ryan, Stephen Page and Michelle Aicken (eds), *Taking Tourism to the Limits: Issues, Concepts and Managerial Perspectives*,Amsterdam; San Diego, CA; Oxford: Elsevier, 2005, pp 187–90, p 188. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. For details of the planned site, see <http://memoryvillage.blogspot.co.uk/> [consulted 21 October 2013]. Subsequent quotations are taken from this source. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. On Assin Manso, see Katharina Schramm, ‘Slave Route Projects: Tracing the Heritage of Slavery in Ghana’, in Ferdinand de Jong and Michael Rowlands (eds), Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa, London: Left Coast Press, 2007, pp 71–98, pp 82–84, and Lauren Adrover and Christina McMahon, ‘Naming ceremony and river crossing’, *The Drama Review*, 54(2), 2010, pp 155–63, pp 161–63. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Schramm, ‘Slave Route Projects’, p 84. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. On this initiative, see

 <http://www.cg971.fr/images/stories/CULTURE_ET_PATRIMOINE/RouteEsclave/PDF/livret.pdf> [consulted 21 October 2013]. It has subsequently been supplemented by a major new project, Mémorial ACTe, an undertaking identified by François Hollande in his presidential address at the French annual commemoration of abolition in 2013 as part of the country’s symbolic reparations for slavery. See <http://www.cr-guadeloupe.fr/upload/documents/Macte12P.pdf> [consulted 21 October 2013]. On the 2009 social unrest, see Yarimar Bonilla, ‘GUADELOUPE IS OURS: The Prefigurative Politics of the Mass Strike in the French Antilles’, *Interventions* 12(1), 2010, pp 125–37. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. On the impact of the age of Revolutions in Guadeloupe, see Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. See in particular Patrick Chamoiseau, *Un dimanche au cachot*, Paris: Gallimard, 2007. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. On roots tourism and the concept of pilgrimage, see Olga Idriss Davis, ‘The Door of No Return: reclaiming the past through the rhetoric of pilgrimage’, *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, 21(3), 1997, pp 156–61, and Paulla A Ebron, ‘Tourists as pilgrims: commercial fashioning of transatlantic politics’, *American Ethnologist*, 26(4), 1999, pp 910–32. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Rasul A Mowatt and Charles H Chancellor, ‘Visiting Death and Life: Dark Tourism and Slave Castles’, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 2011, pp 1410–34, p 1414. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Mowatt and Chancellor, ‘Visiting Death and Life’, p 1417. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. [Sandra L Richards](http://muse.jhu.edu/results?section1=author&search1=Sandra%20L.%20Richards), ‘What is to be remembered?: tourism to Ghana’s slave castle-dungeons’, [*Theatre Journal*](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theatre_journal), 57(4), 2005, pp 617–37, p 623, and Mowatt and Chancellor, ‘Visiting Death and Life’, p 1428. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Rice, ‘Museums, memorials and plantation houses’, p 225. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Ibrahima Thiaw, ‘Every house has a story: the archaeology of Gorée Island, Sénégal’, in [Boubacar Barry](http://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3ABarry%2C+Boubacar.&qt=hot_author), [Elisée Akpo Soumonni](http://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3ASoumonni%2C+Elisee+Akpo.&qt=hot_author) and [Livio Sansone](http://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3ASansone%2C+Livio.&qt=hot_author) (eds), *Africa, Brazil and the Construction of Trans-Atlantic Black Identities*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008, pp 45–62, p 45. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. On the history of Gorée, see Jean Delcourt, *La Turbulente Histoire de Gorée*, Dakar: Editions Clairafrique, 1982. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. On the history of Gorée and its progressive transformation into a heritage site, see Thiaw, ‘Every house has a story’; Djibril Samb (ed), *Gorée et l’esclavage. Actes du Séminaire sur Gorée dans la traite atlantique: mythes et réalités, Gorée, 7–8 avril 1997*, Initiations et Études Africaines 38, 1997, Dakar: Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar; IFAN, 1997, and Hamady Bocoum and Bernard Toulier, ‘La fabrication du Patrimoine: l’exemple de Gorée (Sénégal)’, *In Situ*, 20, 2013, http://insitu.revues.org/10303. Considerable attention has been paid to George W Bush’s visit. See, for instance, Martin J Medhurst, ‘George W. Bush at Goree Island: American slavery and the rhetoric of redemption’, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 96(3), 2010, pp 257–77, and Michael Ralph, ‘“Crimes of History”: Senegalese soccer and the forensics of slavery’, *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Cultures and Society*, 9(3), 2007, pp 193–222. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Gorée is the starting point of Rachid Bouchareb’s third feature film, *Little Senegal* [2001], an exploration of its protagonist’s own transatlantic journey from Senegal to North America. After many years as a tourist guide in the Slave museum in Senegal, Alloune decides to travel to the USA, in search of traces of his enslaved ancestors transported to the New World two centuries earlier. Travelling from Charleston to Little Senegal, New York, he engages in inverse roots tourism, but also seeks an ideal vision of an African family, only to discover strong tensions between the African and African-American communities. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Emmanuel de Roux, ‘Le mythe de la Maison des esclaves qui résiste à la réalité’, *Le Monde*, 27 December 1996. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. The thread of exchanges regarding Gorée, including Curtin and Mbembe’s contributions, is available here: <http://www.h-net.org/~africa/threads/goree.html> [consulted 21 October 2013]. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. On this subject, see Nicola Frith, ‘“Working Through” Slavery: The Limits of Shared Memories in Contemporary France’, Irish Journal of Francophone Studies, 13, 2013, pp 17–39. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Lubaina Himid, ‘What are monuments for? Possible landmarks on the urban map’, <http://www.jellypavilion.info/paris__london> [consulted 21 October 2013]. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. For a discussion of Himid’s work, see Alan Rice, ‘Tracing Slavery and Abolition’s Routes and Viewing Inside the Invisible: The Monumental Landscape and the African Atlantic’,*Atlantic Studies*, 8(2), 2011, pp 253–74. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. A longer discussion of the legacies of slavery in these cities is available in Charles Forsdick, ‘The Panthéon’s empty plinth: commemorating slavery in contemporary France’, *Atlantic Studies*, 9(3), 2012, pp 279-97, and ‘Monuments, Memorials, Museums: Slavery Commemoration and the Search for Alternative Archival Spaces’, *Francosphères*, 3(1), 2014, pp 81–98. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. On the implications of the Taubira law, see Christine Chivallon, ‘Resurgence of the memory of slavery in France: issues and significations of a public and academic debate’, in Ana Lucia Araujo (ed), *Living History: Encountering the Memory of the Heirs of Slavery*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010, pp 83–97. On the development of the Liverpool museum, see Renaud Hourcade, ‘Un musée d’histoire face à la question raciale: l’International Slavery Museum de Liverpool’, *Genèses*, 92, 2013, pp 6–27. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. See, for example, Renaud Hourcade, ‘**Commemorating a Guilty Past: The Politics of Memory in the French Former Slave Trade Cities’**, in Ana Lucia Araujo **(ed), *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Space*, New York: Routledge, 2012, pp 124–40, and** Christine Chivallon, ‘Construction d’une mémoire relative à l’esclavage et instrumentalisation politique: le cas des anciens ports négriers de Bordeaux et Bristol’, Les Cahiers des Anneaux de la Mémoire, 4, 2002, pp 176–203. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Stéphane Valognes, ‘Slave-Trade Memory Politics in Nantes and Bordeaux: Urban Fabric between Screen and Critical Landscape’, [*Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage*](http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/maney/jaf;jsessionid=2kraf200kslm8.alexandra), 2(2), 2013. pp 151–71, p 152. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Cited in Frith, ‘“Working Through” Slavery’, pp 33, 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. On this aspect of the Liverpool museum, see Silke Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating Memory in the Museum. Empathy, Trauma, Nostalgia*,Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp 89–113. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. For recent discussions of this subject, see Stephen Small, ‘Still Back of the Big House: Slave Cabins and Slavery in Southern Heritage Tourism’, *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, 153, 2013, pp 405–23. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. On this episode, see Emmanuelle Chérel, *Le Mémorial de l’abolition de l’esclavage de Nantes: enjeux et controverses (1998-2012)*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012, pp 41–77, and Valognes, ‘Slave-Trade Memory Politics in Nantes and Bordeaux’, pp 164–66. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. See Christine Chivallon, ‘L’émergence récente de la mémoire de l’esclavage dans l’espace public: enjeux et significations’, *Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 52(4a), 2005, pp.64-81, p.67. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Frith, ‘“Working Through” Slavery’, p 29. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Frith, ‘“Working Through” Slavery’, p 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. On this aspect of the Liverpool museum, see John Richard Oldfield, ‘Repairing historical wrongs: public history and transatlantic slavery’, *Social & Legal Studies*, 21(2), 2012, pp 243–55, pp 250–51. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. See *Bordeaux au XVIIIe siècle: le commerce atlantique et l’esclavage*, Bordeaux: Le Festin; Musée d’Aquitaine, 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. There is a need to situate these initiatives in their wider national contexts, in relation to the histories of the representation of the minority groups they include, as well as in the light of ideological approaches to cultural and social diversity. The International Slavery Museum in Liverpool was established, for instance, in the context of the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, whereas the development of the galleries in Bordeaux and Nantes is situated firmly in the post-Taubira era. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Achille Mbembe, ‘L’esclave, figure de l’anti-musée?’, in Françoise Vergès (ed), *Exposer l’esclavage: méthodologies et partiques*, special issue of *Africultures*, 91, 2013, pp 37–40. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Stephen Small, ‘Slavery, colonialism and their legacy in the Eurocentric university: the case of Britain and the Netherlands’, *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 10(1), 2012, pp 69–80. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Peter Hinks, ‘Mémorial de l’Abolition de l’Esclavage’, exhibition reviews, *Journal of American History*, 100(1), 2013, pp 150–55, p 151. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Hinks reads this element, ‘fired in glass’, as a reflection of ‘the medium in Kongo cosmology that opens the way to the deceased, the gods, and what lies below surfaces’, in ‘Mémorial de l’Abolition de l’Esclavage’, p 151. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Julian Bonder, ‘On memory, trauma, public space, monuments and memorials’, *Places*, 12(1), 2009, pp 61-69, p 65. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. On comparable sites that memorialize the Holocaust, see Maria Pia Di Bella, ‘Walking Memory: Berlin’s “Holocaust Trail”’, *Journeys*, 13(2), 2012, pp 55–70. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Frith, ‘“Working Through” Slavery’, p 35; Hinks, ‘Mémorial de l’Abolition de l’Esclavage’, p 154. A number of others are in preparation, including the Mémorial ACTe in Guadeloupe. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. On ‘maritimization’ of the histories of slavery, see John G Beech, ‘The Marketing of Slavery Heritage in the United Kingdom’, *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration*, 2(3–4), 2001, pp 85–106, pp 103–04. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Edward T Linenthal, ‘Epilogue: Reflections’, in James Oliver Horton and Lois E Horton (eds), *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006, pp 213–24, p 224, cited by Rice, ‘Museums, memorials and plantation houses in the Black Atlantic’, p 246. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)