

CALL

Second Cosmopolis Conference

Abolition and the Idea of Slavery in Global Perspective

1750-1950

Bloemfontein, 18-19 June 2015

This second Cosmopolis Conference aims to study slavery and its abolition as a global phenomenon from a comparative and connective perspective. It takes up the challenge of some recent studies on slavery that go beyond the usual boundaries of both time and space (Bush 2000, Miller 2012). It also wants to break through that other dividing line between 'freedom' and 'unfreedom', 'status' and 'contract' (Stanziani 2009). The conference does this by globally re-examining the many different paths through the abolition of slavery. As a result of the legal abolition of slavery many apparently clear-cut identity markers were developed. By looking for various counter-points, on (just) the other side of the spatial, temporal and social boundaries, this conference will apply the methodology of *l'histoire croisée* and critically re-examine the practice and the concept of slavery in its various entanglements between the local and the global.

As the 'Tavern of Two Seas' (Boxer 1965; Worden 2012) South Africa provides the ideal viewpoint to examine slavery and its abolition both in its local setting as well as through a comparative and connective (Ward 2009) perspective. Recently the local and the global (being African, European, Asian) perspectives have already been examined for the wider social identities of Cape Town (Worden 2012). This conference wants to connect to this approach but by (once again) zooming in on abolition and by (for the first time) zooming out to the conceptual, global level. One of the hypotheses we would like to reflect upon is the difference between abolition in the Indian Ocean and the Atlantic world. Also, the conference will look for unexplored (dis)continuities of practices within colonial empires. For these reasons, we particularly invite scholars that will speak about abolition, primarily, by including the transformation that occurred in conceptions of slavery in the age of abolition.