

## *Ancient and modern forms of slavery*

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“I believe that the older certain books are, the more valuable they become.”

Paul Auster

In this presentation I intend to examine modern forms of enslavement and consider how enslavement has been transmuted over the last two hundred years from overtly physical forms to covertly psychological one. I will consider the work and writings of Alexander von Humboldt, and compare and contrast his findings on the issue of slavery in the 18th and 19th century to those of today’s researchers. It is my contention that slavery is alive and well in the 21st century and exists in the heartland of the so called free world. Enslavement is a contravention of fundamental human rights, yet the tentacles of slavery continue to maintain their reach, even into the minds of free people. I hope to show that as corporate and institutional powers seek to find ever more sophisticated means to keep their workers docile and co-operative – even in our own high technology, pluralistic societies – a new form of enslavement has emerged. I present this paper as both an academic concerned with the historical and contemporary enslavement experience and as an “expert by experience,” as someone who has survived a form of attempted enslavement within the workplace.

In 2004 we commemorate the bicentenary of the meeting between Alexander von Humboldt and President Thomas Jefferson of the United States of America. We are also celebrating the last visit by Alexander von Humboldt to Havana, Cuba, from March to April 1804, where, with the authorization of the Spanish Crown, he observed (in 1799, 1800 and 1804) the society of one of the “Spanish Sugar Colonies.” This is where, according to Humboldt (1826, 44), by 1825 the slave population of the island had a total of 260,000 and by 1877 a total of 200,000 (Zeuske 2002, 136). Coincidentally, 2004 has also been proclaimed by the United Nations as the year against slavery.

Since the beginning of 2004, in recognition of the bicentenary, a number of new editions and translations of Humboldt's work have been published in both Germany and Spain. For instance, in collaboration with a colleague I have been responsible for the publication of two new translations in Spain, the first translation is from French to German (Humboldt 2004a) and the second is the Spanish translation (Humboldt 2004c) of the *Essai politique sur l'Ile de Cuba*, a work written and published originally in French by Alexander von Humboldt (1826). In particular, the last chapter "About Slavery" represents, in a singular and bold manner, an analysis of this issue and represents one of the major calls for the defence of human rights to be made at this time. Humboldt gave special importance to this chapter in his work about Cuba and in spite of this it was not included in the English translation by the North-American pro-slavery politician, John Thrasher. Humboldt's displeasure is clearly evident, for when Thrasher sent his version to Humboldt in 1855, Humboldt declared firmly that the translation was a "manipulation" of his work (Beck 1992: 263 / Ortiz 1930 / cf. Prüfer 1998; 2001) and that he considered this missing chapter as the most important one of the entire Essay about Cuba. Our translations also present, by the inclusion of a statistical index, numerous examples of the transcendental interest Humboldt showed about human exploitation. The attention given to the term "slaves" with 87 mentions of the word is the most utilized word in relationship to groups of persons or indexed entries of named individuals. Indeed Humboldt (2004c, 175) confessed, 200 years ago, that: "Leaving America I continue feeling the same horror for slavery as in Europe."<sup>1</sup>

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### *The Historical Environment*

In 1769, the Chamber of Representatives of Massachusetts had already vigorously expressed their condemnation of "the unnatural and unwarrantable custom of enslaving mankind" (Walsh 1819, 312) and by 1807 the abolition of the slave trade of black people occurred in both London and Washington. These beneficial measures were first also adopted by Denmark, the Northern States of the USA and Great Britain and then by the rest of Europe.

In 1814 and 1815 Treaties were signed by Spain and Portugal to enable the continuation of slavery.

In 1865 came the definitive abolition of slavery in USA.

Other nations, such as Spain, maintained and defended (through the use of their colonial system), both the slave trade and slavery in general until much later. Spain for instance maintained its support for slavery until 13th of February 1880.

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1. All translations from the original French *Essai politique sur l'Ile de Cuba* or other cites from Spanish to English are made by the author of this paper.

Between 1880 to 1886 a transition period took place in, the so called *patronato*. The slaves, *patrocinados*, were given an identity card with their first name, age, their physical description and were declared free.

1886 saw the final abolition of slavery in the Spanish colonies. This is why Humboldt, in the writing of his *Essai politique sur l'Île de Cuba*, was involved in one of the most critical debates about the perverse nature of the colonial system and the obvious and contradictory failure to apply the abolition laws outside of the Western world. Unfortunately, Humboldt did not live to see the abolition of slavery in the Spanish colonies, as he died in 1856.

It's evident that the slavery phenomenon has political, economic and sociological facets and Humboldt's *Political Essay* reveals this through the use of these three sciences in a notably modern and interdisciplinary way united in a holistic manner. Further, we can add to these disciplines, judicial and ethical ones.

### **Analysis of slavery forms described by Humboldt**

L'esclavage est sans doute

le plus grand de tous les maux qui ont affligé l'humanité.

Alexander von Humboldt

With this statement Alexander von Humboldt begins the last chapter of his *Essai politique sur l'Île de Cuba*.

Humboldt (1826, 102) denounces at the beginning of the above mentioned essay “cynicism and obscurantism” by the “intelligent writers” who invented such terms as “‘black peasants,’ ‘black vassalage’ and ‘patriarchal protection’ and in doing so intended to hide the barbaric nature of the institutions by the ingenious fiction of language.” He discovers at the same time, that this terminology is used as a means by which slavery in general is excused. Further, the “excesses of humanity” promoted by so called “civilized” European nations “by illusory parallels or copious sophisms” that were used to reinforce their argument is well demonstrated by their comparison of contemporary slavery with that of ancient Roman and Greek civilizations. The motivation for using this terminology and the historical antecedents was to promote the case of slavery by tranquillizing only those who are the “secret sharecroppers of the slave trade whose intention is to benefit from the misfortune of the black race. In doing so they needed to find a means to reject their own emotional responses which could overcome and surprise them.”

It is important to note that the chapter “About Slavery” (Humboldt 1826, 101–114) is closely related to the one about “Population” (Humboldt 1826, 43–64) in the same *Essay*. Humboldt compares the situation of black slaves with the “situation of the serfs in the Middle Ages and with the oppressive

state under which some classes in North or East Europe suffered.” The chapter denounces the following forms of submission:

- The permanent condition of slavery based on barbaric laws and institutions with the use of excessive force on some individuals in discriminatory ways.
- The use of threats and aberrant corrective measures, for example forcing people to drink boiling soap; or to drink a solution of Glauber salt with a very small spoon and through the excessive use of whips.
- The selling of slaves in the Spanish colonies for a price of between 200 and 380 Piasters, for instance in 1825 the price of slave on the Island of Cuba was 450 Piasters.
- Treating slaves like animals: for instance the slaves were branded with a hot iron to distinguish them from others.
- Unlimited punishments, harsh and excessive work.
- No consideration of the need to provide prescriptive measures to ensure the quality and quantity of the nourishment provided.
- Absolute delimiting of liberty: The slave was not allowed free movement, without permission, they were only allowed to move the maximum distance of one league and a half from the plantation.
- Being exposed to the excessive and aggressive exercise of absolute authority which could be conducted with impunity.
- The maintenance of the illusory possibility that slaves could refer for judgment in defense of the few legal rights they possessed.
- The disproportionate numerical difference between female and male slaves (between 1777 to 1816 1:1.9 /1.7; in the sugar-mills 1:4) and the consequent celibacy imposed upon slaves in most of the plantations (Humboldt 1826, 58).

However, without clearly distinguishing between different forms of slavery, Humboldt perceives some differences between the familial and psychological situation of slaves working in a rich house in Havana and the ones working independently and paying a day-wage to his Landlord; the slave who lived alone without any family in the midst of a big town and the one working in a sugar mill and who had the support and care of his own wife. He also distinguishes between the nature of house-work carried out in a town house, the work in a coffee plantation and extremely hard work carried out in a sugar-mill and suffering from the high temperatures of the manufacturing process. Zeuske (2002, 133–139), however, gives a detailed analysis of these different forms of Cuban slavery employment.

In Humboldt’s work he claims that enslaved people have the right to be treated with sensibility, emotion, intelligence and wisdom. Therefore he was able to support authorities who at least showed a favourable disposition for the progressive improvement of the situation of slaves. But this “philanthropy,” according to Humboldt, “cannot only consist in giving ‘a bit more

codfish and a bit less punishment. The authentic improvement of the serving class has to be extended to the totality of men, in both its moral and physical dimensions.”

Further, Humboldt dismisses the justification of the existence of slavery from an economic point of view. Defenders of the colonies often cited the argument that: “Without slaves there can’t be colonies.” Humboldt countered this by referring to the opinion of Arango who pointed out that the colonies could have existed without slaves, only with less success and with reduced production. He proves by statistical analysis “that those who repeat unceasingly that only black people can cultivate sugar” (Humboldt 1826: 79), are wrong. He also cites the *Representación del ayuntamiento, Consulado y Sociedad patriótica del 20 de Julio de 1811*, in opposition to His Majesty the King of Spain: “To take slaves from one Continent to another was an evil contrary to moral principals.”

According to the numerous statistics presented throughout the whole essay, Humboldt counted more than 80.000 slaves in the most important towns of the Island of Cuba, “because of the attraction of luxury for landlords and the possibility of obtaining greater profits through the work of the subjugated.” Humboldt considered this situation to be a great threat to a harmonious society, and if the proportion of free men to slaves continued in such an unsustainable manner, then, there could be violence, not only in the Island of Cuba but also in the whole Antilles, where he estimated there were a total of 1.150.000 slaves. He warns that a social explosion in these colonies could only be prevented by direct action by government and the legislative, otherwise a peaceful change could not be expected. Without entering into the historical debate about Humboldt’s significance in a political and ideological sense, I observe that he proposes, in a liberal manner, that colonial legislation should be changed by addressing the following objectives (Humboldt 1826, 104-105):

- Colonial *legislative support* for the passing of new laws to limit *barbaric excesses*.
- To *limit to a small number*, the black men and women working in the sugar-mills.
- To accord *liberty for each slave who has served fifteen years* and to every black women who has brought four or five children to the world.
- To give *liberty to all slaves on condition* that they have to work a certain number of days on the plantation.
- To give *the slaves a part of the net product* so that they would become more concerned in the development of the agricultural economy.
- To fix within the *budget of public expenses* a sum destined to the ‘manumission’ of slaves and the improvement of their future.

- He believed it was necessary that “*local authorities* have a strong will ...,” “to control events and to open up the potential for progress, using the instruments of law and order with a *moral purpose*.”
- He acknowledged *sensibility* and the sentiment of *human dignity* and the importance of the influence of those people who have a firm *moral consideration*.

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### *Analysis of modern forms of slavery*

Slavery has been always related to the exploitation of men and women’s labour. Slavery in the Spanish Colonies to which Humboldt refers in his *Political Essay on the Island of Cuba* was officially abolished in 1886 after the establishment of the transitional status of the *patronatos* between 1880 and 1886.

It is not my focus to develop the history of the post-slavery epoch as a continuation of historical research as for example Saco (1937), but it is of great interest to discover and describe modern forms of Slavery in our own times.

I think it would be valuable to consider the development of new forms slavery that have emerged in modern Spain, a country that centuries ago had been one of the most significant nations to engage in the exploitation of black people to enhance the economic development of its colonies.

However, I want to point out that the following examples are not intended to be exhaustive, and of course, are not only related to Spain, existing in plenty of other affected countries. I have not restricted the forms of slavery to a strict definition but have subsumed the examples under the following common forms:

- Abuse of absolute authority with the total submission of the victim
- Work-exploitation
- Humiliation of the human being in different ways: physical and / or psychological maltreatment, defamation, etc.
- Discrimination and exclusion of the victim from family and / or society
- No consideration of fundamental laws
- Defenselessness of victims
- Impunity of perpetrators and authorities
- Severe moral and physical consequences

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### *Sexual exploitation*

In spite of the abolition of slavery in 19th century in the Western world, Antonio Salas (2004) has proved with his research that in the 21st century in

Spain the slave-trade from Africa continues. Today that does not mean the colonies, but within the state of Spain itself, a nation with a democratic constitution which this year is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

The author believes it is necessary to denounce this form of exploitation that is not only common in Spain but also in the whole of Europe. Whilst using a pseudonym, the author received e-mails with the most horrifying threats and declarations that there are judges and lawyers who are using “sex services” and thereby taking advantage of the calamitous circumstances of these slaves, mainly women, and this in the 21st century in our so called “civilized society.”

Each criminal network responsible for the sexual exploitation of women and minors commonly has income of about 3 million euros (Salas 2004, 159). The characteristics of this exploitation and the making of sex slaves are as follows:

- The rape, forcible removal and transportation of woman and/or minors from Africa or Asia and their transportation to Europe.
- Obliging women to become prostitutes and work for their procurer and to give him all or the main part of the money she is earning.
- In the contract between prostitute and procurer the women are required to totally submit, with body and soul, to the buyer giving him the right to kill, not only the woman, but also her family in the place of origin. In many contracts appears the clause “The value of my life is equivalent to the sum I owe my pimp” (Salas 2004, 19).
- Selling the prostitute to another procurer gaining a considerable sum through this transaction.

The consequences in most cases are severe physical harm (for instance AIDS) and psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and other problems as for example the ability to form relationships with a partner.

This modern form of slavery involving especially young women and girls includes rape, kidnapping and prostitution under the strict vigilance of a procurer demanding the women’s total submission, body and soul.

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### *Exploitation as home-slaves of Sudan tribes*

In the same way, but from a personal perspective, Mende Nazer (2004), from the Nubian tribe of Sudan tells of her experiences as a slave. She denounces another form of slavery of the 21st century, affecting thousands of minors, boys and girls, from Sudan tribes. They are transported to rich households of Arabian people first and then eventually sold on to other “free” European countries, ironically including those with a long tradition of democracy, for example England.

The journey into slavery of the minors is as follows:

- The Arabian militias attack the Nubian tribes, kill the adults, rape the minors, abducting them from their families, and selling them as slaves.
- Deprived of their liberty and isolated from the exterior world, brought up without any love and humane treatment, these minors and adolescents are working until they are physically exhausted, receive punishments, are humiliated and suffer sexual harassment.
- They are sold to other houses including representatives of Diplomatic missions of so called 'free countries'.

The consequences of this treatment and trade are severe physical and psychological problems. There are no definitive figures for the number of children who die under these harsh working conditions, or by committing suicide, whilst others by attempting suicide cause long lasting consequences.

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### *Sexual tourism and the exploitation of children*

Another significant form of enslavement arises from the need to service the sexual tourism industry and which includes the abuse of minors in countries such as Latin America and Asia. The United Nations Organization for Children (UNICEF) estimates in its last report that about 1,200,000 minors have been trafficked for this purpose.

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### *Other forms of slavery: Holocaust Nazi, conjugal slaves, and domestic violence.*

From the beginning of slavery in the Middle Ages (and even in earlier epochs, such as the ancient Greek civilization) until modern times, slavery has maintained as its first objective the dehumanization of the enslaved people. The process involves their conversion into objects or animals and is accompanied by discriminatory practices intended to demonstrate their inferiority in comparison to other human beings. The main purpose of this dehumanization is to accrue economic benefit or to demonstrate the power of the enslaver.

That's how the Jewish people were treated when they were subjected to mass death during the Nazi holocaust in the 1930's and 40's as they were considered to be "an inferior race by a superior race." Even today it remains a means to justify the torture and disappearance, for political reasons, of "persons who were opposed to the military dictatorship" in South American countries. Further, it is the reason why the great majority of Afghan women are considered to be "inferior to men" and have been enslaved by their husbands as "conjugal slaves" and that's why, in the first nine months of 2004 more than 40 women in Spain have been killed by their partners, the majority as a consequence of denouncing their husbands for domestic violence.

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## *Mobbing*

You will recall that earlier in this presentation I pointed out that slavery was denounced by Alexander von Humboldt as “the most important evil which afflicts humanity” (Humboldt 1826: 103). To this day this truth remains. Modern forms of enslavement are directed at people of “another race” or “color,” “tribe” or “sex,” “other political ideas” or simply for having “other ideas” or even worse, when “they attempt to point out that the enterprise or institution is failing to meet its obligations as prescribed.”

So there exists a covert form of enslavement of people, where those apparently equal to others and whose only apparent defect is the pronouncement of their own ideas and convictions in front of others which are counter to those held by the governing party or institution or powerful people.

The famous Spanish psychologist, Piñuel (2003: 205) has denounced psychological harassment in the work-place or mobbing as an “evil in the world.” Recent research in 2004 by this psychologist showed that mobbing ([www.leymann.se/English](http://www.leymann.se/English)) affects not less than 22 percent of employees of the Public Treasury in Spain. Further, according to the Spanish psychologist Buendía, 44 percent of employees and professors at the University of Murcia in Spain, also experienced mobbing. Also Alberto Reig Tapia (“El País” 27th of June 2004) denounced practices of abuse of authority specially in the University. Institutions of the State in all Europe (Di Martino 2003), especially in Educational Centers and the Public Health Institutions are affected as outlined below:

- The psychological maltreatment of colleagues of inferior, equal or superior status in the work-place has as a primordial objective the social destruction of the person, to make impossible their effectiveness, chances of promotion and ultimately to exclude them from the work-place and is made up of:
- Continuous unjustified criticism, defamation and injury.
- Humiliating treatment, ridicule and interruption in communication with her / him leading to social exclusion.
- Discriminatory treatment, especially in applying statutes and workplace regulations.

When the victim comes forward to complain the administration of or the enterprise have been known to initiate disciplinary measures which it can be argued represents an official continuation of the harassment. In effect the harassment is tolerated and those responsible protected by the administration and ultimately harassment is practiced by the administration itself. This kind of harassment is known as “institutional mobbing.”

All this provokes in the victim self doubt, insecurity, serious physical and psychological consequences which are often disputed by the administration and considered to be “inventions.” The overall intention is to make the victim

feel culpable and thereby provoking the “voluntary” self-exclusion of the victim from her / his work-place (cf. Prüfer 2003).

There are similarities to be found between domestic violence and psychological harassment in the work-place. The physically and psychologically aggressive treatment often is considered by victims and pursuers as “normal” behavior. In Spain there is a famous expression by a Spanish woman victim of domestic violence to the judge trying her case: “My husband beats me as often as normal.”

At the very moment when domestic violence or violence in the work-place is being denounced, we are also seeing the beginning of the latest phase of violence: husbands killing their wives and the institutions or enterprises initiating unjustified disciplinary measures as a means of intensifying the depression and social destruction of the victim.

However, the difference between the two forms of violence is that normally the perpetrator of domestic violence is often caught and condemned or commits suicide as a form of self-justice, while perpetrators and protectors of psychological violence in the work-place normally escape punishment because they are both judge and jury and take part in the disciplinary measures. In Spain, there exists a legal vacuum to confront this sort of violence or slavery. However, due to our “advanced civilization” where physical violence is forbidden and yet can be easily realized, slavery and violence, including both physical and psychological forms, as Humboldt already distinguished, has become more and more purely psychological. I will cite two voices that have been raised against toxic “neo-management” (Piñuel 2004) and institutions:

In the case of harassment in the work-place, the person loses the place which she/he is occupying in the workplace society, her/his liberty and also her/his anthropological identity as a person. Nobody can be humiliated, even less at her/his work-place, because she/he can't escape because of her/his own economic necessity. Limiting the possibilities of work signifies a means of creating violence against human dignity – promotion, realization, security or social justice, generating a sort of P-S-Y-C-H-O-L-O-G-I-C-A-L S-L-A-V-E-R-Y leaving the person without any defences, life-purpose, worth-while duty, and without a sense of the society she/he belongs to. (López / Vázquez, 2003:17)

Every day the perpetrators are generating an authentic coup d'état, because, from their egocentric power centers, which are held unlawfully, they see themselves as above the law, imposing instead a form of power based on social control, typical of feudal states, demanding from the victim a form of enslavement. And they are able to do so because they are practically immune. This is unacceptable and paradoxical because it is developing an illegal system which is transforming this type of violence into a permanent violation of

law. Thus, mobbing represents an enormous step back in the effort of humanity to go ahead to a just, free, pluralistic and pacific society. Fortunately, the ethic of Human Rights and the collective power of the harassed will make it impossible to return to a middle-ages. (Blanco Barea, 2003:248)

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*Analysis of differences and similarities of ancient and new forms of slavery*

Humboldt lived in a position of almost total economic and ideological liberty. There existed only a certain dependence on the Spanish Kingdom who permitted his research in their Colonies by providing Letters of Recommendation. So Humboldt could denounce the human condition of the slaves in the *Essay* in question.

If we contrast ancient and modern forms of slavery, we observe the following similarities:

Treatment of human beings as animals in the following ways:

- Work-exploitation until removal from the work-place
- Inhuman work and life-conditions
- Discrimination
- Without any or with very small remuneration
- Physical and psychological maltreatment, aberrant and inhuman punishments
- Buying and selling and reselling of slaves
- Restriction and complete invalidation of liberty
- The victims can't have relationships with their families nor with friends.
- They are unable to dedicate any time to their own life and their own personal development.
- Laws of fundamental rights are not respected.
- Hiding the truth and the impossibility of referring to justice: discriminatory treatment and being defenceless before the laws, where these exist.
- Humiliating psychological treatment
- Overseers treat slaves with cynicism, they laugh at them and lie.
- Culpabalization of victims
- Banalization and ridiculization of the terror to which victims are submitted.

The first and most important realization, is that today, there exist various forms of enslavement and an enormous variety of slavery, compared to the Humboldtian age, two Centuries ago. However, in our epoch, we can look back to the 19th Century when slavery was officially abolished. And during the 20th Century, especially after 1940 and the Nazi Holocaust, when a great number of States signed UNO and other diverse Treaties and International

Conventions defending Human Rights. All of these conventions prohibit inhuman practices and the partial and/or absolute subjugation under the direction of managers, Juntas and even entire Governments. Nevertheless, we can observe a proven tendency to tolerate covert slavery in Europe and the so-called “Free World” especially those forms with the objective of enabling sexual exploitation (especially of minors). On the other hand, in the last twenty years we have seen the development of new forms of psychological slavery within a much more sophisticated system. However, these new forms of slavery, in spite of the presence of the aforementioned international Conventions and Organizations, are tolerated, protected and even generated by the responsible institutions themselves and that’s why there is silence, even by judges in the most consolidated democracies. This situation, equal to the Humboldtian times (when the agenda was to bring in legislation intending to protect slaves from abuse), makes victims absolutely defenseless.

The hypocritical attitudes of democratic Governments which signed the Conventions and Treaties in favor of Human Rights and against slavery find expression in their self-promotion of defending Human Rights, whilst, at the same time, by the back door they protect and tolerate inhuman treatments. They do this by treating victims cynically or don’t recognize them as victims at all, as the representatives of institutions will never recognize their responsibility for crimes committed in their name, as Fernández (2003) indicates in his scientific study about Uruguayan post dictatorial society.

It is important to state, that the transition of physical slavery to psychological slavery has been driven by changing social attitudes to the acceptability of physical punishment of human beings and the easy identification of visible injuries and death. The recognition of psychological maltreatment depends on exact instruments for its verification. In the last fifty years these instruments have improved enormously and are able to certificate depression and post-traumatic stress, for example, abuse at work is known to be one of the related causes. (Test Leymann/Test Cisneros I-V). Nevertheless, judges in Spain, normally without any knowledge or experience of the issues, generally refuse to accept psychological findings that show work related harm when determining compensation claims.

In the economic and employment field range of considerations we can make the statement that in Europe and the Western world in general, workplaces in the service industries have become attractive to Africans, Asians and East-Europeans workers. However, here too we can see that the same serious forms of exploitation exist, as with older forms of slavery, as unscrupulous employers take advantage of the immigrant workers illegal status. On the other hand, due to the specialization of work and the increasing importance of higher academic education of the so called “civilized” population,

there is hard fought competition for academic and employee work-places, which provides motivation and opportunities for mobbing-activities which are completely unrelated to real work-place concerns.

Humboldt confirmed in his political study about Cuba that slaves were forced to succumb to the absolute feudalism of their superiors producing in the individual, physical and psychological illness. At the same time he denounced the resulting impunity of those superiors and landlords. Today's studies confirm that human beings still rest in absolute dependence to superiors and institutions producing physical and psychological consequences with very difficult or nearly impossible to recover from. In the 1980's, Leymann (1993/2002, 121) studied suicide related to harassment at the work-place in Sweden and discovered that in 1986, the cases of suicide were greater than those of working accidents (at a ratio of 100 to 65).

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### *Conclusions*

It's evident that slavery in our official post-slavery era is more virulent than before. We can say the phenomenon is more severe because of its more and more covert character. The principles of International Rights recognized by the Statue of the Military Tribunal of Nuremberg which have been confirmed by the General Assembly of the UNO in Resolution 95 (I) of 11th of December 1946 listed as crimes against humanity: "assassination, extermination, reduction to slavery, deportation and every other inhuman act against every civil population ...." But not only are international rights violated but also fundamental national constitutional rights.

Slavery and the consideration of Human Rights continue today to have a great importance in political life, because of the judicial hypocrisy of many democratic governments. 200 years after the analysis of slavery in Cuba, by Humboldt.

As was acknowledged in 2004, by the General Secretary of Amnesty International who declared, there is a state of "Crisis of Human Rights" that can be attributed to the huge propagation of slavery, especially of women of the third world and Eastern Europe who are recruited as prostitutes in modern Europe with potentially epidemic consequences for HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and harassment in the work-place.

With the statement of judicial hypocrisy of democratic states we can extend this declaration to a "crisis of democracy" and the "crisis of the objective application of rights and laws."

I am ashamed to say that according to the UNO in the 21st century there are 250 million persons living in conditions which can be called as slavery, and not only in far away Continents such as Asia and Africa. This is a direct

historical continuation of the experience of approximately 13 million Africans who were forced to undertake the voyage of slavery from Africa to the American continent several centuries ago (cf. Prüfer 2001, 230) and that was so forcefully denounced by Alexander von Humboldt. Without any compromising his position to political, ideological ideas or relationships, Humboldt saw as a unique solution the application of an ethical and moral code to the said obvious crisis in 18th and 19th century. His ideas are as relevant today as they were two hundred years ago.

Whilst during Humboldtian times, politicians discussed the abolition of institutionalized slavery hiding their pro-slavery position behind economic and sociological pretexts, today's democratic governments commit with absolute impunity the most evil violations of fundamental rights predicating "the final point (*punto final*)" and "to forget" when according to judicial, psychological and sociological studies it is absolutely illegal (Fernández 2003 / López Garrido) and impossible to overcome the collective memory.

In conclusion I believe institutional slavery in Humboldtian times can be demonstrated to have been substituted by forms of covert institutional slavery that can only exist because they are tolerated and protected by institutions. This change occurred during the transitional post-slavery epoch when slaves in Cuba were accorded the status of free men, with the crucial difference of being given a devalued social status, by being forbidden to use the term "Don" (a title of distinction) and the right to use their second family name. So while slaves during the years 1880 to 1886 were recognized to be equal by the judicial system, they were not protected from the humiliation of being regarded as second class people (Scott / Zeuske 2004, 539), a subtler form of branding.

That is why I am defining "slavery" as all abuses of power and humiliation and claim the:

- Overt recognition that victims of slavery are caused physical and / or psychological damage.
- To get through to the truth, to end the impunity and the abuse of power.
- The means reaching these goals require the necessary consciousness of victims who have to recognize the cause of their misfortune and this is also true of those who are abusing power.

This project is also affecting individuals who have to work in prevention with their children and in self-aid organizations and associations. In the words of Alexander von Humboldt that means a major reconsideration of our morality as it affects our immediate surroundings as a means of achieving a global abolition of slavery in all terms and forms.

Writing my paper in Europe and going to America I felt a similar horror as Humboldt when writing his Chapter "About Slavery," recognizing the

confirmation of my hypothesis that there exist only few fundamental variations in human treatment by powerful men comparing with the Humboldtian era.

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