

Legacies of British slavery by Georgina Arnott

In her remarkable cover essay, historian Georgina Arnott – building on the work of her colleagues around the world, and drawing on a massive new London database – explores the legacies of British slavery and the extraordinary compensation of British slave owners, some of which compensation money found its way to the Australian colonies – a well-kept secret that will surprise many and that has major implications for modern Australia as it contends with racism and colonialism.



Georgina Arnott

An extract from Georgina Arnott's essay

'Australia's own entanglement in the transatlantic slave business is now emerging, albeit slowly and in ways complicated by its particular relations with nineteenth-century Britain. This is largely thanks to the production of a publicly available database of British slave-owners by the Legacies of British Slave-ownership (LBS), a University College London history project. The database shows that dozens of slave-owning men and women, and their children, travelled to the newly forming Australian colonies to take advantage of their opportunities. The movement of capital and ideas from Britain's slave colonies to Australia, although far less quantifiable, appears to have been even more effecting, stimulating the growth of settlements, industries, and governance structures. How we tell these stories, and where we place emphasis – on the individual slave-owners, capital flows, policies, labour practices, psychological patterns – will shape how we think about their impact on the society we live in today.'

About Georgina Arnott

Georgina Arnott is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Melbourne and author of *The Unknown Judith Wright* (2016).

Interviews

Georgina Arnott is available for interview.

Please contact Peter Rose at editor@australianbookreview.com.au or call on (03) 9699 8822.

This article, one of a series of *ABR* commentaries addressing cultural and political subjects, was funded by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund.