

Running Log of Discussion Questions

#3

1. What is The New Slavery, and how many people does it impact?
How is The New Slavery Different from The Old Slavery?
Why is slavery currently in the midst of a resurgence?
2. What is the single aspect of The New Slavery that distinguishes this form of labor control from legal forms of capitalist exploitation that are also degrading and oppressive.
3. Explain how debt lies at the heart of slavery in Brazil. Do you see any links between the way peons and others are roped into slavery and the way that the Brettons Woods institutions now controls many less developed countries?
4. Explain the chain of people who constitute the system of slavery that Le Breton is studying in the book *Trapped*. Describe how each type of person depends on the other types, and how people in the different categories treat one another. How might these people defend themselves if accused of aiding and abetting slavery—the worst form of human rights abuse short of murder?
5. Discuss whether you feel that the Brazilian peons of the book *Trapped* are “slaves” in the same sense as the excerpt that we read (concerning Seba, the Malian woman who works in Paris). What is different and what is the same about them and their situation? Touch on the way they became slaves, the level of coercion and exploitation, and the temporality of their enslavement?
6. Why did Brazil adopt the motto “land without men for men without land” in the 1970s? What development efforts did they support in order to settle people in the Amazon region, and were these development efforts successful? What has happened to the environment?
7. Do you feel that the Brazilian state is acting effectively to put a stop to the slavery that now ensnares an estimated 15,000 people? Discuss cases in which state agents (including police, judges, “the Feds,” and flying squads) do or do not aid in decreasing slavery.
8. As Binka Le Breton states, the system of slavery in Brazil thrives in an environment marked by extreme violence and lawlessness. What reasons does she give for this violence and lawlessness? How do people in Amazonia feel and talk about it?
9. Why do some peons not recognize their situation as one of slavery? In the final analysis, do you agree with Le Breton’s assertion that the Brazilian peons are slaves, and that they simply need institutional and moral support to recognize their situation for what it is?

10. In understanding TNCs (transnational corporations), it is important to understand some related concepts. Can you explain the following, as outlined in the McMichael book:
 - NICs
 - sub-contracting
 - free-trade zones or export-processing zones (EPZs)
 - maquiladoras
 - technological shedding
 - new international division of labor
11. Why do global factories tend to hire more women than men? Why are *rural* women particularly important in these factories?
12. From the perspective of the female workers, what drives them to seek employment in global factories? What are their long-term goals?
13. How do the societies where these global factories are located feel about the high employment rates of women?
14. In both Thailand and Mexico, how does international capital rely on localized gender ideologies and patriarchal hegemony to recruit, discipline, dispose of, and exploit female workers?
15. Explain the elaborate ceremonial trips that Thai workers make in order to give ritual donations to village temples. Explain Mill's assertion that by organizing and participating in ceremonial offerings, young rural women are able to the "resolve the tensions" in their self-image that their factory work entails.