

Joseph Beaumont, Esq.

THE NEW SLAVERY

An Account of the Indian and Chinese Immigrants in British Guiana

The New Slavery is a text that is ultimately concerned with the way in which narratives set out the parameters of identity within spaces of colonial contact.

Beaumont's term as Chief Justice of British Guiana lasted between 1863 and 1868, although he was appointed against the wishes of some of British Guiana's plantocracy. These governmental appointments were made to ensure the independent administration of justice thereby protecting the indentured labourers; but it is just such a lack of independence that Beaumont decries in *The New Slavery*. As Chief Justice, he openly and regularly opposed the decisions of stipendiary magistrates when he believed that they were biased in favour of the planters. Unsurprisingly, Beaumont quickly fell afoul of those in power, and the Colonial Office would find that although Beaumont had not committed judicial misconduct, his "want of judicial temper" and his tendency to "embarrass the Executive Government rather than to promote the ends of justice" warranted removing him from office.

To read *The New Slavery* as simply a legal declaration or a compilation of facts pertaining to the administration of justice during Beaumont's time as Chief Justice in the colony, is interesting in and of itself. But to read the text in this fashion is to miss out on an opportunity to explore one of the most important, although less tangible machinations of colonization. Specifically, *The New Slavery* provides an important vantage point from which to consider the significance of stories and storytelling to the colonial enterprise.

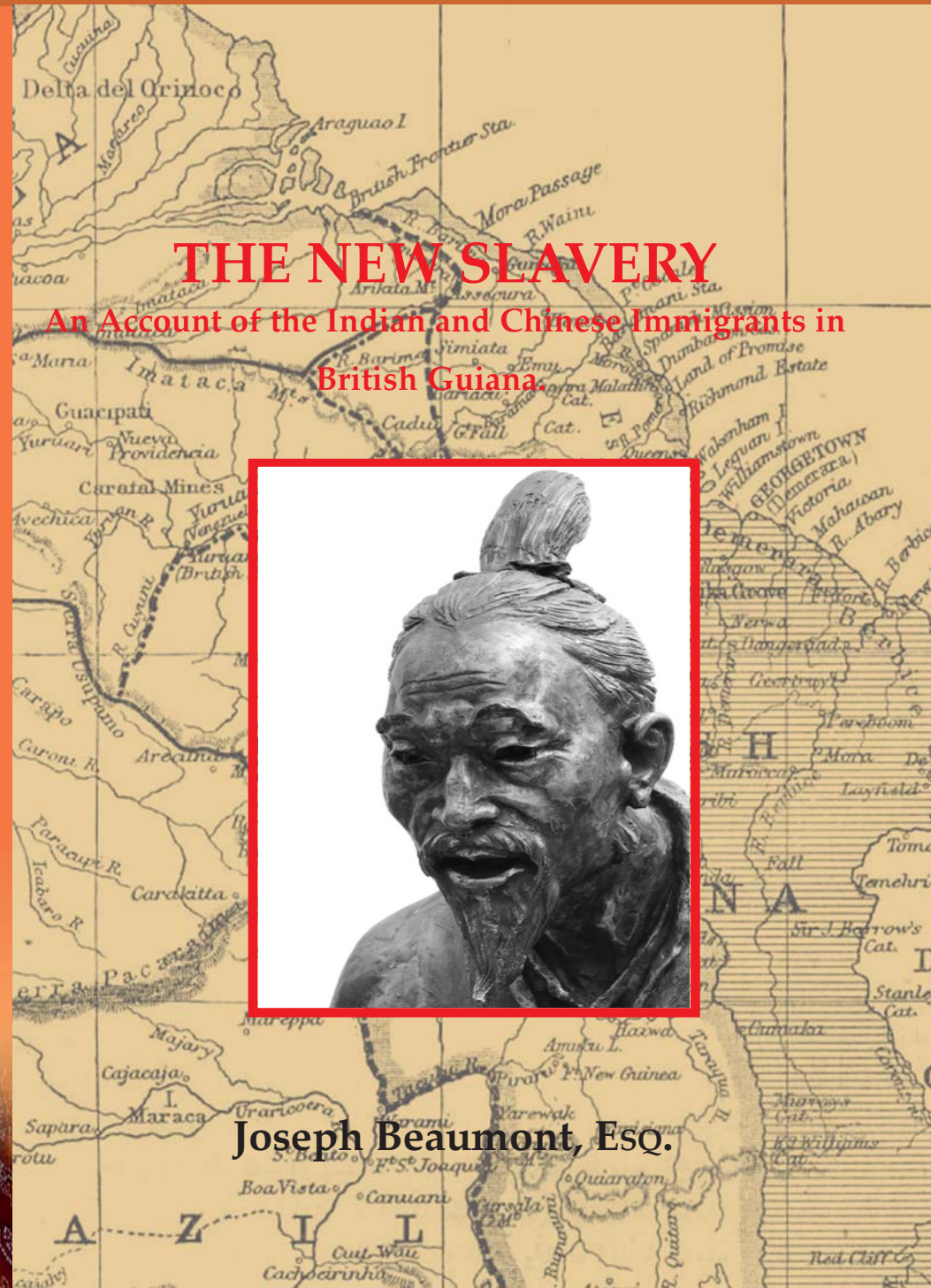
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