Book Reviews


In: New West Indian Guide/ Nieuwe West-Indische Gids 56 (1982), no: 1/2, Leiden, 90-110
Haitian literature is arguably the most complex and interesting of the literature written in the French language outside of continental France. This fact is not widely known, in part, to the absence of a systematic history of Haitian literature. Ghislain Gouraige's *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne de l'Indépendance à nos jours* (1960) and Raphaël Berrou & Pradel Pomplius' two-volume *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne* (1975) are aimed at Haitian secondary school students. The best to date is still the "Haiti" chapter of Auguste Viatte's *Histoire littéraire de l'Amérique française* (1954), a mine of information and the first attempt at a systematic ordering. The interesting essays of Maximilien Laroché, a Haitian scholar working in Canada, and particularly his *Le Miracle et la métamorphose* (1970), should also be mentioned.

J. Michael Dash is Lecturer in French Literature at the University of the West Indies (Mona, Jamaica). His *Literature and Ideology in Haiti 1915-1961* is a useful complement to Ulrich Fleischmann's *Ideologie une Wirklichkeit in der Literatur Haitis* (1969), and an important contribution to the history and interpretation of Haitian letters. Dash's title is somewhat misleading, since a long first chapter is dedicated to a "Survey of the Nineteenth Century". The chapter is most welcome: it explains concisely and convincingly why a good part of Haitian nineteenth-century literary production is (and could hardly have failed to be) mimetic in its techniques and nationalistic in its themes. In this first chapter, Dash also pleads for the rehabilitation of the "Generation of La Ronde", constituted by writers who wrote in the literary magazine *La Ronde* between 1898 and 1902, and who were accused by following generations of having produced a literature of escape, based on servile imitation of French Parnassians and Symbolists. Dash shows that *La Ronde* deserves better than this perfunctory dismissal: one of the merits of these writers, he reminds us, is to have affirmed the necessity of technical competence, which engaged Haitian authors have tended to neglect or even to deride under the pretext that it would weaken the ideological impact of their writings.

The U.S. occupation of 1915-1934 saw the birth of modern Haitian literature, which forms the subject of the essays in Dash's chapters 2-7. After a chapter on "The American Occupation and the Beginning of a Literature of Protest" and one on "The Indigenous Movement" (whose ambition was "to create a lite-
DASH shows, in "The Way Through Africa," how the African components of the Haitian soul, neglected in the past in favor of the French ones, came to inspire Indigenist writings — not an unmixed blessing in his view. Here, DASH suggests that "the anti-intellectual tendencies of Indigenism had intensified into a total immersion in the irrational" (p. 115) and claims that "the lure of black authenticity ... would bring black Fascism to power in 1957" (p. 111); this, I think, is overstating the case somewhat. At any rate, it should be pointed out that, while many theorists and poets indeed preached a rather venomous noirisme, novelists did not. Some — JACQUES-STÉPHEN ALEXIS, for example — explicitly denounced it. In "Jacques Roumain: The Marxist Counterpoint", DASH argues that the author of Masters of the Dew should be considered "a Romantic individualist rather than an ideologue" (p. 130). The next two essays are devoted to René Depestre and JACQUES-STÉPHEN ALEXIS. The ideological importance (and influence) of these two writers is well known; it is a pity that the focus of DASH’s study does not allow him to examine in more detail their contribution to the artistic originality — of vision as well as of expression — of Haitian literature. In his "Epilogue", DASH explains the current mediocrity of the Haitian literature produced within the country — as opposed to that produced in foreign exile. He also analyzes the first full-length novel written in Haitian créole, FRANKETIENNE’s Dezaf (later adapted into French by the author under the title Les Affres d’un défi), a brilliant work, far superior to the other créole language novels which have subsequently been published.

It seems to me that the different chapters of Literature and Ideology in Haiti 1915–1967 could have been better articulated, and that some of DASH’s remarks concerning vodun are debatable. There are numerous typos in the French quotations, but these are minor flaws in an otherwise excellent overview of Haitian literature and its ideological underpinnings. The book will no doubt inspire needed systematic studies of those Haitian writers, schools, and themes whose importance J. MICHAEL DASH so ably brings out.

This review is a translation and adaptation of one written for the Revue d’histoire littéraire de la France.

REFERENCES


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En les forçant un peu, ces pages sont groupées sous trois thèmes principaux: la traite, le \textit{"vécu de l’esclavage}, et \textit{comprendre l’esclavage}.

La traite rappelle d’abord un fort intéressant chapitre de J.-D. Fage, déjà bien connu en France, mais le prolongent un peu en manière de hors-d’oeuvre, les développements de Melville et de Frances Herskovits sur leur voyage au Dahomey et au Nigeria, et de George Fredrickson sur le racisme.

Sous le titre un peu abstrait du \textit{"vécu de l’esclavage} interviennt deux études sur le marronage bien particulier de la Jamaïque où prirent forme des communautés d’aniciens esclaves qui vécurent plus d’un siècle dans les Blue Mountains, et un chapitre de l’ouvrage de Herbert Gutman sur les familles des plantations de Good Hope en Caroline du Sud. Cette partie ne donne pas une idée bien avantageuse de la variété des recherches entreprises sur la vie et sur le travail des esclaves américains.

\textit{Comprendre l’esclavage} veut mettre en relief l’extrême diversité de l’attitude des maîtres selon les régions des États-Unis, la différence très grande de la productivité de l’esclavage selon les colons et les endroits. Il est question de la résistance \textit{"au jour le jour}, de la vie sexuelle, de la part de la vie de famille chez les esclaves américains. On enregistre beaucoup de discussions, l’amour de débats infinis, heureusement sans grande intention de comparaisons.

Tout cela vivant, mais se rapportant surtout au XIXᵉ siècle, et sans la connaissance de l’Afrique, même de l’Ouest, la seule qui soit citée ici.

Une brève, mais excellente note bibliographique clôt le livre; et nous laisse sur une excellente impression. Il s’agit surtout de livres américains publiés depuis une quinzaine d’années. On eût seulement désiré un choix plus sévère, quelques mots de jugements critiques et un ordre plus méthodique.
The history of Trinidad is extremely well served by the appearance of this intelligently conceived and ably written narrative by Bridget Brereton, whose previous study, *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad* (Cambridge, 1979) is widely acclaimed. Here Brereton examines the entire history of European colonial settlement in Trinidad, with special attention to the post-1783 period. Divided into twelve chapters, each dealing with a chronological period, it attempts to give comprehensive treatment to each theme. Chapter Five, for example, deals with "The Ordeal of Free Labour and the Colonial Economy, 1838–1900," while Chapter Six examines Indian immigrants under the curious title, "The Newcomers, 1838–1917." Similarly, Chapters Seven and Eight focus on two separate themes over the same historical span: "The Development of Creole Society, 1838–1938," and "Politics in a Crown Colony, 1838–1914."

As a general history the book does an admirable job in three very important areas. First, it conveys a great deal of information in a direct, manageable and uncluttered style. No significant theme, event or individual is omitted. Spanish colonialism is examined; as is the complex conversion to English laws, custom and culture in the early nineteenth century. Politics, economics, society and culture are effectively intertwined throughout. In the second place, it includes an excellent bibliography, both in the text and on pages 254–258. Brereton's commendable capacity to synthesize, and her keen eye for the quotable phrase, are seen at their best in her final chapter, "Free at last? 1950–1962." Although designed for the general reader, it is a work which the specialist can read with delight and consult with confidence. In the third place, Brereton gets away from the tedious adherence to political history which seems to be such a standard part of the historiography of the English Caribbean. Here the reader will realize that there were always groups and classes and issues which did not get the attention of the local governors, and hence were not reported to the Colonial Office. At no time will the reader ever have to wonder where the real Trinidad is.

But the traditionalists need have no fear. The conventional themes are all there: Charles III's colonial reforms, the French immigration, slavery and the African slave trade, the administration of Thomas Picton, British Crown Colony Rule, the travails of free labor after emancipation, the growth of the cocoa industry, the plantation economy and the indenture of East Indians, the operation of the Legislative Council, labor organization after the first World War, the economic impact of oil, the political impact of Eric Williams, (Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago from 1956 until his death in 1981), and the social function of the calypso.

Although the author readily admits to some deliberate omissions and shortcomings, she does not explain why she opts to treat the calypso yet neglect cricket, especially since it is so difficult to obtain the brilliant analysis by C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*. Nor can an omission of the crucial role of Trinidad in the West Indies Federation be justified — the moreso since her terminal date, 1962, is so intricately related to the demise of the Federation. Given her fine bibliography, it is surprising that both education and the church are given such short shrift, since both are important socially and politically in the history of the island. Her treatment of economics, too, is too general and too thin. Nevertheless,
these minor blemishes are readily overlooked (if not forgotten) in the multiple commendations which this book evokes. BRERETON has lifted insular history several notches, and if she and her colleagues can continue the operation for the other islands, then a new phase of Caribbean historiography will have arrived. A History of Modern Trinidad is a most promising beginning.

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WALTER RODNEY presented his History of the Guyanese Working People in part “to identify the local changes that modified the picture of underdevelopment as sheer stagnation” (p. 217). To attain this modest but theoretically significant goal, he deliberately concentrated on the period between 1881 and 1905. During this time, the plantation-based sugar industry in British Guiana underwent a sweeping and astonishingly rapid transformation. Under pressure of stiff competition on the world sugar market, the number of estates declined from 109 to 45. Individual planters either shut down their operations or sold out, and limited liability companies tightened their grip on the industry.

For purposes of RODNEY's argument, these major changes are significant because they suggest that even wider transformations occurred. In the initial chapters of the history, RODNEY cautiously defines the limits of those wider changes. First, he notes that only the plantation elite had sufficient resources to respond to the endless problems of water control on the low-lying Guianese coast, and to the depressing international economic forces impinging on the colony. Second, RODNEY emphasizes that the laboring populations paid dearly for a restructured sugar industry. Estate closings raised unemployment, and a swelling reserve army of laborers encouraged planters to slash wages and to intensify the work demanded of each individual.

Although the sugar planters retained considerable power during the period, RODNEY demonstrates that their overall position in the wider political economy still eroded. In Chapters 3 and 4, he shows clearly that, to fill the economic void, local peasants, farmers, ranchers, artisans, miners, and petty merchants all found ways to expand their activities, and he devotes special attention to the production of gold and timber, and to the cultivation of rice. More needs to be said about these important developments but, for RODNEY’s purposes, the analysis is sufficiently detailed to prove that, within limits, small-scale producers could, and did, pursue vital avenues of change in a plantation-based economy.

In Chapters 5–8, RODNEY focuses on the political arena of British Guiana. He insists that the ruling planter class was not, in itself, “unshakable and immutable” (p. 126), and he shows that, through an effective Political Reform
Club, artisans, teachers and petty merchants in the colony managed to wrest some significant constitutional reforms from the planter-oriented legislature. Rodney also chronicles the labor struggles that Indians and African Creoles waged on the plantations. But here, he wonders why “proletarian organization” continued to remain so weak and underdeveloped (p. 165). His answer, in part, is a subtle and sophisticated essay on “Race as a contradiction among the working people.” Finally, Rodney examines how the 1905 Georgetown riots impressed some of the participants with the need for systematic labor organization.

Rodney informs his entire study with frequent references to the title category, “the working people.” As a loose cover for wage-laborers, and small-scale producers and merchants, Rodney’s use of the term is intelligible and serviceable. But at times he attempts to pack a more rigid and concrete meaning into the term, and at these points his otherwise brilliant and persuasive argument goes awry.

Rodney asserts, for example, that the term “working people” refers to one of several historical “entities” (p. 221). He contends that it came into being at Emancipation in 1838, and consisted of an undifferentiated mass of “plantation workers,” who subsequently differentiated themselves economically and politically (p. 218). Unfortunately, there is no good reason to accept the existence of this posited “entity.” Slave conditions in British Guiana are as yet little studied, but there is enough evidence to conclude that slaves here, as elsewhere, entered freedom sharply divided among themselves by occupation and in other ways. Not all labored on the plantations, even under slavery, and afterwards many continued to pursue special interests in trade, artisan manufacturing, and provision farming.

Rodney also advances a wavering conception of the so-called differentiation process. In general, he readily admits the existence, for example, of “peasant production,” which ex-slaves and others often combined with wage labor on the estates. But occasionally he seems unwilling to acknowledge a growing diversity of economic roles until it is evident that a special activity can fully occupy an individual. When he adopts this more limited view, Rodney then appears to deny the existence of the peasants that he elsewhere discusses and labels as such: “Rural wage earners in Guiana in the nineteenth century were so close to the land that they have been imprecisely designated as peasants” (p. 60).

Rodney’s *History* is not, therefore, without its errant and unrefined features. But in its central argument — that underdevelopment is the changing product of a long history of economic and political struggle, and not the stagnant result of a single institution — the *History* is elegant, well-documented and entirely convincing. Always sensitive to the opportunities for economic and political maneuver that Guyanese people found and made for themselves in an otherwise oppressive society, Rodney produced a work that demands attention from those interested in the particular histories of Caribbean societies, and in the wider studies of colonialism, economic development, and ethnic and labor relations.

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Richard Hart reminds us that “Looking backwards over two centuries of slavery and the slave trade in the British West Indian colonies, it is hardly credible that man could have behaved towards his fellow human beings with such calculated inhumanity” (p. 106). And he takes us back, step by step, to consider this inhumanity.

This is the first of two volumes and is designed to provide the historical and comparative context to the analysis of slavery in Jamaica. In this volume Hart discusses the origins of slavery in Greece, Rome and Moorish Spain, the enslavement of the Amerindians in the Caribbean and finally the growth of African slavery in the Americas. He discusses the capture and the march to the coast, the trade on the coast, the middle passage, sale in the Caribbean, and then the labour and brutality on the plantations.

It is a gruesome tale, and Hart does a good job. His extensive quotations from contemporary sources — African and European, slave and free — are particularly vivid, enabling one to feel as well as to understand the issues.

The author includes an excellent chapter on the successful revolution in Saint-Domingue, which clarifies Napoleon's treachery. He grapples with the vexed question of comparative colonial treatment, and seems to conclude that the British were worst; and his two concluding chapters deal with the abolition of the trade and then of slavery itself. Here, as throughout his book, he has emphasized the role of the Africans and the slaves to be free, and to abolish slavery, as the title of his work implies. He points out that “most historians have paid little or no attention to the frequent and formidable rebellions and conspiracies of the slaves, or the extent to which these events influenced the British decision” (p. iii-iv) — particularly the Jamaican rising of 1831. He observes, echoing Eric Williams, that “The Jamaican rebellion was a sure indication that if slavery was not soon abolished from above it would be destroyed from below” (p. 223).

Hart has written a useful and timely work — vivid and inclusive, with a wealth of contemporary material. And what is new is the orientation; what Herbert Aptheker and Kenneth Stampp have done for the study of slavery in the States, Richard Hart is now doing for slavery in the Caribbean. I look forward to his second volume, Blacks in rebellion.

The book is well produced, with a useful bibliography and an index.

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While the transatlantic slave trade was breathing its last gasps during the middle decades of the 19th century, a new chapter in the African diaspora began to unfold. Even as the British abolitionists were scoring their great victories, their planter opponents in the West Indies were developing schemes which would lead to a continuing flow of cheap labor from Africa. As early as the 1840's, the recruiting of "liberated Africans" and "recaptives" — slaves who were "rescued" and freed by British anti-slavery patrols while en route to the Americas — had been set in motion. In the ensuing decades, a number of British and French colonies (most notably Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana, Grenada, and Martinique) were to receive on their plantations several thousand of these post-Emancipation "voluntary" laborers.

The story of these "late arrivants" has gone largely unnoticed, most scholarly attention heretofore having been directed to Africans who entered the New World in slavery, and their descendants. In this book, MONICA SCHULER remedies this situation, taking one site of sustained post-Emancipation African immigration, Jamaica, and attempting, as a social historian, to tell its story. Her detailed account of life among some of the last African laborers to enter the New World before the regular traffic between continents trickled to a halt is important in a number of ways. It helps to fill a gap in Afro-American studies, adding to the initial inroads made by the few other scholars who have concerned themselves directly with post-Emancipation African immigrants and their descendants; it makes considerable use of present-day oral sources, in a rigorous and productive way; and it crosses disciplinary boundaries and confronts, with varying degrees of success, a number of important anthropological issues.

Drawing on her extensive archival research in Jamaica, England, and Sierra Leone, SCHULER documents the activities, as well as motives, of the labor recruiters. As the story progresses, we see how the machinery of indentured immigration quickly shed the philanthropic ideals in which it was originally cloaked and came to resemble more and more the system of slavery which had been legally abolished in 1838. Abundant evidence is adduced to show the African immigrant scheme for what it really was: an attempt "to force Afro-Jamaicans to work for lower wages through immigrant competition" (p. 29), in order to shore up the failing plantation economy.

SCHULER incorporates into her narrative not only the perspective of the planters and their recruiting agents, but that of the victims of the scheme, the African laborers themselves. Indeed, part of what makes this study special is the amount of space it devotes to the latter. The traditionally voiceless are here made to speak, both through surviving written documents and the memories carried by their living descendants. This enables SCHULER to go beyond the writing of history per se, and to bring the story she tells up to the present. A large part of the second half of the book is concerned with the Central African and Yoruba cultural traditions which have been maintained by present-day descendants of the indentured immigrants in different parts of the island.

One valuable contribution made by this study is that it settles once and for all — in this reviewer's opinion — the question of the origins of the Afro-Jamaican
religion known as *Kumina*. Many writers have assumed that *Kumina* represents a “survival” from the slave plantations, going back at least to the 18th century, or that it developed among the Maroons living in the Blue Mountains and spread eventually to the coastal regions (see, for instance, Hogg 1960; Patterson 1969; Brathwaite 1971, 1978; Barrett 1974, 1976). Literature purveying this notion continues to appear. However, Schuler’s work with present-day adherents of this religion, in combination with her archival research, clearly shows that *Kumina* was introduced to Jamaica by post-Emancipation Central African immigrants, who were heavily concentrated in the eastern parish of St. Thomas, where *Kumina* is still most strongly represented. Schuler reports that *Kumina* devotees themselves, many of whom are direct descendants of these indentured immigrants, remain fully conscious of the post-Emancipation background of their religion. My own work with *Kumina* practitioners in several parts of eastern Jamaica fully supports Schuler on this point. Hopefully, this finding will not be lost on future scholars. Its significance extends to the broader field of Afro-American studies, for as Schuler points out, a good deal of ethnographic work concerned with African cultural “retentions” in the New World has failed to distinguish between cultural traditions stemming from the period of slavery, and those introduced later by post-Emancipation African immigrants. (For a general discussion of this problem, see Mintz & Price 1976.)

“Alas, Alas, Kongo” is as much a cultural history as a social history. The author attempts to interpret her data in the light of anthropological theory, and to examine some of the cultural processes by means of which the indentured African immigrants adapted to their new situation in Jamaica. While this is one of the study’s more interesting aspects, it is also where it begins to run into problems. One such problem is a failure to distinguish adequately between culture (in the ideational sense) and social organization, and a tendency to read too much from what is known about one into the other. For instance, the author at times makes unwarranted assumptions about the socio-political organization of the immigrant laborers on the basis of what she has been able to learn from their descendants about their culture and language. She presents insufficient evidence, either archival or oral, to back her conclusion that “in Jamaica new, apparently matrilineal, descent groups were fashioned out of subgroups like the Kongo and Nsundi,” and “each subgroup appears to have had its own head” (p. 70). And she remains on equally weak ground when she discusses power relations, social control, and the regulation of marriage among the African immigrants. Tied to this difficulty is the author’s tendency to underestimate the impact on the newly-arrived Africans of the larger Creole world surrounding them. Her assertion that the African immigrants “organized their society with as little reference to the non-African world as possible” (p. 65) — a claim echoed in several parts of the book — is, at the very least, questionable.

In spite of problems such as these, “Alas, Alas, Kongo” is refreshing in its attempt to blend history and anthropology. In the end Schuler succeeds in bringing to life the African immigrants about whom she writes, and their “exceptional human qualities of endurance, resourcefulness, and creativity” (p. 10). Most importantly, this study provides us with a view, often intimate, of the life forged by a group of Africans in the New World who belong to a special category, and whose story has received too little attention. One hopes, along with Schuler, that this work will generate increased interest in such African late-comers, and that it will stimulate further studies of the worlds they fashioned and the legacies they have left in other parts of the Americas.

Of the seven chapters of this book, four are based on previously published articles and one on a public lecture. These are preceded by a chapter in which Puerto Rico's four hundred years of Spanish domination are glossed over in nine pages (sample: “Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, isolation and insulation from the world preserved in Puerto Rico and all of the Spanish Caribbean the outlook of 1492” [p. 7]), and a more acceptable “chronology of events” since the United States took over.

As the book's subtitle implies, its emphasis is on the island's political system and particularly on its relations with the United States. Several aspects of this all-pervading “status-problem” are dealt with in chapters on the failure of independence, on Luis Muñoz Marín, on the 1967 plebiscite and on recent political developments. Problems of industrialization, tourism and migration are touched on in a chapter called “The Puerto Rican jibaro: demise of spirit and symbol.”

The book is clearly meant to be an elementary introduction to Puerto Rican politics and should be judged as such. The author shows a warm sympathy for the Puerto Rican people and its problems, and the book's bibliography testifies to her efforts to get acquainted with both. Yet, even in her succinct discussion of Puerto Rico and the New Deal, should not Thomas G. Mathews' book on precisely this topic have been used? And, more seriously, if some of her readers should be really interested in the complex reasons why pro-independence movements and parties have failed so far to attract a wide following, will their intellectual curiosity be satisfied by predictable, albeit tautological, references to...
imperialism, colonialism (‘inferiority’, ‘resignation’) and personalism, phenomena which surely are not restricted to the island under discussion, yet have not succeeded in preventing de-colonization elsewhere?

Perhaps a second edition will enable Professor Johnson to deal with such questions in greater depth, to organize the book more tightly, and to correct the several errors, especially in Spanish quotations. Gordon K. Lewis wrote a laudatory Foreword.

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Island adrift: the social organization of a small Caribbean community: the case of St. Eustatius. Wout van der Bor. Leiden: Department of Caribbean Studies, Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology, 1981. 439 pp. (Paper Dfl. 35.00)

St. Eustatius is a much neglected island, both on the part of government officials and planners and on the part of social scientists. Island adrift seeks to make up for this double deficiency by combining (as R. A. J. van Lier notes in his brief Preface to the book) “scholarly research with the collection of information and insights valuable for policy and development purposes.”

St. Eustatius differs from most other Caribbean islands, we learn, in that it was never an important plantation society, but attained its colonial significance in the mid-18th century, particularly during the American war of independence, as a trading and smuggling center. The flourishing economy which resulted created the legend of the “Golden Rock.” This heritage, the author emphasizes, bears little relation to actual conditions on the island for almost the past two centuries.

During the 19th century trade declined rapidly, and with the end of the slave trade, and later slavery, the island was virtually abandoned by those who had profited by the trade, leaving the local population to fend for itself. Since the end of the 19th century, migration to areas of economic development has provided the main economic opportunity to Statians. Despite some recent growth in the tourist industry there is little possibility of major developments taking place on the island, and it is increasingly dependent upon economic aid from the outside. Government-funded employment, primarily in the public works department, therefore provides the main source of income.

With the introduction of local democracy, government employment has become controlled by local political leaders, resulting, according to van der Bor, in the emergence of patron-client relationships. Today these relationships center on two rival political parties. Economic dependency is also seen to have induced the growth of the revivalistic Seventh Day Adventist church in strong opposition to the more established Methodist and Catholic churches. Internal political and religious divisiveness has further paralyzed the island community, worsening its dependent status. Furthermore, the local belief in the eventual return of the almost mythical “Golden Rock” era, when the island was a prosperous Caribbean center, has given the Statians a rather unrealistic image of the real potential of the present island society.
While St. Eustatius' history is somewhat different from that of other West Indian islands, the general picture of exploitation, followed by neglect and underdevelopment is valid for much of the Caribbean. Likewise, the response on the part of the Statians to their condition has many parallels in other island societies. The case of St. Eustatius therefore will be of interest to scholars and planners working in the Caribbean in general. Unfortunately, however, this description of St. Eustatius is poorly organized and rather repetitive. It would have been improved if the text had been focused on a central theme, with incidental comments and information weeded out. The many extensive theoretical reviews should have been integrated into the main argument of the book. The temptation to cover too much in a study of a neglected area clearly got the better of the author.

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The aim of this study on Curaçao plantation management in the 19th century is to fill a gap in the historiography of the island. Until recent times the history of Curaçao was studied almost exclusively by Dutch amateur historians. They concentrated on political, military and church history and neglected social and economic issues. Moreover, their approach was analytical more than synthetic; comparisons with other islands in the Caribbean region were seldom made and much attention was given to colourful detail, i.e., the “petite histoire” of an isolated colonial society. Of course, there were exceptions to this rule, notably in the work of the former civil servant in St. Eustatius, G.J. van Grol, whose three-volume study on land tenure in the Dutch West Indies is the exact counterpart of an “histoire événementielle” (see Meilink-Roelofs 1982).

At first sight Renkema’s thesis follows the pattern set by van Grol. Thorough research in the archives and collections in both public and private repositories in Curaçao, the Netherlands and elsewhere has provided him with an enormous mass of serial data. These are either in narrative form (yearly reports of the Governor of Curaçao to the Netherlands, reports and letters of district commissioners to the Governor, etc.) or in numerical form (population censuses or statistics on imports, exports, harvests and livestock). Altogether these provide a firm basis for the writing of an “integrated” history, in which the interplay of social, economic, cultural and institutional factors is clearly shown. Obviously, this was the author’s aim from the outset, but I cannot suppress the feeling that in the course of his research Renkema has fallen victim to the abovementioned tradition of analytical historiography. Everything found is put in the book, be it in the text proper, in the notes or in the appendices; in this way, repetition could not be avoided and, inversely, arguments and interpretations are often inserted.
in the wrong place. Sometimes Renkema cites three or four different sources for the corroboration of one simple fact.

My main objection, however, concerns the lack of synthesis in this thesis. Chapters Four through Six (about the owners of the estates and the labourers, both before and after the emancipation of the slaves in 1863) constitute the "social side" of the narrative, whereas Chapters Two, Three and Eight concentrate on the economic and financial aspects (products of the plantations, experiments in agriculture by Governor Van Raders, land-tax and mortgages). In Chapter Seven, the influence of climate and soil on plantation management is treated. Thus there are three main lines of approach to one subject, but one gets the impression of reading three different books by the same author. One example may suffice. In Chapter Three, Renkema gives an account of the agricultural experiments of Van Raders, attributing the failure of his attempts at innovation to natural, economic and human causes (p. 89ff). The human factor is dealt with on p. 92–93, without any reference to the arguments exposed in Chapter Four (characteristics of the Curaçao plantocracy, which was distrustful of foreigners without any local prestige, etc.). Frequent quotation of Hoetink (1958) notwithstanding, this part of the picture remains underexposed. The relevant sources are presented in abundance, but there is hardly any interpretation.

The concluding chapter is a striking exception to this rule. Here Renkema presents a very clarifying comparison of the Curaçao plantation, the typical West Indian sugar plantation (Suriname and elsewhere) and the Latin American hacienda (see Wolf & Mintz 1957). There is a remarkable similarity between the Curaçao plantation and the hacienda.

As a whole, Renkema's book is a veritable goldmine of information, but to be appreciated fully the work requires close reading and the constant use of a pencil to note down cross-references and to unearth hidden interpretation, argument and unsolved questions. The valuable map of plantations drawn by M.A. Visman is reproduced on too small a scale. Binding, typography and layout are excellent.

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Hira has made an ambitious attempt to write the history of resistance in Suriname over a period of more than three centuries. His book includes descriptions of the early struggle of Amerindians against the colonizers, the struggle of slaves and maroons of African origin against the planters and their military force, and also of the conflict of Hindustani contract labourers and the emergence of the labour movement in more recent times.

The first chapter opens with a marxist critique of the pluralistic framework used in Van Lier's major work Samenleving in een grensgebied: een sociaal-historische studie van Suriname (1949; translated as Frontier society: a social analysis of the history of Surinam, 1971). As may be expected, Hira gives priority to class above race, and to class consciousness and rationality above socio-psychological explanations such as frustration. Some of the arguments are, however, presented in a rather obscure way. Commenting on Van Lier's explanation that "the social relations which were important in determining life in the Colony... came about as a result of the joint striving of a group of people to attain certain objectives, and of their views testifying, in doing so, to a mentality which was connected with certain given situations" (1971: 2), Hira asks, "At what point in history did the slave and his master together make the decision to take away the freedom of the first in order to serve the latter?" Instead of pointing to the fact that Van Lier's formulation may lead to absurd questions, the author seems to be highly astonished that Van Lier does not give an answer to this "crucial" question.

Despite the prosaic effusion that doing historical work on Suriname without consulting the work of Van Lier is like entering into a labyrinth in the night without a lantern, no other references (except for some critical notes in the first pages) are made to Samenleving in een grensgebied. Not all the theoretical points made are convincing to me. I do not understand, for instance, why a theory of pluralism must necessarily be able to provide a consistent and closed explanation for the origin of the plural society. Hira's critique is focused on the theory of pluralism without mentioning the other key concepts in Van Lier's analysis: plantation colony and frontier society. Unfortunately Hira's study does not provide an elaborated analysis of the development of classes in Suriname society, nor does it explore the concept of class in colonial plantation societies. Instead, it gives a series of descriptions of revolts and other manifestations of resistance interpreted from a marxist perspective. The pitfalls of a marxist approach are not completely avoided. Hira tends to relate all cases of manifest and latent resistance to class struggle; and in the case of lack of resistance, reference is made to the power of the ideology of the ruling class to cause false consciousness in the minds of the oppressed.

In my opinion, too little attention is given to the relation between class and ethnicity. Ethnic diversity is largely reduced to a black-and-white opposition — a contrast which happens to coincide with the major class division. Although political parties were until recently firmly based on ethnic and religious affiliation, resource and power competition between the various ethnic groups are considered as more or less irrelevant.

Hira's work is based on the study of both archival material and a large number of publications. It is clear that misinterpretations and errors can never
be completely avoided; I mention just a few. The impression is given that in the 1920s the Saramaka tribe was established along the Suriname side of the Marowijne River (p. 265); in fact, the Saramaka population in this area consisted of a number of emigrants (mostly men working in the gold industry), while the majority of the Saramaka resided in the tribal area along the Suriname River. The speculation that (after 1765) "schuilders" (a category of maroons living in the forests near the plantations) were not able to establish viable communities (p. 137) is not correct; many of the "schuilders" joined the different groups of maroons in the Cottica-Commewijne area who were to form the Boni tribe. Hira's statement (p. 136) that the Matawai were not involved in the peace treaty of 1762 of the Saramaka is also incorrect; both groups signed this treaty.

The book contains some unique photographs showing social unrest in Paramaribo in the 1930s. The bibliography is quite extensive, but has some remarkable gaps.

Despite my criticisms, I recommend this book to anyone interested in Suriname's history. It raises important questions and will undoubtedly stimulate historical interest and research among a new generation of Surinamers.

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"French Guiana, did you say?" Out of the back pages of old geography manuals (where in defiance of all geography it is filed with New Caledonia, Réunion and Martinique under the heading "Overseas France") or straight off the headlines of today's news, launching the Ariane missile into space: La Guyane. "...90,000 square kilometers, 55,000 inhabitants lost somewhere out there 7000 kilometers from France, does such a place really exist...?" (p. 13).

Louis Doucet — journalist, author and radio commentator — went to see. He hopscotched across its surface for about three weeks by car, plane and motorized canoe. Eyeing it all like a 20th-century Candide, he explores with his reader this patch of administered rain forest on which, like a tropical tabula rasa, three centuries of French folly, piety and chicanery have inscribed their amazing contradictions.

From the terraced cafés of metropolitan-styled Cayenne to the backwater of St.-Georges-de-l'Oyapok and the dark, complete world of a Caribbean store, he journeys up the Oyapok River in the east for a quick look at the Oyampi Indians; in their traditional villages, he tells us, they receive social benefits and modern medicine, play soccer and vote for the Président de la République. Crossing over to the western frontier, he meets the Wayana Indians of the Litani and travels down the Lawa and Maroni waterways swelling with rain and busy with Maroon dugout canoes. Off the coastal route, he explores the Îles du Salut (which branded Guyane forever in French memory as a penal colony), the space age at Kourou, a dwindling leper colony at Acarouany, and a village of prolific
refugee Hmongs growing Vietnamese rice at Cacao. He finds gold — or the memory of it — at Saul, where 3000 prospectors once thronged, and where today a few aging, bare-foot diggers cling to the remnants of civilization in the form of gendarmes, rum and a shopkeeper.

As piece by piece we encounter this puzzle of the present, flashbacks intervene to shed light on past tragedies and comedies of French colonialism. ("Rassurez-vous," quips DOUCET, "Ça continue!"") Leading personalities of contemporary French Guiana are sought out, interviewed and assessed: from Tanon, who controls much of French Guiana's economy, to a lone steel worker who ran away to join the Indians, from a fanatical priest and a radical headmaster to a critical anthropologist. Organized very much like a French TV documentary with its travelogue-sampler of images, incidents and opinions, DOUCET's narrative rolls along at a rapid pace — funny, biting, sometimes beautifully evocative.

The profile that emerges is more accurate in its overview than in its detail, and readers may regret the absence of bibliographical references that would lead to further material or justify the author's view of history. It would be unfair to expect from a journalistic account the precision of scientific research or the deep insights born of a long intimacy with the land. But many mistakes would not have gone into print had the author troubled to check his manuscript with authorities, or his itinerary with a good map. In the territories of the various Maroon tribes, for example, he travels down the Lawa River which he calls the Maroni, locates "Boni" villages on Djuka and Paramaka territory, lands at the Paramaka tribal seat of Langa Tabiki which he transcribes as "Langa Batiki" and, by then thoroughly lost, relates a political incident pertaining to Papaiston, a Boni village far back on the Lawa River. In his brief chapter on the Maroons entitled "Return to Africa" (apparently based on information obtained from his Maroon guide), the text is so studded with errors that no more than the description of canoes passing before his eyes should be retained. This is perhaps understandable in the light of traditional Maroon secrecy, here compounded by the difficulties of linguistic exchange between boatman and writer. But DOUCET's naiveté loses its charm when he injects into this confusion humorous touches that lend a comic-book quality to the origins and language of a people about whom he knows nothing.

The weaknesses in the book become distorting only at those points where the author deals with ethnic groups other than the French. But this he does as little as possible. The Guyane he outlines is a specific one, and the one that is most accessible for him: the Guyane of the French — of French implantation, policies and relations with indigenous populations. Other Guyanes — those of its native Amerindian peoples, of its black Créoles, of its Maroons (groups which compose the bulk of the population and whose differing world views evince themselves by chance in the text) — form a quaint, foreign background to this "Overseas France."

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DEREK BICKERTON has always been a linguist with a daring imagination. He resembles a poet: he writes a beautiful and vigorous prose, is often very funny, and is more convincing through brilliant associations (based on analogy), than through careful reasoning. This sentence might very well start an extremely critical review, and I am sure that these critical reviews will be written. I must confess that I admire the book, which reads like a novel and contains an exciting hypothesis with all the qualities and qualms of a sweeping theory that has not yet outgrown the state of a hunch.

Let me first present the theory in a few words. Creoles are new creations as far as grammatical structure is concerned. Substrata and superstrata have had no influence on the grammar. Children with Pidgin-speaking parents brought new grammatical rules into the hopelessly ungrammatical sentences of their parents. So Creoles are not acquired, but created. I may have exaggerated the kind of sweeping statements by BICKERTON, but the essential message is there. BICKERTON studied the Pidgin English of immigrants in Hawaii and the English-based creole of their children. He can prove that the parents' language is different and less regular.

All Creole languages have basic grammatical structures in common, no matter what their substratum or superstratum may be, no matter in what part of the world they are spoken. This has fascinated creolists for a long time. Monogenesis (common African, Pidgin Portuguese or Sabir) cannot explain this fact. BICKERTON concludes that children must have access to an innate bioprogram for constructing language, which gradually becomes available during the early ages (say 2–4 years) in about the same way as the bioprogram which regulates physical development: crawling to sitting to standing to walking. This bioprogram is much more specific than the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) of the transformationalists. The content and structure is still rather vague, but it should contain basic semantic concepts like the distinction between punctual and non-punctual, state and event, specific and non-specific, etc.

If this is true, the bioprogram should not only influence the creation of new languages, but also the much more frequent acquisition of old languages. The LAD hypothesis cannot explain children's mistakes. According to the LAD hypothesis a child constructs (within the formal bounds provided by the LAD) random hypotheses about the grammatical structure of the output of the earlier generation. The child gradually revises his hypotheses, until he arrives at the correct one, almost like a linguist analyzing a language. Children would in that case acquire the same language at different speeds, depending on the measure of correctness of their first guesses. This does not seem to be true. The kind of mistakes children make at different ages seem to be influenced by the kind of grammatical structures found in Creole languages. So the bioprogram seems also to predict the kind of mistakes children will make in acquiring their parents' speech habits.

BICKERTON goes even further in his analogy with physical bioprograms. They are thought to copy stages in the development of skills in the species. In the same way the gradual development of the bioprogram for the acquisition of linguistic skills reflects stages in the acquisition of language by the human species. BICKERTON even promises a forthcoming volume: Language and Species. In his conclusion
he talks (often in an extremely funny way) about the consequences of his theory for 'the Dignity of Man' and the limits of our species.

It is rather easy to detect flaws in his novel. If all children are endowed with the same bioprogram, why do languages deviate from this program, forcing each new generation to make the same mistakes over and over again? Bickerton's answer to this question is not very convincing.

Does this mean that we can dismiss his work as too imaginative? I do not think so. His basic questions are valid questions. He might use hunches and untested analogies, but there is a lot of common sense in these, and he presents interesting arguments that should be scrutinized by more down-to-earth linguists. His book also points to an interesting research program.

This review is written for non-linguists with a Caribbean background. It might be valuable to illustrate the kind of problems and arguments with a discussion of the Tense-Mood-Aspect (TMA) systems in Creoles. Most Creole languages have a verb system based on three markers, preceding the verb in a fixed order. This system has been described for Sranan Tongo in Voorhoeve 1957. Other creolists recognized the same system in other Creoles. It is even present in Juba Arabic. The three particles in Sranan Tongo are *ben* (anterior marker), *sa* (non-real or future marker) and *(d)je* (non-punctual marker). The order is fixed and each particle alternates with its absence. This constitutes eight verbforms, marked by *ben-sa-e, ben-sa-je, ben-je-e, je-sa-e, je-sa-je, je-e-e and je-e-je*. The glosses are very much alike in all Creoles, but they are different for verbs expressing states or events.

In most descriptions, including Bickerton's, two separate paradigms are presented for state verbs and events. State verbs include the so-called adjectives. Formerly, it was said that state verbs could not be marked for non-punctual (*e* in Sranan Tongo). This proved to be wrong, if verbs are regarded inherently as states or events. State verbs, combined with the non-punctual marker *e*, receive an event interpretation, as can be seen in the following pairs:

- *mi sabi a pasi* 'I know the way'  
  *mi e-sabi a pasi* 'I am learning the way'

- *mi nati* 'I am wet'  
  *mi e-nati* 'I am getting wet'

- *mi nati mi neki* 'I wet my throat'  
  *mi e-nati mi neki* 'I am wetting my throat'

Some linguists prefer to stay within the two-paradigm solution and derive events from state verbs: *sabi* at the left is a state verb ('to know') and at the right an event ('to learn'), derived from this state verb.

This is an expensive solution. I would prefer to interpret the punctual/non-punctual distinction as identical with the state/event distinction, in so far as every state is the result of a previous event. So, *mi waka* 'I have walked, walked' is a state resulting from a previous event *mi e-waka* 'I am walking, walk'. This does not destroy Bickerton's original hypothesis; it even strengthens it, because two of his major distinctions can be interpreted as one still more basic one.

This is not the full story about Creole verbal systems. Many Creoles have a perfective marker, like Sranan *kaba*, which occurs phrase-finally ('already'), as a main verb ('to finish') or phrase-initially (a conjunction 'and then'). In some Creoles, this perfective marker functions as part of the TMA markers and may even assume the function of 'anterior'. The non-real particle may also occur outside of the TMA markers. Some Creoles develop an additional future marker, like in Sranan the particle *e* (from an auxiliary verb *go* 'to go'). The development of a habitual takes different paths in Creoles. It may coincide with the non-
punctual (as in Sranan), with the punctual (as in Haitian Creole) or even with the non-real (as in some Portuguese-based Creoles). But these complexities do not destroy the essential unity of the verbal system in the different Creoles.

Bickerton thinks that the marker nearest to the verb must be the first acquired. So the bioprogram starts with the punctual/non-punctual (or state/event) distinction, then adds the real/non-real, and finally the anterior distinction. Deviations from this program are explained by a prolonged Pidgin stage (as in Tok Pisin) or by prolonged massive immigration during the creolisation period (as in Papiamento). The addition of a perfective marker cannot be a deviation, because it is found in almost every Creole (even in Juba Arabic). The reason why it is almost always found outside of the TMA positions (immediately preceding the verb) is not clear. It seems as if later additions to the early TMA distinctions cannot very well be incorporated, because only three auxiliary positions are available in the bioprogram.

The far-reaching hypothesis can only be tested through language acquisition studies. Evolution in Creoles can only take a direction away from the bioprogram (as in decreolisation). Bickerton's study of decreolisation in Guyanese Creole (1975) is based on the assumption that the original Creole stage equals present-day Sranan Tongo. The work by Ian Robertson on Dutch Creoles in Guyana (also to appear with Karoma Publishers) casts serious doubts on the reality of this assumption. We badly need documentation on early developments in Creoles. There are some indications that the early Sranan Tongo did not use verbs with more than two arguments. All additional arguments are introduced by serial verbs or by the all-purpose preposition na. Three-argument verbs in the present-day language (taigi 'to say to', friteri 'to tell to', sori 'to show to', gi 'to give to', aksi 'to ask') seem to represent innovations. I assume that all actual Creoles represent stages in a development, which can only deviate from the original bioprogram. Research is needed in the early stages of Creole development and in the forces behind these deviations. I do not think that all deviations from the bioprogram can be explained as decreolisation under the influence of the model (or official) language.

Let me conclude this review by saying that Roots of Language is a very stimulating book that opens up a new type of research program. Even if most of the author's conclusions will prove to be wrong in the long run, the book will have its impact on theoretical linguistics: the book most emphatically puts Creoles in the very center of linguistic interest.

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This book contains six chapters. After an introductory essay by Gilbert, there are five chapters that translate various writings by Schuchardt on the topic of pidgin and creole languages. These deal, respectively, with Melanesian English, the English of the American Indians, English in India, the Lingua Franca, and Saramaccan.

My question concerns the criteria used for the selection of these five essays out of Schuchardt's work on pidgins and creoles. The publisher's blurb claims that this is "a coherent selection of the most important essays." Gilbert himself says more modestly that it comprises a translation of all that Schuchardt wrote on English-based pidgins and creoles, plus his essay on Lingua Franca. However, it seems to me that two of the essays included here do not deserve at all the qualification "important" — those on the English of American Indians and the English of India. There are two reasons for this. The first concerns their brevity, at least insofar as they concern pidgin English. Schuchardt's essay on American Indian English is only five pages long, and that on English in India includes only about six pages that deal with various forms of pidgin English — the rest being about the English of the British in India and the phonological shape of loans from English in Indian languages. The second reason is that Schuchardt's sources for these two were extremely fragmentary.

The inclusion of the other three essays can be justified, however, on the grounds that they illustrate the development of Schuchardt's ideas concerning the formation of mixed languages. Gilbert explains in his introduction that at first Schuchardt believed that all aspects of pidginization or creolization could be explained as being due to a combination of the interference of substrate languages and acquisitional errors. This viewpoint is represented in the essay on Melanesian English.

In the second stage Schuchardt regarded the similarities among creole languages as being due to the fact that the speakers of superstrate languages (target languages in Schuchardt's terminology) simplify their language in a predictable way when addressing speakers of other languages. This stage is represented by his Lingua Franca article.

Finally, in his article on Saramaccan he takes the position that both the speaker of the target language and the learner thereof are regarded as being jointly responsible for the development of the resultant pidgin or creole. The similarities are then ascribed to parallelism in the social and psychological frames of language teaching and learning.

From what he says, Schuchardt appears to have held the concept of a basic, unmarked language structure from which individual languages may deviate. He says of the formation of creole languages, "The master stripped off from the European language everything that was peculiar to it, the slave suppressed everything in it that was distinctive". For instance when comparing Sranan go teki kom and Ashanti ko-fa-ba (both equal to go-take-come) with English fetch he does not conclude that the Sranan expression is a calque on the Ashanti form, but claims that the expression in terms of three separate actions is the normal treatment and that to express the three actions in one word as English does is abnormal. In other words, the fact that Sranan has one word per concept is due...
to suppression of the marked English treatment, not to any possible influence of
substrate African languages.

Whether this explanation is correct is to be doubted. However, this is just one
of the many ideas that SCHUCHARDT proposes on the basis of his large experience
with pidgin and creole languages. All in all many of these ideas seem very
modern, and SCHUCHARDT's works are in fact a fertile source of interesting
hypotheses for the creolist. For this reason it is very useful that GILBERT has
provided a translation of SCHUCHARDT's somewhat inaccessible work. The only
criticism I have concerns the choice of essays. It might have been better to have
replaced the two essays on the English of American Indians and the English of
India with some other more important essay.

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