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TURNING COO-COO

"I were lying upon the ground
The goblet and the water was passed around
I had a taste of the fowl and the rice
The coccoo and the goat in the sacrifice..."
— from Tiger's "Yaraba Shango" (1936)¹

The pairing of cornmeal and okra, which pops up everywhere in the Caribbean, nicely captures the amalgam of African and American resources that has produced so much of the region's cultures, and bears witness to the earliness of culinary creolization – on both sides of the Atlantic. Corn (maize) is, of course, native to the New World, and okra (gumbo) to the Old. The *Dictionary of Jamaican English* includes back-to-back entries on *oka* and *okra* – the former from a Yoruba word for corn, though in Jamaica it refers to a cassava mush served with an okra sauce (Cassidy & Le Page 1967:328). And while the Ewe word *kukú* means "corn dumpling" (Cassidy & Le Page 1967:135), its Caribbean cognates generally signal the presence of okra – as in Bahamian *cuckoo soup* (Holm 1982: 55). Just to the north in the United States, that classic of southern cuisine, fried okra, is made by coating the pods in cornmeal before dropping them in the bacon drippings. At the southern end of the Caribbean, the Brazilian dish called *angu* (from Yoruba – see Schneider 1991:14) is made with cornmeal (or cassava-flour); its Saramaka namesake (*angú*), though made with rice- or banana-flour, is usually served with an okra sauce. And in Barbados, cornmeal and okra comprise the essential ingredients of a national culinary tradition, which we will spell *coo-coo*.²

Research on coo-coo quickly pulls us into a comparative consideration of *foofoo* (Cassidy & Le Page 1967:191; Miller & Henry 1982:35; Harris 1988:85; Grant 1989:154), which in the Bahamas, can refer to an okra stew (Holm 1982:80). *Foofoo*, in turn, leads back to West Africa, where the

“gluey” consistency of the staple *foofoo* (usually made from cassava) is as well known as the “sliminess” of Caribbean coo-coo (Wilson 1971:19, 73). *Foofoo* also takes us into the realm of the closely related dish, *funchi* or *fungee* (Dijkhoff 1985:60; Cassidy & Le Page 1967:192; Ortiz 1973: 281, 291), sometimes designating a dish made from cassava, but much more frequently a cornmeal pone. In the Netherlands Antilles, the addition of okra turns *funchi* into *funchi ku yambo*, or coo-coo. (Our correspondents in contemporary Puerto Rico report that *funche* has become rare because of its associations with economic hard times; Sid Mintz reminisces that “Elí talked about painting the kitchen walls yellow with it when Taso was blacklisted and they had to eat it all of the time.”) And *funchi*, with the addition of beans, produces another culinary cousin – the *tootoo* (*tutu*) of Curaçao (Dijkhoff 1985:142).

But let’s focus on Caribbean coo-coo, which is a rich enough subject on its own. Lise Winer offers a number of Trinidad and Tobago expressions that allude to coo-coo, including: “Boy, you coo-coo burn” (“You are in trouble”), “Your coo-coo cook this time” (“You are finished, ruined”), and “Me and he coo-coo doan soak” (“We don’t get along well”). Sometimes glossed simply as a “side dish,” coo-coo can designate foods based on a diversity of ingredients, including cassava, plantains, and breadfruit, and incorporating anything from salt beef or salt cod to sweet potatoes, tomatoes, or coconut milk. But “real” (Bajan) coo-coo is okra and cornmeal, “turned” in broth with a “coo-coo stick” until it achieves the correct consistency, and coated lightly with butter. When tradition is properly respected, it is served with steamed flying fish.

An essay entitled “Cuckoo and Culture” probes the dish’s deeper significance. Commenting on the climactic scene of George Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin*, Edward Baugh (1977:30) argues that, in watching the boy watching his mother as she turns her coo-coo, we witness “the creation of order out of disorder, and beauty out of ugliness.” At the end of the cooking process, the mixture is scooped from the iron pot with a calabash, and reversed onto the plate.

The calabash had given it a smooth even curve all round. It was like a visitor waiting to be shown in. Then she applied a thin paste of butter. The heat melted it and the mixture seemed to shine. The ochroe seeds were a dull pink and all over the surface of this curve you could see them pushing up like dots that decorated the mixture. Here and there were the bits of green that edged the slices of ochroe. Whether or not you liked to eat cuckoo it was something you could look at and feel a quiet satisfaction from. (Lamming 1953:282)

A few years later in Brooklyn, another Bajan mother bent to the task:

As the late summer sunset flamed above the brownstones Suggie Skeete prepared her meal of cuckoo. In the solemn pose of a priest preparing a sacrament, she stood at the stove in the cramped kitchen, slowly pouring yellow corn meal into a pot of simmering okra and water. Then with a wooden spatula she blended the meal and okra water, adding more water as the meal thickened. Soon steam flew up in little puffs from the turning meal, and her stroke quickened until perspiration broke in bright nodes on her brow and the flesh under her arm shuddered. When the corn meal was done she lopped it into a bowl lined with butter and slapped the bowl between her hands until the cuckoo – smooth and glistening with butter, studded pink and green from the okra, with steam rising from its dome – resembled a small speckled sun. (Marshall 1970:19)

These passages suggest that coo-coo, perhaps more than anything else, symbolizes home for Bajans – for Lamming's character it's what he lovingly watches as he's preparing to leave to become a man, and for Marshall's character, in her dreary northern surroundings, the coo-coo sets her to dreaming about her home in Barbados, with the yam patch and the mango tree, the soft-sloping hills, the sugar cane, her goat, and lizards sidling under the dry leaves.

Around Christmas 1993, we had an opportunity to turn some coo-coo for a special guest, visiting in Martinique for a conference. Lamming seemed genuinely pleased, even comparing our version to his mother's, though he did mutter something about how anthropologists of all people should know that coo-coo should never be served on Sunday. From the Atlantis Hotel in Barbados, where he was living, he later wrote:

The Atlantis staff were quite startled by the unheard-of event of cou cou on Sunday; but this was nothing to compare with the disbelief that it was as good as theirs. I was going to say that it turned out to be as good because "turn" is the verb we use for make in the preparation of the ochros and meal. You can either turn cou cou or you can't turn cou cou. I forgot to ask about your "stick" because you turn with a "stick" which is a thin lath of wood about the length of a cutlass. Stick or no stick, Sally came good, as they say in Trinidad.

The shock, to Bajans, of serving this dish on Sundays was vehemently contested by a number of aficionados from other parts of the Caribbean.³ "That's nonsense!" cried some; "You're *supposed* to have coo-coo on Sundays!" objected others. Several explained the "prohibition" as a simple preference by Bajans for fancier cooking, including meat, on Sundays.

Because of the okra, coo-coo is sometimes thought of as being slimy –

babosa, as they say in highland Puerto Rico – and this quality has even been linked to Lammington's inclusion of a character called Mr. Slime in *In the Castle of My Skin* – a man who “betrays [people] in order to satisfy his personal greed” (Baugh 1977:31). Which reminds us – it's time to publish this year's Caribbeanist Hall of Shame (which, happily, is briefer than in past years), before serving up our own mix of bibliographic left-overs. As usual, we list those books that (as of press time, January 1996) we have been unable to review because the scholars who agreed to the task (identified here by initials in square brackets) have – despite reminder letters – neither provided a review nor returned the books so that they could be assigned to someone else. As in the past, these paragraphs may serve as a kind of backlist “books received.”

Two scholars who promised review articles on Cuba have never come through with their manuscripts. The first [by N.P.V.] would have included *The Politics of Psychiatry in Revolutionary Cuba*, by Charles J. Brown & Armando M. Lago (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction, 1991, cloth US\$ 29.95, paper US\$ 17.95), *The Cuban Revolution into the 1990s: Cuban Perspectives*, edited by the Centro de Estudios Sobre América (Boulder CO: Westview, 1992, cloth US\$ 50.00, paper US\$ 19.95), *Work and Democracy in Socialist Cuba*, by Linda Fuller (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 44.95), *Cuba: The Revolution in Peril*, by Janette Habel (London: Verso, 1991, cloth US\$ 39.95), and *Cuban Politics: The Revolutionary Experiment*, by Rhoda P. Rabkin (New York, Praeger, 1991, cloth US\$ 39.95). The second [by J.S.] would have included *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev 1960-1963*, by Michael R. Beschloss (New York: Edward Burlingame, 1991, cloth US\$ 29.95), *The Shattered Crystal Ball: Fear and Learning in the Cuban Missile Crisis*, by James G. Blight (Savage MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1992, paper US\$ 14.95), *The Missiles of October: The Declassified Story of John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis*, by Robert Smith Thompson (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993, paper US\$ 14.00), and “Everything within the Revolution”: *Cuban Strategies for Social Development Since 1960*, by Thomas C. Dalton (Boulder CO: Westview, 1993, paper US\$ 49.00).

Three double-book reviews have also failed to materialize: *Imperial Power and Regional Trade: The Caribbean Basin Initiative*, edited by Abigail B. Bakan, David Cox & Colin Leys (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993, paper US\$ 29.95) and *The Effect of a North American Free Trade Agreement on the Commonwealth Caribbean*, by Jennifer Hosten-Craig (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 49.95) [K.B.]; *Puerto Rico and the United States: The Quest for a New Encounter*, by Arturo Morales Carrión (San Juan: Editorial

Academica, 1990, paper n.p.) and *The Disenchanted Island: Puerto Rico and the United States in the Twentieth Century*, by Ronald Fernandez (Westport CT: Praeger, 1992, cloth US\$ 45.00) [A. G. G.]; and *Sir Arthur Lewis: An Economic & Political Portrait*, edited by Ralph Premdas & Eric St Cyr (Mona, Jamaica: ISER, 1991, n.p.) and *The Pursuit of Honour: The Life and Times of H.O.B. Wooding*, by Selwyn Ryan (Port of Spain: Paria Publishers [and ISER, UWI, St. Augustine, Trinidad], 1990, cloth n.p., paper n.p.) [D.M.].

Reviews of single books that have never been submitted include: *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami*, by Alejandro Portes & Alex Stepick (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, cloth US\$ 25.00, paper US\$ 15.00) [T.McC.]; *Labor in the Puerto Rican Economy: Post-war Development and Stagnation*, by Carlos E. Santiago (New York: Praeger, 1992, cloth US\$ 39.95) [J.L.]; *Inward Stretch Outward Reach: A Voice from the Caribbean*, by Rex Nettleford (London: Macmillan Caribbean, 1993, paper £13.95) (E.R.); and *La urbanización en la cuenca del Caribe: Notas sobre un proceso de investigación en marcha*, edited by Alejandro Portes & Mario Lungo (San José, Costa Rica: FLASCO, 1992, paper US\$ 7.00) [C.C.].

As always, we would welcome these reviews even at this late date and will gladly publish them as a service both to the authors of the books and to our readers.

We begin our own annual year-end wrap-up with recent Caribbean fiction, an unsystematic selection consisting of what publishers have provided plus what we happen to have bought during the year. (As a matter of policy, the *NWIG* does not devote full reviews to literary works, but we continue the tradition of briefly noting those new works that we have seen in the last twelve months.)

The Guyanese master Wilson Harris has published a new novel, *Resurrection at Sorrow Hill* (London & Boston: Faber and Faber, 1993, cloth £14.99, US\$ 22.95), in which he once again pilots us far upriver to that remarkable region where Amerindian myth and Western and Eastern philosophy, as well as terror, violence, and above all madness, intertwine like the roots of some great tropical tree. The same publisher has also brought out Harris's *The Carnival Trilogy* (1993, paper £9.99, US\$ 15.95), which groups in a single volume his *Carnival* (1985), *The Infinite Rehearsal* (1987), and *The Four Banks of the River of Space* (1990) and includes an introduction in which the author muses about the changing ways in which he reads – several years after writing them – these astonishing novels.

A *Small Gathering of Bones* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1994, paper £5.99, US\$ 9.95), Patricia Powell's second novel, sensitively explores the social complexities of male homosexuality in late 1970s Jamaica. Ernest Pépin's *Coulée d'or* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995, paper FF 99.45) recreates a childhood world, with strong *créoliste* echoes, where Guadeloupean and French values by turn shine through. *La voie des cerfs-volants* (Paris: Stock, 1994, paper FF 85.00) continues Xavier Orville's preoccupations with Martiniquan ways of death as well as his very particular magico-poetics of daily life. In a very different register, Tony Delsham, editor-in-chief of the *créoliste* magazine *Antilla*, has published *Kout fê* (Schoelcher, Martinique: Editions M.G.G., 1994, paper FF 100.00), another in his series of popular French-language novels, which sets off hyper-contemporary, neurotic male characters against more successfully modernizing women.

This year brings a bounteous crop of first novels. *Fire in the Canes* (New York: Soho Press, 1995, cloth US\$ 22.00), by Brooklyn-based Barbadian Glenville Lovell, is a much-acclaimed epic that effectively mixes past and present, magic, folktale, and history. In *Spirits in the Dark* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1994, paper £5.99, US\$ 9.95), St. Vincent-born H. Nigel Thomas, who lives and teaches in Canada, presents a troubled coming-of-age tale of sexual and racial identity, framed by Spiritual Baptist-like mourning rites. *Consolation* (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1994, paper £5.50), by Earl G. Long, a St. Lucian living in the United States, chronicles the all-too-familiar transformation of an Atlantic-coast village by outside developers. Playwright and ethnologist Ina Césaire, mixing earthy prose with traditional song lyrics in *Zonzon tête carrée* (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 1994, paper FF 115.85), chronicles the misadventures of a Martiniquan "taxi-pays" driver of a half-century ago. *Cravache ou Le nègre soubarou* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995, paper FF 90.00), by Joscelyn Alcindor, who has lived since age twenty-one in the métropole, evokes, with rather less vibrancy, a slice of rural Martiniquan life during the same period. *La grande drive des esprits* (Paris: Le Serpent à Plumes, 1993), by Guadeloupean Gisèle Pineau, a bright new force on the Francophone literary scene, received the Prix Carbet 1993 as well as the Grand Prix des Lectrices from the magazine *Elle*. Finally, Richard Price & Sally Price's *Enigma Variations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, cloth US\$ 18.95) combines text and computer-generated images to raise questions about the nature of authenticity in a steamy Caribbean setting, and has been characterized by the *Wall Street Journal* as "a fabulous and unique artifact, an art-historical whodunit told with great flair, intelligence, and sensitivity."

We note four Antillean novels that have appeared in translation. Maryse Condé's *Crossing the Mangrove* (New York: Anchor Books,

Doubleday, 1995, paper US\$ 10.95), originally published in French in 1989, stages a polyvocal wake that criss-crosses the Guadeloupean imaginary. *Le gouverneur des dés* (Paris: Stock, 1995, paper FF 120.00) and *Mamzelle Libellule* (Paris: Le Serpent à Plumes, 1994, paper FF 85.00), both by Raphaël Confiant, were first published in Martiniquan Creole in the late 1980s and represent an excellent starting point for those interested in the writings of this co-founder of the *créolité* movement. And Dany Bébel-Gisler's *Leonora: The Buried Story of Guadeloupe* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994, cloth US\$ 50.00, paper US\$ 17.95), an unjustly neglected, luminous 1985 "*roman-témoignage*," presents a life history that Vera Kutzinski & Cynthia Mesh-Ferguson read, in a new afterword to the book, as "a revision of [Aimé Césaire's] *Cahier*, one that restores female voices to a literary culture dominated by ... decidedly masculinist visions of national history, identity, and authenticity."

Two fine short-story collections: Lawrence Scott's *Ballad for the New World and Other Stories* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1994, paper £4.99, US\$ 9.95) contains sharply etched tales of his native Trinidad, and Edwidge Danticat's celebrated *Krik? Krak!* (New York: Soho Press, 1995, cloth US\$ 20.00) presents a series of heart-rending, arresting, and poetically written accounts of Haiti and Haitians, mostly under the Duvaliers but also in Flatbush, by this gifted immigrant Brooklynite.

The Heinemann Book of Caribbean Poetry, compiled by Ian McDonald & Stewart Brown (Oxford: Heinemann, 1992, paper £6.99, US\$ 10.95), offers a balanced selection of largely recent pieces by an unusually wide range of poets from the Anglophone islands. *To Us, All Flowers are Roses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995, paper US\$ 11.95) is Lorna Goodison's sixth collection of poems, strong and accomplished, about Jamaica past and present. *Tongue of Another Drum* (St. George's, Grenada: Talented House Publications, 1994, paper n.p.) is a first booklet of poems by a young Grenadian, Omowale David Franklyn. *Viajera del Polvo* (Santo Domingo: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, 1993, paper n.p.), Ida Hernández Caamaño's first collection, weaves together nostalgia, melancholy, and memories of adolescence in a dusty Dominican border town. And *Adyosi/Afscheid* (Nijmegen: Stichting Instituut ter Bevordering van de Surinamistiek, 1994, paper NLG 25.00) presents a half-century of largely unpublished Albert Helman poetry about Suriname – some poems in Sranan with Dutch translations and others originally written in Dutch – as well as favorite African American poetry the old master has translated from English and French into Dutch.

A number of works of literary criticism that, for one or another reason, are not getting fuller reviews deserve mention here. Laudable in its pan-

Caribbean intent, inevitably spotty in its execution, the nevertheless useful *A History of Literature in the Caribbean, Volume 1: Hispanic and Francophone Regions* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1994, cloth US\$ 150.00) was published under the general editorship of A. James Arnold, with Julio Rodríguez-Luis editing the Hispanic section and J. Michael Dash the Francophone portion. *West Indian Literature* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995, paper £7.95), edited by Bruce King, is a thoroughly revised edition of this standard work from 1979 – a definitive introduction to Anglophone Caribbean writing. Alain Baudot's *Bibliographie annotée d'Édouard Glissant* (Toronto: Éditions du GREF, 1993, cloth Can\$ 96.00, US\$ 71.00) is in every way monumental – 757 pages covering 1347 texts by and about Glissant, graced by numerous illustrations. *Caribbean Writers between Orality & Writing/Les Auteurs caribéens entre l'oralité et l'écriture (Matatu 12)* (Amsterdam & Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 1994, paper, NLG 75.00), edited by Marlies Glaser & Marion Pausch, is a rich mélange of literary criticism, poetry, and interviews, mainly in English, some in French. In *Pour Aimé Césaire* (Paris: Jean-Michel Place, 1994, paper FF 45.00), Annie Lebrun applies her sharp tongue to some of the excesses of Martinique's *créoliste* discourse. *Temas de literatura y de cultura dominicanas* (Santo Domingo: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, 1993, paper n.p.), by Giovanni Di Pietro, presents a reading of some contemporary Dominican novels. In *Woorden op de Westwind: Surinaamse schrijvers buiten hun land van herkomst* (Amsterdam: In de Knipscheer, 1994, paper NLG 49.50), photographer Michel Szulc-Krzyzanowski and literary critic Michiel van Kempen capture with verve the lives of ten Suriname writers who live abroad, to complement their 1992 collaboration devoted to Suriname writers at home. *Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993, paper US\$ 17.95), edited by Heidi Hutner, offers various feminist readings, but is disappointing in its anachronistic treatment of Behn's seventeenth-century Suriname and slavery writings from an eighteenth- (and twentieth-) century perspective. Two works of criticism have just been returned to us by a responsible but overcommitted reviewer who had held them for more than a year without finding time to review them – *Caliban in Exile: The Outsider in Caribbean Fiction* (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1992, cloth US\$ 39.95), by Margaret Paul Joseph, which offers readings of Rhys, Lamming, and Selvon from the perspective of Commonwealth Literature, and *Recasting the World: Writing after Colonialism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, cloth US\$ 45.00, paper US\$ 14.95), edited by Jonathan White, in which a distin-

guished group of critics consider, among others, Lamming, Naipaul, and Morrison.

We've seen several new collections of folklore. *Creole Folktales* (New York: The New Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 16.95) is the lively English translation of Patrick Chamoiseau's retellings of a varied set of folktales, published in French in 1988; in our view the collection suffers from a presentation of the tales as specifically (and by implication exclusively) Martiniquan, while in fact they are widespread in the Afro-American world – there's the chiggerfoot boy of the Anglophone islands, the boy (in Suriname versions, Anansi) who “trades up” from an *acra* to a cock to a pig to a confined corpse, and other familiar plots and characters. A more explicit statement of the *créolistes'* efforts to subsume much of Caribbean (and southern United States and northeastern Brazilian) culture into their Martiniquan model is Raphaël Confiant's *Contes créoles des Amériques* (Paris: Stock, 1995, paper FF 130), which depicts *French* Creole culture as the undisputed culture of reference for Plantation America, and also contrasts Confiant's literary recuperation of the tales, including his reworking of them in French, as “properly distancing them from mere ethnographic reproduction.” Considerably more pedestrian and less literary is Bert Oosterhout's rendition in Dutch of selected folktales from the Netherlands Antilles and from Creoles and Amerindians in Suriname: *Westindische sprookjes* (Rijswijk: Elmar, 1994, paper NLG 12.50). *The Jamaica Handbook of Proverbs* (Mandeville Jamaica: Island Heart Publishers, 1993, paper n.p.), by Vivien Morris-Brown, is a fine collection in Jamaican, with English glosses and explanations.

Several art and photo books have come to our attention. *Carib Art: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean. A Travelling Exhibition of Contemporary Works of Art by Artists of the Dutch, English, French and Spanish Caribbean* (Curaçao: National Commission for UNESCO of the Netherlands Antilles, 1993, paper n.p.) contains full color reproductions of nearly two hundred recent works, each by a different artist, arranged by nation/island/language. *Art of Latin America, 1900-1980* (Washington DC: Inter-American Development Bank [Johns Hopkins University Press], 1994, cloth US\$ 49.95, paper US\$ 29.95), by the late Marta Traba, is an important overview that includes the Hispanic Caribbean. Suzanne Preston Blier's *African Vodun: Art, Psychology, and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, cloth US\$ 50.00), an ambitious, object-centered analysis from a distinctly art historical perspective, focuses on Africa with only fleeting excursions into Haiti and Cuba. *Havana/La Habana* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1994, cloth US\$ 45.00), consisting of largely architectural photos by Nancy Stout and

often engaging observations by Puerto Rican architect Jorge Rigau, is at its most interesting when setting the city in the comparative context of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Stephen Williams's *Cuba: The Land, the History, the People, the Culture* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 27.50), though touted on the blurb as "an insider's tour of the island," provides little more than a kind of Sunday supplement "who'd-a-thought-it" depiction. Finally, *Martinique: Photographies* (Tartane, Martinique: Gondwana Editions, 1990, cloth FF 370.00) is a coffee-table book filled with aestheticized images by Eric Leroy, a French-born resident of the island, who founded Gondwana Editions in 1989.

Two new reference books: *The Beinecke Lesser Antilles Collection at Hamilton College: A Catalogue of Books, Manuscripts, Prints, Maps, and Drawings, 1521-1860* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994, cloth US\$ 150.00), compiled by Samuel J. Hough & Penelope R.O. Hough, offers careful lists and annotations for some 2000 books, manuscripts, maps, prints, drawings, and paintings. *Suriname-catalogus van de Universiteitsbibliotheek van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam, 1995, paper NLG 50.00), compiled by Kees van Doorne & Michiel van Kempen, includes unannotated entries on nearly 8000 books, articles, and manuscripts, plus more than a hundred maps.

We note a half dozen books on creolistics. In *Early Suriname Creole Texts: A Collection of 18th-century Sranan and Saramaccan Documents* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert; Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1995, paper US\$ 38.00), Jacques Arends & Matthias Perl have compiled, translated, and lightly analyzed materials that will be of special interest to students of historical linguistics. With an excellent, annotated edition, in Sranan and Dutch, of *Skrekiboekoe: Visioenen en historische overlevering van Johannes King* (Utrecht: Vakgroep Culturele Antropologie, 1995, paper NLG 35.00), Chris de Beet completes the publication of nearly all of the works of this mid-nineteenth-century Matawai evangelist and mystic. *Surinaams van de straat (Sranantongo fu strati): Een lexicon van alle-daags Surinaams* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1994, paper NLG 19.00), by Ronald Snijders, is a selective Sranan-Dutch dictionary that highlights contemporary usages. *A Buku fu Okanisi anga Ingiisi Wowtu (Aukan-English Dictionary)* (Paramaribo, Suriname: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994, paper n.p.), edited by Louis Shanks with contributions from Evert D. Koanting & Carlo T. Velanti, is an excellent though very partial dictionary-in-progress that illustrates many of its Ndjuka entries with proverbs. In *Pale kreyòl: Manuel d'apprentissage du créole à l'usage des francophones* (Quebec: Garneau-International, 1994, paper Can\$ 29.95), Haitian Alix Renaud offers an appropriately unpretentious mini-

course on his native language. *Understanding Jamaican Patois: An Introduction to Afro-Jamaican Grammar. With a Childhood Tale by Llewelyn "Dada" Adams* (Kingston: Kingston Publishers, 1991, paper J\$ 7.95), by L. Emilie Adams, a curious little book now in its fourth printing, provides an affordable, respectful, practical introduction to Jamaican speech. Serge Harpin's *La pêche en Martinique: Dictionnaire encyclopédique des technologies créoles (créole-français)* (Fort-de-France: Éditions AMEP, 1995, cloth n.p.), an ambitious, illustrated book, is, despite a certain number of ethnographic and historical errors, a useful reference work.

Three books that touch on Caribbean medicine. If Mark J. Plotkin's popular *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnobotanist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1993, paper Can\$ 14.99, US\$ 11.95) is as inexact on plants and diseases as on its descriptions of social phenomena, reader beware! – in a few short pages, we are told, among many other such things, that Sranan is based in part on Yiddish, that Maroon women wear "only patchwork breechcloths," and that the famed eighteenth-century healer Kwasi earned his freedom by traveling to Holland. *100 plantes médicinales de la Caraïbe* (Tartane, Martinique: Gondwana Editions, 1995, cloth FF 200.00), by Jean-Louis Longuefosse, usefully systematizes pharmacological, ethnobotanical, and linguistic data regarding commonly used remedies, and comes alive with excellent color plates. As for John S.R. Golding's, *Ascent to Mona as Illustrated by A Short History of Jamaican Medical Care: With an Account of the Beginning of the Faculty of Medicine, University of the West Indies* (Kingston: Canoe Press, 1994, paper J\$ 200.00, US\$ 7.50), the title accurately reflects the contents of this modest history.

Three new books, while not devoted to the Caribbean, have significant implications for the way we think about the region. Robert J.C. Young's *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995, paper US\$ 16.95) focuses on the cultural politics of hybridity, contextualizing recent postcolonial theory within a longer historical discourse on race and warning against the uncritical adoption of this favorite term of the Victorian extreme right. Nicholas Thomas's *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 49.95, paper US\$ 16.95) provides an incisive argument that colonialism, rather than being simply a homogeneous ideology supporting capitalist expansion, deserves to be fully and minutely historicized. And *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 69.95, paper US\$ 19.95), edited by Stuart B. Schwartz, contains much historiographical wisdom as well as an excellent chapter by Peter Hulme about early encounters in the Caribbean.

Seven more books that contain chapters of interest. *Remapping Memory: The Politics of TimeSpace* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994, paper US\$ 18.95), edited by Jonathan Boyarin, includes an important essay by Daniel A. Segal on postcolonial Trinidad and Tobago. *History & Memory in African-American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 39.95), edited by Geneviève Fabre & Robert O'Meally, is largely devoted to the African diaspora within the United States but includes an essay by VÉVÉ Clark on Katherine Dunham's Caribbean choreography. A fine collection entitled *Race* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 48.00, paper US\$ 16.00), edited by Steven Gregory & Roger Sanjek and largely devoted to the United States, also includes chapters on Puerto Ricans in the mainland (by Clara Rodríguez) and on color and politics in Haiti (by Michel-Rolph Trouillot). *Coffee, Society, and Power in Latin America* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, cloth US\$ 48.50, paper US\$ 15.95), edited by William Roseberry, Lowell Gudmundson & Mario Samper Kutschbach, has a single chapter on the Caribbean – Fernando Picó's essay on coffee and the rise of commercial agriculture during the second half of the nineteenth century. *Americas: New Interpretive Essays* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 49.95, paper US\$ 15.95), edited by Alfred Stepan and apparently tied in to a public television series, includes Caribbean chapters by Franklin W. Knight, Helen Safa, and Anthony Maingot. *Imagining Home: Class, Culture and Nationalism in the African Diaspora* (London: Verso, 1994, paper US\$ 18.95), edited by Sidney J. Lemelle & Robin D.G. Kelley, brings together papers from a 1988 conference and includes explicitly Caribbean chapters by Maryse Condé and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, as well as others, e.g., by Paul Gilroy and Paul Buhle, that relate less directly to the region. And the just-published *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995, cloth US\$ 24.95), by Natalie Zemon Davis, includes as one of its protagonists Maria Sibylla Merian, with lively analysis of that part of her life and work devoted to Suriname.

A number of books on general Caribbean history, not otherwise reviewed in the journal, deserve mention here. *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1995, cloth US\$ 34.95), by Gérard Chaliand & Jean-Pierre Rageau, is the translation of a 1991 French work but contains only ten very inadequate pages on "the Black diaspora." In

Histoire générale des Antilles et des Guyanes, des Précolombiens à nos jours (Paris: Éditions Caribéennes, 1994, paper FF 190.00), Jacques Adelaide-Merlande attempts to fill the need for an accessible, general history of the Caribbean in French but provides instead a spotty, old-fashioned Eurocentric account, which each of the three reviewers we approached declined to engage. *Slavery and Beyond: The African Impact on Latin America and the Caribbean* (Wilmington DE: Scholarly Resources, 1994, cloth US\$ 40.00, paper US\$ 14.95), edited by Darién J. Davis, is a reader intended for teaching, a compilation of often interesting, previously published essays. *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994, paper US\$ 49.95), edited by Darlene Clark Hine, Elsa Barkley Brown & Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, is a two-volume treasure trove, which includes numerous Caribbean connections – from Zora Neale Hurston to Paule Marshall to Michelle Cliff.

Books based on three series of public lectures delivered in Barbados, in 1988, 1990, and 1992 respectively, have reached us. *Emancipation IV: A Series of Lectures to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Emancipation* (Kingston: Canoe Press, 1993, paper J\$ 150.00), edited by Woodville Marshall, is devoted largely to Barbados. *The African-Caribbean Connection: Historical and Cultural Perspectives* (Cave Hill, Barbados: Department of History, University of the West Indies, and the National Cultural Foundation, 1990, paper n.p.), edited by Alan Gregor Copley & Alvin Thompson, includes a number of provocative chapters. And *Crossroads of Empire: The Europe-Caribbean Connection 1492-1992* (Cave Hill, Barbados: Department of History, University of the West Indies, 1994, paper n.p.), edited by Alan Copley, treats broad Caribbean themes and includes lectures by, among others, Rex Nettleford and George Lamming.

A number of reprints have come our way. A fiftieth anniversary reprint of Eric Williams's classic *Capitalism & Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 34.95, paper US\$ 14.95) boasts an excellent introduction by Colin A. Palmer, analyzing the politics that surrounded the publication of the thirty-three-year-old Williams's manuscript in the United States of the 1940s. Equally welcome is the new edition of Fernando Ortiz's great *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1995, paper US\$ 18.95), originally published in 1940, with an extensive and theoretically hip introduction by Venezuelan anthropologist Fernando Coronil. Two decades after its first publication in Barbados, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Kingston: Canoe Press, 1994, paper J\$ 600.00, US\$ 27.00), by Richard B. Sheridan, has been reprinted with a brief and sympathetic preface by Hilary Beckles, linking the work to

Capitalism and Slavery, of which Sheridan became a major defender. *The Dominican Intervention* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, paper US\$ 14.95), by Abraham F. Lowenthal, first published by Harvard University Press in 1972, has a new 3-page preface in which the author reflects on how he would, or would not, write the book differently today. *The U-Boat War in the Caribbean* (Annapolis MD: Naval Institute Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 32.95), by Gaylord T.M. Kelshall, first published in Port of Spain by Paria Publishing in 1988, has been reprinted unchanged. And *Bahamian Society after Emancipation* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1994, paper n.p.), by Gail Saunders, first published in 1990, has been lightly revised. Finally, *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, paper US\$ 14.00), by Virginia E. Sánchez Korrol, is a partly updated edition of a 1983 Greenwood publication.

Miscellaneous historical works, for which we have not found reviewers. *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1993, cloth US\$ 34.95), by Gustavo Gutiérrez, an activist Peruvian priest/scholar, includes an analysis of Las Casas's changing ideas concerning Africans and the slave trade. *Cuba la perla de las Antillas: Actas de las I Jornadas sobre "Cuba y su Historia"* (Madrid: Doce Calles, 1994, paper n.p.), edited by Consuelo Naranjo Orovio & Tomás Mallo Gutiérrez, is an absolute miscellany of often interesting historical papers originally presented at a 1991 conference in Havana. *Het Oude Fort van Aruba: De geschiedenis van het Fort Zoutman en de Toren Willem III. Gedenkboek bij het bestaan van het tweehonderd-jarig bestaan van Fort Zoutman in 1996* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1995, cloth NLG 35.00), by J. Hartog, adds yet another title to this devoted antiquarian historian's enormous list. There are two books about "deathcamps" in the Guianas, two centuries apart: in *Conamama: Camp de la mort en Guyane pour les prêtres et les religieux en 1798* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995, paper FF 130.00), Maurice Barbotin, who is parish priest in Maripasoula, uncovers a little-known incident of Caribbean history, a precursor to later French uses of Guyane; and in *De groene hel: Een Nederlands concentratiekamp in Suriname maart 1942 tot 15 juli 1946* (Bunne, Netherlands: Servo, 1994, paper NLG 15.00), A.G. Besier continues his long-standing lobbying for greater recognition of the war-time internment of some 146 Dutch nationals, arrested as German sympathizers and transported from the East Indies to Suriname, where the survivors remained in custody well after the end of the war. Alan L. Karras's *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992,

cloth US\$ 34.50) is a careful comparative study that was recently returned to us by a reviewer who had been holding the book for a couple of years.

Several new works concern racial and ethnic politics. Engagé and up to date, *No Longer Invisible: Afro-Latin Americans Today* (London: Minority Rights Publications, 1995, cloth £29.95), edited by the Minority Rights Group, includes chapters on Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico, as well as an introduction by Pedro Pérez Sarduy & Jean Stubbs. *Black Culture and Society in Venezuela (La negritud en Venezuela)* (Caracas: Lagoven, 1994, paper n.p.), by Angelina Pollak-Eltz, is a translation of a 1991 Spanish-language, color-illustrated booklet. *Jeux d'identités: Etudes comparatives à partir de la Caraïbe* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993, paper FF 220.00), edited by Marie-José Jolivet & Diana Rey-Hulman, includes chapters on Guadeloupe, Guyane, and Suriname. And Michael George Hanchard's excellent *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 29.95), though about Brazil, has useful implications for Caribbeanists.

Several works of politics and economics. *Maritime Jurisdiction in the Wider Caribbean: A Handbook on National Legislation* (Hamburg: Wayasbah, 1993, paper DM 196.00), compiled and edited by Beate M.W. Ratter assisted by Anja K. Possekkel, does just what it claims, with all the requisite maps. In *Caribbean Economic Policy and South-South Co-operation: Issues Arising from the South Commission Report, The Challenge to the South* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Caribbean; St. Augustine Trinidad: Institute of International Relations, University of the West Indies, 1993, paper £13.95), for which we have been repeatedly unsuccessful in finding a willing reviewer, editor Ramesh F. Ramsaran presents the proceedings of a conference held in 1991 in Trinidad to discuss the South Commission's Report and its implications for Caribbean economic policy. *Modern Caribbean Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, cloth US\$ 50.00, paper US\$ 15.95), edited by Anthony Payne & Paul Sutton, has suffered the same fate, despite its pan-Caribbean perspective and lineup of well-known political scientists. *Guyana at the Crossroads* (New Brunswick NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992, paper US\$ 16.95), edited by Dennis Watson & Christine Craig, publishes the proceedings of a 1991 conference and includes some lively debate. *Politics in Jamaica* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1994, n.p.), by Anthony J. Payne, is a revised edition of his well-known 1988 book. And Peter Morgan's *The Life and Times of Errol Barrow* (Bridgetown, Barbados: Caribbean Communications, 1994, paper n.p.), though hagio-

graphic, reveals much about Barbados during the second half of the century.

Four books relating to the Cuban revolution have not been reviewed, in most cases because a reviewer held the book for a couple of years before sending it back. The result of a 1990 conference that brought together many of the leading Cubanologists, *Cuban Studies since the Revolution* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992, cloth US\$ 39.95), edited by Damián J. Fernández, provides useful historiographic overviews. Juan M. del Aguila's *Cuba: Dilemmas of a Revolution* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 51.50, paper US\$ 18.95) is the third edition, revised, of his 1984 publication. Jan S. Adams's *A Foreign Policy in Transition: Moscow's Retreat from Central America and the Caribbean, 1985-1992* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 39.95, paper US\$ 14.95) analyzes shifts in Soviet foreign policy during the Gorbachev years. Finally, in *The Vogue of Revolution in Poor Countries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, cloth US\$ 19.95), Forrest D. Colburn makes an ambitious and sophisticated attempt to explain/analyze a number of recent revolutions, including those in Cuba and Grenada.

We have received two guidebooks, both for Dutch readers. *Cuba* (The Hague: ANWB, 1995, paper NLG 26.50), by François Hermans, seems competent and workmanlike, and *Suriname* (Haarlem: J.H. Gottmer, 1995, paper NLG 32.90), by Jeannette van Bodegraven, strikes us as the fullest and most perspicacious of the several recent Suriname guides on the Dutch market. Then there is an unclassifiable, peculiarly pretentious publication, part of a series on French national monuments: *Guyane: trace-mémoires du bain* (Paris: Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites, 1994, paper FF 95.00), with photos by Rodolphe Hammadi (mainly showing ruins amidst the encroaching forest) and a text by Patrick Chamoiseau that explicitly "avoids everything that has been written about the *baigne* to try instead to capture what the *traces-mémoires* murmured to us" during his brief and apparently vapid visit.

And now some miscellaneous leftovers. We should mention the publication, at long last, of C.L.R. James's iconoclastic reading of literature, politics, history, and much else in the United States ca. 1950, an important work for those interested in the great man's thought and legacy – *American Civilization* (Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1993, cloth US\$ 49.95, paper US\$ 19.95), edited and introduced by Anna Grimshaw & Keith Hart, and with an afterword by Robert A. Hill. *Intellectuals in the Twentieth-Century Caribbean, Volume II. Unity in Variety: The Hispanic and Francophone Caribbean* (London & Basingstoke: Macmillan Caribbean, 1992, paper £13.95), edited by Alistair Hennessy, is uneven in coverage

(inevitably, the Cuban revolution casts a wide shadow), but includes a number of excellent essays. *Salarios y beneficios del trabajo (Principios y métodos para determinarlos)* (Santo Domingo: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo, 1993, paper n.p.), by Víctor Melitón Rodríguez R., is a highly technical manual written from a statistical and public administration perspective. *Marginalization of the Black Male: Insights from the Development of the Teaching Profession* (Kingston: Canoe Press, 1994, paper J\$ 225.00, US\$ 7.50), by Jamaican sociologist Errol Miller, is the second, revised edition of this small book. *Low-Income Housing and the State in the Eastern Caribbean* (Kingston: Press University of the West Indies, 1994, paper J\$ 250.00, US\$ 10.00), by Robert B. Potter, presents an on-the-ground survey of housing conditions, with special attention to vernacular architecture. *Une certaine victoire* (Fort-de-France: Editions de l'Atelier, 1995, Paper FF 90.00), by Martiniquan architect Marc Alie, casts a sardonic eye on the neocolonialist local scene. *Ambtsuitoefening en onafhankelijke controle in de Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba: Juridische en beheersmatige controle als waarborg voor deugdelijk bestuur* (Nijmegen: Ars Aequi Libri, 1994, paper NLG 35.00), a study of public administration and law in the Dutch islands, is Harold F. Munneke's Ph.D. thesis written for the Rijksuniversiteit van Leiden. In *Viva Musica Vivace* (Rotterdam: Stichting SOBER, 1994, cloth NLG 65.00), R.F. Klei presents seventy-five (for the most part) new songs, with musical transcriptions, in various Suriname languages. Four years after we requested a copy, the publisher has finally sent *Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991, cloth US\$ 27.50, paper US\$ 16.00), by Alan M. Klein, which we had hoped to include in Andy Zimbalist's review article on Caribbean baseball and society (*NWIG* 68: 101-4) – a bit wooden in style, it nevertheless complements those other works, and adds to the fast-growing library of books on the sociology of Caribbean sport (cricket, basketball, and baseball). A new journal, *Caribena* – published annually since 1991 (four numbers thus far), mainly in French and on the French Antilles – is something of a miscellany on glossy paper with fine photos: historical archaeology, settlement patterns, environmental degradation, Carib mythology, and ethnopharmacology; it's available from Gondwana Editions, Anse l'Etang, Tartane, 97220 Trinité, Martinique, for FF 200 per issue.

We end with two cookbooks, both published by Ian Randle in Kingston. The color photographs in Enid Donaldson's *The Real Taste of Jamaica* (1993, paper n.p.) make you feel like eating, and the recipes make you feel like cooking, but you'll need to pick your way through it gingerly if you're worried about calories and cholesterol. Less visual and

more cerebral, Cristine Mackie's *Life and Food in the Caribbean* (1995, paper n.p.) offers a healthy mixture of recipes and foodlore that locates the dish you're cooking in terms of origins, travelers' accounts, and ethnographic context; we are hardly persuaded, however, by its speculation that coo-coo can be traced to loblolly, a European sailors' adaptation of an Amerindian corn-and-water gruel, which Bajans later thickened and refined by adding okras "and eggs"(!).

NOTES

1. Tiger's calypso "Yaraba Shango" is transcribed and discussed in Hill 1993:252-55.
2. "It just won't do to have that dish which is a favourite of Barbadians spelled in three ways: *cookoo*, *coo-coo*, and *cou-cou*" (Allsopp 1978:185). He forgot *cuckoo* (see Lamming 1953 and Marshall 1970).
3. We are grateful to Antonio Díaz-Royo, Ligia Espinal de Hoetink (and through her Elaine Arnold), Sidney Mintz, Cruz Nazario, John and Angela Rickford (and through them Sydney A. Marshall and Ewart Thomas), and Lise Winer, who provided comparative coo-coo lore from various parts of the Caribbean in response to a preliminary draft of these paragraphs.

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