Book Reviews


-Catherine A. John, Kathleen M. Balutansky, Caribbean creolization: Reflections on the cultural dynamics of language, literature, and identity., Marie-Agnès Sourieau (eds)


This PDF-file was downloaded from http://www.kitlv-journals.nl
The setting is Martinique, the French West Indian island that the author visited for the first time as an undergraduate in 1962. A well-known Caribbeanist, anthropologist Richard Price writes here a book that explodes the traditional confines of his field as he elegantly poaches into others’ domains – the mystery writers’, the biographers’, as well as the cultural studies scholars’. The resulting blend makes for an enjoyable reading, even though what Price has to say is not entirely meant to cheer up the reader. The Martiniquan interpretations are complex, varied and changing to such an extent that there is no happy ending, no resolution in sight, only the assurance that there are more interpretations to come.

Richard Price, happily supported by an impeccable taste for forceful illustrations, is indeed a master narrator under whose literary charms one can easily fall in this relatively short piece of work that draws heavily on his intimate knowledge of Martinique in the French West Indies. In and of itself the narrative holds together, in its detailed exploration of different inflections and contradictions in the implementation of modernization. Behind such a narrative there is a powerful cultural critique of imposed modernization and a devastating indictment of French colonialism in general, even though the book is securely anchored in incidents and events that occurred in Martinique. Price’s narrative however leads him to a great many excursions outside of Martinique: to nearby French Guiana and its formidable penitentiary; to North Africa and its convicts; to black Africa,
its riflemen, its former slaves and a former ruler; and to France itself, at the center of the empire, yet at the periphery of Martinique. What interests Price is decidedly not far-off France, but Martinique realities qua part of the larger West Indian cultural ensemble.

What the alliterative title of the manuscript suggests is a certain matter-of-fact, commonsensical unity, that of the island itself in its insular geography. But the title also suggests a powerfully contrastive tension. At the top of the social hierarchy, there is, ensconced in its successful status and established role, the “colonel,” French of course, white, a béké (i.e. born in the West Indies from French parents), politically active and conservative, well-endowed and well-connected Maurice de Coppens, a rhum distillery owner, the very image of the French colonialist, who can get away with almost everything. At the bottom of the same social hierarchy there is a “convict,” poor Médard Aribot, the very image of the trampled “colonized,” a marginal, a loser, a semi-trickster, a petty thief victimized by the system, a local member of the underclass. Events, which span most of the twentieth century, of course come and muddle everything. The colonel, now more or less forgotten, is killed in a post-electoral brouhaha on May 24, 1925. The convict, born in 1901, does not die before 1973, of natural causes, and has now been “discovered,” as an original, and an artist, by the tourist industry as well as by intellectuals. Different Martiniquans “read” these historical events differently, negotiate different identities for these two characters. The same events and the same characters are those Price uses to illustrate what he calls “the seine of history” (pp.121-217), that is, in his own terms “to explore how one generation’s powerful historical metaphors could so quickly become the next generation’s trivial pursuit” (p. 157). As could be expected from Price’s critical stance, the title, emblematic in its own right, reverses the colonial hierarchy, begins with the convict and relegates, as it were, the colonel to the end.

After an initial prologue where Price “situates” himself on the Martinique scene, after a first chapter devoted to the evocation of “la guerre du Diamant” in which Colonel Coppens perished, after a second chapter focusing on Médard Aribot, a loner, a simpleton, a man of supernatural strength, an artistic genius, a gentle eccentric, and possibly a madman, Price proceeds to a broader reflection on what he calls “theatre of marginality” that involves a “master narrative of loss” as well as a “current renegotiation of identities.” And this is a theatre in which all Martiniquans play one way or the other, whether poor fishermen and peasants or well-educated intellectuals, whether locals or négropolitains. But for Price, “it would be a rash ethnographer who could feel certain that Médard and the guerre du Diamant might not emerge from their present ‘folkloric’ trappings and assume their place as part of the richer historical
The appeal of the book partly derives from Price’s uncanny ability to explore *la guerre du Diamant* (which is but one of a large number of harsh colonial confrontations during the early twentieth century) and the life of Médard Aribot as two threads in the ongoing history of Martinique, and in the protracted negotiations of Martiniquan identities. Price has selected these two events because he could weave them with other historical events that are interpreted and reinterpreted by all to shape the contested history of the island. While Price has something to say about French colonization in general and the Caribbean at large, as well the politics of memory, he always keeps close to particular events from which he astutely spins layers and layers of meaning. This is a brilliant achievement.

Carefully crafted, engaging and powerful, his narrative is exceptionally well-written in a style that – supreme mastery! – seems effortless. It is a style upon which Price has complete control, a style that is reined in when necessary for clarity of expression and a style that is let loose when a hint of lyricism is called for. The end result is a delightful piece of work, on target in exposing French colonialism in the Caribbean context, efficient in its arguments, suggestive in its instances, and sensitive to the historical and cultural complexities it exposes and disentangles for our benefit.

True to his goal of eschewing completion, the book does not end; even though the word “fin” appears on p. 217, the text sputters further, until p. 285 to be precise. And even this false end is mitigated, as the paragraph that precedes it is made up of questions. Its last sentence, “How might one also write about that?” (p. 217), echoes the anthropologist’s self-doubt, and the wish “to question in unexpected ways the nature of power.” At the end of the millennium, anthropologists have come a long way, indeed.

Still inspired by this “last” page, and in spite of my appreciation of the book, I must take exception less of course with Price’s final query about the nature of power than with the expeditive way with which Price feels at liberty to dismiss Clifford Geertz’s “mini-narratives with the narrator in them.” Was it really necessary to seem to sacrifice on the fashionable altar of Geertz-bashing?


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Caribbean Romances contains ten lively essays dealing with different aspects of contemporary Caribbean culture. Music and Carnival feature prominently, as do the politics of identity in Martinique and Haiti, Trinidad, and Puerto Rico. Derek Walcott and Édouard Glissant are constant reference points for their cultural criticism. Paule Marshall’s Brown Girl, Brownstones represents “high” literature, Valerie Belgrave’s Ti Marie the popular kind. The varied backgrounds and interests of the contributors make for the kind of genuinely interdisciplinary volume that is fully in keeping with the high ideals of the New World Series to which the collection belongs.

Many of the chapters offer a combination of theoretical reflection and case study. So, for example, Shalini Puri’s “Canonized Hybridities, Resistant Hybridities: Chutney Soca, Carnival, and the Politics of Nationalism” opens with a general discussion of theories of hybridity before moving into the fascinating case of “cultural douglarization” in Trinidad, “douga” being the term for a child of mixed Black/Indian parents. Her chief example is the success of Drapatee Ramgoonai on the national calypso stage in 1988 with the soca chutney song, “Lick Down Me Nani.”

Two of the book’s best chapters interrogate the powerful discourses of mestizaje (in Puerto Rico) and créolité (in Martinique). Catherine Den Tandt’s “All That is Black Melts into Air: Negritud and Nation in Puerto Rico” traces the place of negritud in Puerto Rico’s cultural project of national self-definition, paying attention to the important work of José Luís González, but focusing on two less well-known examples – Lucecita’s 1973 song, “Soy de una raza pura,” and Javier Cardona’s 1997 performance piece, “You don’t look like.” Den Tandt’s essay is less eager than some of the others in the volume to offer solutions and programs, tending rather to stress the complexity of the Puerto Rican situation while noting that ques-
tions of race, constantly displaced especially in the official national discourse, have a tendency to reappear in cultural and artistic expression.

In "Shadowboxing in the Mangrove: The Politics of Identity in Postcolonial Martinique," Richard Price and Sally Price offer a sustained critique of the essentialist and masculinist notions inherent in the purportedly antiracial and anticolonial discourse of créolité. While questioning the movement's 1989 manifesto, Éloge de la créolité, especially with respect to its historical revisionism, they also have a more recent and extremely rich contemporary document to discuss, the 1995 film L'exil de Béhanzin, its screenplay written by one of the créolistes, Patrick Chamoiseau.

"Shadowboxing" is more than twice as long as almost all the other chapters (some of which do look rather thin in comparison), but it makes good use of its length to provide a detailed and grounded contextualization of the créolité movement, emphasizing both the Martinique that produced it and the wider Caribbean – which the créolistes have tended to ignore. The replacement of the maroon hero by the conteur, the attempt to suggest a Norman basis for Creole, the invention of a beautiful creole love for King Béhanzin, exiled in Martinique from Dahomey – all these créoliste moves chime with what Den Tandt describes of the analogous discourse of mestizaje in Puerto Rico.

The weakest element of the volume is its overall framework, as indicated in the title Caribbean Romances. However understood, this is not a concept that seems to have animated many of the contributors; of the few who make reference to it, Faith Smith is analyzing Ti Marie, written as a conventional literary romance, and Kevin Meehan, in offering a highly appreciative account of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's deployment of the political rhetoric of romance, is, as the editor somewhat wryly notes, using the term in a manner completely opposite to the sense she is trying to introduce as the book's guiding theme.

In that introduction Belinda Edmondson argues that certain idealized representations of the Caribbean, which she wishes to call "romance tropes," have become mystified into regional symbols or clichés offering to identify an essential Caribbeanness. The existence of such clichés is hardly contentious, although very little chapter and verse is offered. Their linkage to the literary-historical use of the term "romance" is, however, inadequately argued. Edmondson wishes to implicate the traditional meaning of romance inasmuch as the features we associate with literary romance – conventional plotting, formulaic heroes and villains – have become the classic clichés of fictional narrative, just as, say, cultural hybridity has become a cliché of Caribbeanness. But an argument which goes "cultural hybridity is a cliché, romance has become a cliché, therefore cultural hybridity is a form of romance" is simply a logical non sequitur which does little to help the
volume’s coherence. For once it is to the book’s ultimate benefit that most of the contributors go their own ways.

Belinda Edmondson’s own book has as its project the imbrication of what she calls “two apparently unrelated phenomena” (p. 1): the Victorian sensibilities of a generation of Caribbean male writers – such as C.L.R. James, V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, and Derek Walcott – and the Caribbean sensibilities of a generation of what she calls “migrant women” writers from the region who currently live in the United States – such as Michelle Cliff, Paule Marshall, and Jamaica Kincaid (p. 2). Her twin contentions are that those male writers’ sense of their literary vocation was founded on the meanings of manhood and cultural authority inherited from nineteenth-century British intellectuals; and that those women writers have therefore had to rewrite the paradigm of the gentleman author in order construct a new notion of literary authority. The book is divided into two parts, each with three chapters: “Making Men: Writing the Nation” and “Writing Women: Making the Nation.”

As the author realizes, the book’s structure seems to set up a rigidly binary argument: the older generation is exclusively male, the younger exclusively female and exclusively non-resident in the Caribbean. In mitigation, she offers some consideration of how Jean Rhys’s work might alter the book’s fundamental contentions and some recognition that they would equally be complicated if she had written about, say, Caryl Phillips; but she cannot dispel the feeling that the book’s structure weights the scales far too heavily in favor of the author’s thesis.

Although the issues discussed in Making Men are of major importance, the book is usually too busy moving forward to the next writer or the next example to pause long enough for careful analysis of individual texts. Some of the choices of text are also questionable: the chapter on James and Naipaul (“Literary Men and the English Canonical Tradition”) finds it easy to list their debts to various senses of Englishness, often Victorian – after all, they both declaim those debts frequently enough; but it does not even mention The Enigma of Arrival, surely Naipaul’s most complex meditation on his relationship with Englishness.

The third chapter, “Representing the Folk,” takes on more of a challenge in that its main subjects, Lamming and Brathwaite, are less obviously linked to Victorian writing than James and Naipaul. Unfortunately, the argument sounds thin. To say, for example, that “Lamming’s vision of the West Indian novel ‘restoring’ the peasant to life” (Lamming’s claim in The Pleasures of Exile) “evokes the similar visioning of the West Indies by Carlyle and the Victorian intellectuals, who liken the region to a sleeping beauty who must be ‘awakened’ by the touch of the English conqueror” (p. 60) is to offer a specious analogy in which “evokes the similar” is asked to
cover the missing work which might actually establish a connection. The section on Brathwaite is more successful, perhaps because his set of Victorian references, unexpectedly scattered within a basically nationalist project, take some teasing out; but before much is achieved, Brathwaite is replaced by Claude McKay and Una Marson, and the chapter’s impetus is dissipated.

Part II begins with a ground-clearing chapter, “Theorizing Caribbean Feminist Aesthetics,” which usefully establishes a model for Caribbean female subjectivity through an interrogation of contemporary African American and feminist theory. “The Novel of Revolution and the Unrepresentable Black Woman” then adds to the extensive critical literature about rewritings of *The Tempest*. As elsewhere in *Making Men*, there are interesting points made here, some of which are relevant to the book’s overall thesis; and a reasonable analysis of Michelle Cliff’s *No Telephone To Heaven* is offered. However, the chapter also indicates two of the book’s major weaknesses. To begin with, George Lamming’s reading of *The Tempest* in *The Pleasures of Exile* is contextualized by reference to other Caribbean readings of the play, most of which followed Lamming’s, such as that by Roberto Fernández Retamar. So:

Retamar’s image of the mestizoized Caliban thus updates Marti’s dream of a colorblind New World. It also defuses the negative image of Caliban in the novel *Ariel*, by early Latin American nationalist José Enrique Rodo [who loses the accent on Rodó throughout]. In this novel Caliban, as the brute who terrorizes his compatriot Ariel, is meant to symbolize U.S. aggression. (p. 111)

These sentences appear, rhetorically, to be spoken in the author’s voice; yet nobody who has even glanced at *Ariel* could imagine that it is a novel, and in *Ariel* no brutish character called Caliban terrorizes Ariel (Caliban is only very briefly mentioned). Just as worryingly, no such misreading of *Ariel* could easily be drawn from Retamar’s essay either. Chinese whispers is a dangerous game for scholars to play. There are in fact whole runs of references in the notes which read “quoted in,” suggesting an unhealthy reliance on pre-digested views.

The second weakness, perhaps ultimately more debilitating, can be illustrated by the following comment on the ending of Lamming’s *Water with Berries*:

In this way, the narrative of *Water with Berries* establishes the gendered terms by which nationhood must be established. The dialectics of rapist and victim, landlady and tenant, owner and owned, are used to illustrate the necessity of masculine agency for the West Indian intellectual in his quest to define the disembodied region of the Caribbean on the European map. Like James, for Lamming revolutionary success ultimately lies with one central figure, the intellectual. (p. 122)
Now *Water with Berries*, whatever the final critical verdict on it, is hardly a straightforward novel (and one might expect rather more caution in any account of it). But it is difficult to imagine any reading of the novel’s final chapters which would see Lamming unproblematically advocating the behavior of his characters on the grounds that that behavior is necessary for ultimate “revolutionary success.” At the very minimum there is no clear authorial statement from Lamming; but surely, for any reading not committed to having the novel conform to some pre-established agenda, there is also ambiguity, irony, pathos, tragedy, despair – all the elements of literary subtlety and political complication that *Making Men* is much too inclined to ignore.


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Critical works that focus on Caribbean women writers are always welcome, given the condition of “unheardness” of black women’s voices. Kathleen Renk’s *Caribbean Shadows and Victorian Ghosts* is one of the most intriguing titles which has been published of late; it also appears to be one of the most ambitious.

Renk’s declared intention is to unearth what in her view critics have not brought to light, namely, the relation between contemporary Caribbean representations of motherhood and those of the Victorian mother, the historical link between madness and race, and “the vital textual connections between Caribbean narratives and nineteenth-century British and colonial discourse.” At the same time, however, her 174-page text also aims at showing how Caribbean women writers re-imagine the Caribbean and how “they approach the failures of nationalism, specifically in relation to women’s lives and social-political expectations” (p. 7). This is carried out through an analysis of the re-writing strategies of five writers: Jean Rhys, Erna Brodber, Michelle Cliff, Jamaica Kincaid, and Dione Brand – even if
several other writers are discussed, among whom Olive Senior, Earl Lovelace, Paule Marshall, and Claude McKay.

The five women on whom she centers her analysis are defined as postindependence writers. The inclusion of Rhys among them leads to incongruous affirmations like "Postindependence women writers were also assisted by the work of many earlier women writers, for example, Mary Seacole, Pamela Smith, Henrietta Jenkins, Sylvia Wynter and Merle Hodge" (p. 12). Renk offers to read Caribbean female texts not merely as resistance to dominant discourses, but as subversion of the central myth of the family dating back to colonial times. Correlated to this family myth is that of England as a garden, a heaven on earth transmitted through spectacle "to overawe the natives" (p. 31).

Positioned as a child in the great English imperial family, the Caribbean has absorbed destructive Victorian codes. Merely acknowledged by male writers, the dismantling of this value system has, according to Renk, become the focus of fiction by women. As they articulate their writing across the boundaries imposed by colonial power and nationalist writers – taking their narratives away from what Édouard Glissant has called the "imitative élite" texts – women have gone beyond the family and garden myths, beyond the nineteenth-century English realist mode of narration, and thus have moved "their narratives closer to decolonization."

Renk barely alludes to differences between the five writers, stressing instead their commonalities. These include the reversal of the Anancy tale, bringing forth the voice of the subaltern, revisioning history, and producing an "alternate consciousness" through the dreamscape. She joins the long list of critics who have pointed to rewriting as the main concern of women writers from the region in their efforts to move outside structures of oppression. However, unlike other critics, who have warned against "trimming" women's writing "to fit [any] neat paradigm," Renk tends to overgeneralize (see O'Callaghan1993:101). As she draws on Trinh Minh-ha to assert that the oral tradition is "the foundation for the writing of women of color," she forgets that one of the writers she analyzes, Jamaica Kincaid, has affirmed: "My writing does not come from that [storytelling]. My writing, if I owe anybody, it would be Charlotte Bronte. It would be English people" (Ferguson 1994:169).

The same generalizing tendency leads Renk to assert that Caribbean women writers reconceive the family and the nation as "alliances among oppressed people" (p. 13). While this is certainly true of Michelle Cliff, one of the writers she discusses at greater length, it cannot be extended to all. Kincaid, a very individualistic writer, does not share Cliff's ideological stand. She has indeed declared that she does not link her destiny to that of the African diaspora. This notwithstanding, Renk asserts that these women have "broadly redefined family first in a manner that resembles pre-slavery..."
and pre-colonial family configurations and then as a connection among peoples who have experienced similar colonial oppression or who are experiencing neocolonial oppression” (p. 10).

Readers can take issue with her insistence on Europe and Africa as cultural matrices, which makes Caribbean culture appear as merely derivative and imitative. Although of European and African descent, as well as Indian in some cases, Caribbean features have their own configuration and also exist in their own right. Also, Caribbean readers might not agree with her assumption that nineteenth-century colonial representation “shaped, and continue to shape, the way the Caribbean views itself and is viewed by the First world” (emphasis added) (p. 89).

The insightful discussion of single writers is thus at times marred by Renk’s blanket assertions and by her reading of intersections in Caribbean women’s work as dominant characteristics of women’s writing from the region. Her captivating title is broader in scope than the content of the book. For instance, Victorian sexuality is discussed, but only in relation to the theme of madness. Yet, especially compared to Anglophone and Hispanophone female writers, sexuality is an issue which women from the English-speaking Caribbean, with few exceptions, have traditionally skirted and only recently explored through homosexuality.

The book would perhaps have been more satisfactory had Renk in her analysis of the writers’ strategies not forced them into a grid — albeit anti-canonical — which they inevitably elude.

REFERENCES


Nana Wilson-Tagoe's *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature* represents a thorough study of the historical imagination of many of the most important figures in West Indian literature, ranging from Wilson Harris and Edward Kamau Brathwaite to Merle Hodge and Erna Brodber. Beginning with an introduction in which she articulates the scope and focus of her study and a first chapter on the development of Caribbean historiography, Wilson-Tagoe devotes each chapter to a careful, sensitive, and insightful reading of individual authors. Her second chapter deals with Edgar Mittelholzer and V.S. Reid, and V.S. Naipaul is the subject of her third chapter. Chapter 4 examines the works of George Lamming and Chapter 5 those of Wilson Harris. Derek Walcott merits two chapters, beginning with a study of his poetry in Chapter 6 and then continuing on to his drama in Chapter 7. Edward Kamau Brathwaite is the subject of Chapter 8, and a number of West Indian women writers are unfortunately compressed into Chapter 9, rather than each receiving a chapter of her own, as the male authors do. After a brief discussion of the role of Africa in the historical imagination of West Indian writers in Chapter 10, Wilson-Tagoe finishes with an equally brief conclusion.

A truly solid piece of scholarship, the book demonstrates an admirable depth and breadth, bringing together a wide variety of literary works and essays in a densely constructed study. The only weakness of the text surfaces in the early theoretical chapters, especially the introduction, where Wilson-Tagoe deploys deconstructive arguments to disable a number of binary oppositions, only to refer to these categories later in the text as if they had never been dismissed. The most obvious instances of this maneuver occur when dealing with her deconstruction of oppositions that turn around notions of history and fiction. She proposes that the categories of historical narrative and fictional narrative cannot easily be distinguished due to their shared reliance on narrative tropes, writerly subjectivity, and creative expression, and she offers no explanation of how to shore up the explanatory power of these categories. But if this is so, the logic of her argument would not allow her to use the category of fiction writing, or at
the very least would require her to call into question the notion of fiction writing as a practice, which she fails to do in her later discussions. Due to the structure of the text, however, this is a much less serious criticism than it might seem, for the theoretical argument developed in the early part of the text is not central to the critical readings of individual authors and seems almost separate from the rest of the study. Thus the very real strengths of the book shine through the moment one gets beyond these early chapters, and the intelligence and attentiveness of the readings of the authors examined guarantee that readers will not be disappointed. In the last instance, Nana Wilson-Tagoe’s *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature* would be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of any scholar interested in the historical imagination in contemporary West Indian literature.


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*Beating a Restless Drum* is well named, for although it delivers what it promises (an examination of the poetic theories and practices of Brathwaite and Walcott), it is itself quite restless in doing other things as well. It identifies Brathwaite and Walcott as the two pre-eminent poets of the English-speaking Caribbean, compares their respective merits, and acknowledges their pioneering role in laying a foundation on which younger poets of the region can build. Beginning in the 1950s, Brathwaite and Walcott faced the challenge of establishing a new tradition of Caribbean poetry in English. They were able to meet the challenge, largely, as June Bobb argues, through their “response to the annihilation of self inculcated in Caribbean people by both European and Caribbean colonials and their modernist counterparts” (p. 226).

The names of Bobb’s four chapters foreshadow her general argument: (1) “Reconceiving Self and World”; (2) “Africa and the Poetic Imagination”; (3) “Language as Salvation”; (4) “Epic Rhythms in the Caribbean.” The argument is that Brathwaite and Walcott reconceived or reformulated a sense of West Indian nationality or identity out of fragments left by four centuries of
African slavery in the Caribbean. In the process, they utilized indigenous, regional, linguistic resources, and created poetic rhythms or patterns that later served as models for younger Caribbean poets like Lorna Goodison, Jean Binta Breeze, Grace Nichols, Cynthia James, Fred D’Aguiar, Kendel Hippolyte, and Mutabaruka. In her conclusion, Bobb quotes approvingly from the preface to Hippolyte’s anthology, *Confluence*: “sundering questions of race, colonialism, Caribbean identity, that split society and self in the two previous decades, are not confronting [younger poets] in the same way” (p. 235). In other words, precisely because of the thorough examination of race, color, class, colonialism, identity, nationality, and related themes by Brathwaite and Walcott, younger Caribbean poets can feel free to consider fresh approaches to these themes or strike out in altogether new directions.

*Beating a Restless Drum* systematically analyzes individual poems by both authors, side by side and in chronological sequence. The analysis reveals many original insights, makes useful comparisons, and illuminates hidden meanings through reference to well-known Caribbean commentators like Édouard Glissant and Rex Nettleford, international theoreticians like Mikhail Bakhtin, Henry Louis Gates, and Homi Bhabha, and such Caribbean critics as Lloyd Brown and Gordon Rohlehr. All this confirms the book’s status as a work of meticulous and painstaking scholarship, for Bobb has roamed far and wide to find historical, sociological, and theoretical material to corroborate her own reading of individual texts by Brathwaite and Walcott and support her claims for both poets.

While one cannot quarrel with Bobb’s main claim that Brathwaite and Walcott established a new poetic tradition by considering issues of identity and nationality and utilizing indigenous Caribbean linguistic resources, it would be possible to express some reservation about her treatment of the “need to locate the Caribbean experience solely in Africa” (p. 53) and her suggestion that “In *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, the vision of Derek Walcott and Kamau Brathwaite converge” (p. 104). To be fair, Bobb only acknowledges the “need” of some Caribbean writers to see Caribbean experience as fundamentally African in origin, and she also considers that “Africa, in Walcott’s poetic world does not have the same all-consuming power of anchorage and homing that it has for Brathwaite” (p. 54). Yet her obvious enthusiasm for Brathwaite’s vigorous, informed, and inspired evocation of Caribbean links to Africa contrasts sharply with her rather defensive advocacy of Walcott.

The fact is that a poem like Walcott’s “A Far Cry from Africa” expresses an ambivalent outlook toward Africa that bears no comparison to the solidly African-centered vision in many of Brathwaite’s poems, and to blame previous critics for emphasizing a polarity between Brathwaite and Walcott does not satisfactorily explain striking differences in the two poets’ respective attitudes towards Africa. But this is a controversial issue that cannot be
easily resolved, and if Bobb’s preference for a Brathwaitean, African-centered Caribbean vision comes through her analysis it should not be regarded as either limiting or misleading. On the contrary, it adds force and consistency to her insights, opinions, and arguments. Most of all, it suggests passionate commitment to her subject; and when we consider the admirable lucidity and clarity with which she writes in *Beating a Restless Drum*, Bobb certainly deserves our thanks for a book from which we can learn a great deal about Brathwaite and Walcott, about Caribbean poetry in general, and about Caribbean history and culture.


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At the end of the twentieth century, when the stridency of the male-female binary of feminism has enlarged into a recognition of the broad gender playing field, Eugenia DeLamotte’s analysis of Paule Marshall’s fiction brings an insightful awareness to the complex issues that have occupied Marshall for almost fifty years. Race, colonialism, class, and multiple citizenship interweave with divergent sexualities in an interlocking bite in *Places of Silence, Journeys of Freedom.* In fact, by couching her argument under the veil of feminism as one of its major contributions to scholarship, DeLamotte undersells a work that is very much a researcher’s trove in shared boundaries such as psychology, economics, gender studies, and Third World politics. The book is a chronological study of Marshall’s vision, played out through characters who wrestle with spanning their selfhood across a multiplicity of allegiances, while striving to remain true to themselves, their self-growth, and their necessary pact with the various communities to which they belong simultaneously.

DeLamotte’s main agenda is Marshall’s interest in binaries, both as textual fabric and as artistic method, the main one being the interplay of silence and voice in the repression and awakening of characters. She argues that a complex interweaving of oppressive hegemonies throws Marshall’s characters upon themselves into zones of non-speech. But silence does not
present the would-be controller with a safe haven from the repressed or speechless. The problematic for the repressed is self-discovery through an acknowledgment of cultural memory and private history. When cultural memory is acknowledged (whether it be for the white hegemonic Harriet or the black materialistic Avey), characters go into crisis and sites of silence become sites of resistance. Reclaiming self and private history challenges distorted public history. Hegemonies may not disappear but in the well-known feminist analogy, “voicing it” either inwardly or outwardly becomes the path to action and to freedom.

DeLamotte also focuses on the stylistic and narrative aspects of Marshall’s use of silence and voice. She notes Marshall’s play with superimposition and doubleness in her use of DuBois’s double consciousness and Ralph Ellison’s invisibility and shadow-and-act paradigms. These paradigms explore the paradoxes of self-knowledge, double exposure, and inversion. *Places of Silence, Journeys of Freedom* cites Marshall’s texts as progressive allegories: *Brown Girl, Brownstones* as social, *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* as psychological, *Praisesong for the Widow* as spiritual, and *Daughters*, where silence is most gendered, as an allegory of independence and a “conflation ... of discourse[s].”

The argument develops in four chapters, each treating one of the novels, but *Reena and Other Stories* is not ignored. The mix of autobiographical, stylistic, and ideological elements of “Brooklyn,” for example, illuminate in black and white how the struggle for voice and its metaphors of journey are unclothed in the superimposed exposures of the controller and the controlled by the lake in Professor Berman’s domain. Analysis is at times turgid, but here the superimposition of narrative ingredients is revealed: the historical objectification of Miss Williams’s black body, the battle royale over her budding writer’s craft, and the inversion of power as Miss Williams “comes to voice.”

One of the strengths of DeLamotte’s analysis is its thoroughgoing and unconventional exploration of places and paradigms of silence and voice. The structural hegemony of the brownstone house with its resident, white legacy, Miss Mary at the top; upward mobility as seen in Beryl Challenor’s parroting of her father; the insistence of Silla’s voice, unmanning her husband, Deighton, are places of silence. Meanwhile, Silla’s kitchen is voiced with movement towards control of private history. The factory, Vere’s pseudo-masculinist machine, the canefields, the strangulation of First World exploitation in *Chosen Place, Timeless People* and *Daughters*; the most unlikely place – Sugar’s Club with its false camaraderie and memorabilia, speaking generations of goodwill; these are all places of silence.

The main achievements of DeLamotte’s study are its holistic approach to major concerns of Marshall’s fiction and its effort to negotiate a broad spectrum of pertinent ideologies for texts, so diasporic and situated at so
many borders of cross-Atlantic discourses. Thus, while analysis comes out of a feminist frame, multiple gender bases are drawn on. Similarly, the study engages alongside African American critical theory, post-colonial parallels, notably the exploration of Bourne Island as a Heart of Darkness allegory. The work is a balanced exploration of Marshall's dichotomies: of being American and West Indian, or Jewish and white like Saul and Harriet as much as being black like Merle Kibona; of the hidden racism behind white benevolence as well as bigotry and classicism among materialist blacks. However, a text dealing with so many Caribbean experiences would have benefited from a cultural exploration of the particularities of Caribbean gender, calypso, and Carnival as theorized by West Indian scholars such as Carolyn Cooper and Gordon Rohlehr.


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Sir Vidia's Shadow is a difficult book to read, and not only because of its excruciatingly bad prose. It is deeply personal, and most of the personal detail is objectionable and reprehensible. Yet all things personal are also always political, especially if the subjects are two writers who have written overtly political books about various countries. Most reviews of the book that have appeared see it as vindictive and salacious and are themselves often vindictive and salacious; the press throughout the world has made of the book a sensational story of the sort that promotes the sale of tabloids. The only productive way to read this book, to my mind, is as the product of a certain culture, just as those reviews and articles with juicy extracts from it can be read as symptomatic of the hollowness of international journalistic culture. The particular culture the book engages is that of neocolonial intellectual formation. Both V.S. Naipaul and Paul Theroux had their careers formed in the crucible of the decolonization of countries in Asia and Africa.
from rule by European colonial powers. Theroux comes from the United States and spent much time in Africa and Asia, about which he has written several books, fiction and non-fiction. Naipaul is a British citizen of Indian descent, born and raised in the Caribbean, whose most famous books, also both fiction and nonfiction, are based in Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa.

Given their genealogies, it would seem that both Naipaul and Theroux were in good positions to interpret and portray the complex situations in countries that had freshly gained "independence," with all its attendant problems. Theroux, with his U.S. American notions of free speech and free movement, his rejection of Vietnam, his decision to teach in difficult conditions in an unstable Africa, and his uninhibited mixing with native Africans, was placed both intimately in the context and distant enough. Naipaul, with his experience of "multicultural" Trinidad as a member of a family who came from India as indentured laborers, his unhappy education in repressive Oxbridge, and his position as a member of a racial minority in Africa, the Caribbean, and Britain, had both privileged access to and intimate knowledge of ethnic difference, formation, and conflict.

However, the bodies of work they have produced are deeply problematic, rife with prejudices and retrogressive ideological baggage of all sorts. Reading this book explains why. Primarily about Naipaul, it nevertheless tells readers as much about Theroux. This is a Theroux who does not so much as demur when Naipaul utters the most blisteringly racist nonsense about Africans and Africa; indeed he begins to see exactly what Naipaul says. After loving Africa and feeling on some days like "Albert Camus, a schoolteacher in remote Algeria" and on others like "George Orwell shooting an elephant," the post-Naipaul Theroux "liked the place less. I had begun to see it with his [Naipaul's] eyes and to speak about it using his words" (p. 144). This is a Theroux whose partner readers will not know even by name because she is referred to throughout as "my wife." This is a Theroux, most of all, who can't stop showing the reader how racist, misogynist, ill-informed, prejudicially opinionated, and ideologically contradictory Naipaul is and yet who, in 1972, wrote an almost completely uncritical book about him entitled V.S Naipaul: An Introduction to His Work. How seriously can one take the politics, in relation to race, sex, society, and nation, of a writer for whom friendship means that all positions either don't matter or must be justified, even if his implicit claim in this book is that he never agreed with them?

Moreover, Theroux inadvertently displays how close to Naipaul's his own views are, whether on women, blacks, or himself. Theroux is embarrassingly adolescent in his self-regarding and self-obsessed outpourings, his homosocial idolizing of Naipaul, his bravado about his sexual prowess, his very lazy political eye, and his deeply solipsist vision. But what new information does he give readers about his subject? The Naipaul that emerges comes as really no surprise to any reader of his books. His views
on race, blacks, women, sex, and sexuality and his colonialist politics are clear in his books, which makes his immense popularity in the Western world quite disturbing, if predictable. This book can do no further damage to Naipaul and, more importantly, offers little to critics except a pile of gory detail to substantiate each of Naipaul’s prejudices. All of those are far more eloquently articulated in Naipaul’s own books, in prose considerably less purple than Theroux’s.

If the colonial metropolitan adulation of Naipaul is worrying, even more surprising is the fact that so-called postcolonial critics write tortuously improbable defenses of Naipaul. Michael Gorra’s *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie* is a perfect example of how politically barren and opportunist much so-called postcolonial criticism is. The ostensible theme of the book is how writing by these three authors leads to a radical redefinition of Englishness. While this is an interesting and productive thesis, Gorra does not appear to sustain it even in a book this short. In his chapter on Naipaul, he neglects to look at texts where Naipaul explores or comments on Englishness at any length, then makes a curiously old-fashioned argument about Naipaul’s “sensibility,” and collapses an assertion that Naipaul’s is a postcolonial aesthetic of mimicry with an admission of Naipaul’s evident search for canonicity. This is surely an impossible contradiction. If anything, Naipaul’s work is a late colonial response which, far from using neocolonial responses to critique colonialism or broaden notions of Englishness, seriously undermines any sense of neocolonial complexity and fits these societies into narratives that embody exactly what the colonial centers want to hear. Gorra’s likening of Naipaul’s writing to a Fanonian, anti-colonial rage is laughable in its necessary abstractness and contortion.

Gorra’s chapter on Paul Scott, the best in the book, is persuasive in its argument that Scott’s work on India is rooted in history and steers clear of Kiplingesque of Forsterian abstraction and mythification, offering the first anti-essentialist account of national identity in British literature. However, Gorra is seriously off-mark with his sections on Rushdie. Again, he chooses the wrong text to concentrate on. *Midnight’s Children* offers little comment on a redefinition of Englishness; it is much more about neocolonial India. Moreover, Gorra’s critical discourse on Rushdie’s use of English is very superficial. In any case, Indian English says nothing about Englishness, Asian or otherwise. Gorra does deal in passing with *The Satanic Verses*, a novel much more concerned with Englishness, but inexplicably dwells more on what it says about postcolonial India than what it says about Britain. His long digression on the BJP and notions of Indianness is fine, but it isn’t about Britain! While there is a connection between the two (the BJP is funded heavily by Indians in Britain and the United States), this is not what Gorra explores.
Gorra also includes, for no apparent reason, a small piece on the fatwa controversy involving a defense of the novel, which does not have very much to do with his argument, nor does it show any sociological insight into the business of British Asian protest against the novel. This is indicative of the general epistemological confusion in Gorra’s critical apparatus. By schematically dividing his focus: Scott-theme, Naipaul-sensibility and Rushdie-language (as if such criticisms were possible to the exclusion of each other), he loses out on any possibility of fruitfully combining them.

The conclusion attempts to tie these very uneven and irreconcilably different chapters into an argument about the expansion of Englishness. In doing so, it undertakes a problematic comparison between Rushdie and Naipaul. Naipaul is made to signify the relentless chronicling of the mimicry involved in postcolonial identity because there are no origins and essences; Rushdie is made to celebrate that fact and be inventive about that impurity. This involves more than just an exceedingly naive understanding of Rushdie’s politics, which are closer to Naipaul’s than he would like to admit. Rushdie’s books about India (The Moor’s Last Sigh, for example) and Pakistan (Shame), and his writing in general, reveal a colonial intellectual formation, albeit less obviously than Naipaul’s, given Rushdie’s complex borrowings from Western and non-Western literary traditions. A study of Rushdie would need to unravel these strands and determine where his politics reside. Gorra also elides the blatantly colonial and racist politics of Naipaul, fitting him into Homi Bhabha’s critical frame without any examination of the politics of his particular portrayal of mimicry or indeed Bhabha’s.

When Gorra does criticize Rushdie, it is on woolly terms, accusing him of not having “depth” and the seriousness of “longing,” when surely Rushdie’s point is to problematize notions of depth and longing, never mind what he says in interviews. (Another of Gorra’s pet critical techniques is to take the writer’s stated intention as gospel.) This critique then becomes a defense of Naipaul’s seriousness in telling things as they are. Finally, both writers become, by little more than virtue of being British citizens, redefiners of Englishness. Exactly how they do this remains quite unclear at the end of Gorra’s book.

Gorra could have used the fatwa to explore British Asian understandings of being British and counterpoised these with Rushdie’s in his work. Instead, he uses Rushdie’s platitudes about British Asians’ unwillingness to accept plurality as evidence of Rushdie’s plural vision and redefinition of Englishness. While he hints at class, Gorra does not see how class influences Rushdie’s vision and how this can offend the bulk of Britain’s Asians (and not just Muslims) for a variety of sociological reasons. As an Indian, for example, I strongly object to Rushdie’s politics in almost every word he has written about India and that is not because I do not have a plural sense of my identity as an Indian.
Scant on sociological knowledge or insight, wrong in its selection of material, and pedestrian in its pontifications on secularism, values, and the nature of the literary aesthetic and its politics, Gorra's book is yet another addition to the large corpus of unproductive writing that has become fashionable under the rubric of postcolonial criticism.


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Afro-Cuban Literature is an in-depth exploration of both the literary output of authors of African ancestry in Cuba and the influence of Africanity on non-black Cuban authors. Considering the current explosion of academic interest in the so-called “Other” in Britain and the continued debate on “race in writing” across the North American continent, what is most valuable about Edward Mullen's text is its comprehensive focus and the detailed analysis which is presented. Mullen provides one of the clearest and most precise definitions of a confusing aspect of Afro-Hispanic writing – “poesía negrística,” “poesía de negros” and “poesía negroide.” The text moves away entirely from the premise that the zenith of Afro-Cubanism spanned only the two decades of the 1920s and 1930s and upholds the ideology that it is Afro-Cubanism that has in the main shaped all Cuban narrative and more importantly, the contemporary Cuban nation.

What is most problematic about this book is Mullen's indefatigable insistence that current U.S. critical theory, especially in its Afro-centered incarnations, is pivotal to a comparison with the Cuban dichotomy. This opinion is presented early in the first chapter, “The Critical Axis”:

In contrast to Latin American debates on race, which have been profoundly influenced by conceptual paradigms of cultural identity anchored in myths of racial harmony and syncretism, polemics in the more racially polarized United States have produced a more forceful and open discussion of race. From its very inception, African-American literary studies have been concerned with the issues of race canonicity and cultural identity. A by-product of the search for a genuine African-American aesthetic sensibility has been a critical vocabulary that helps to clarify the notion of racial categories – a problematic that cuts across linguistic and cultural barriers. (p. 25)
Mullen presents the cultural hybridity that marks Latin American literature as being consumed by the broader notion of a black center in the context of Cuba but he never quite manages to erase the cultural barrier of race in Cuba and thus present a specific critical theory for reading Afro-Cuban texts. Either way one finishes this book with no clear notion of Mullen’s viewpoint on the issue.

The second chapter, “Peninsular Origins: Simón Aguado’s Entremés de los negros,” is the most interesting of the text. It highlights blacks in Hispanic literature as being worthy subjects dating since the fifteenth century in Spain. In addition, the chapter reflects on Cuba’s status during the seventeenth century as Spain’s most interesting colony in the New World with equivalent emphasis placed on her nationals. Interestingly, Mullen sums up the chapter with a description of blacks as “parts of a complex network of social relationships reflective of the tensions of seventeenth-century Spain” (p. 58). Chapter 3, “Juan Francisco Manzano: Building a Tradition,” describes the life of this self-taught slave, stresses the importance of his narrative, and calls for its inclusion in what are deemed the canonical Latin American texts, especially given Manzano’s status as one of the foundational black writers in Afro-Cuban literature.

In Chapter 4, “The Black Witch Doctors,” the astute work Hampa afrocubana: Los negros brujos (Afro-Cuban Underworld: The Black Witch Doctors, 1906) of the great Cuban thinker and writer Fernando Ortiz is analyzed in great detail, as is, to a lesser extent, his Los negros esclavos (The Black Slaves, 1916). It is to be noted that Mullen does not sway from Fernando Ortiz’s pioneering premise that Cuban culture is a mulatto culture but rather presents Ortiz as a Cuban intellectual whose ideals are much more Caribbean centered than would have been recognized in his day.

Chapter 5, “Nicolás Guillén’s Son Motifs: Afro-Cubanism Comes of Age,” highlights the literary output of Cuba’s “poeta nacional” and most renowned exponent of Afro-Cubanism: Nicolás Guillén. However, Mullen gives no additional insight to this remarkable man and his Motivos de son texts. Indeed the chapter ends with the author’s suggestion that much of Guillén’s work is yet to be understood in its entirety. The final chapter, “Shaping the Canon: The Flowering of Afro-Cubanism,” attempts to determine how inclusion in works on canonical texts comes about for black Hispanic writers. Mullen makes no substantial claim to explain inclusion; he suggests that “race” is paradoxically that which at once most admits and most decenters black writers. Of note is the inclusion in the text of the three appendices: “Afro-Cuban Poetry” by José Juan Arrom, Black Interlude by Simón Aguado, and Son Motifs by Nicolás Guillén – all in English translation.

Afro-Cuban Literature: Critical Junctures stands out as an example of literary scholarship which is completely devoted to the African contribution.
and presence in Cuban literature. It is also a comprehensive history with bibliographic details and an almost encyclopedic scope. For this reviewer, however, Mullen does not reach a concrete understanding of Afro-Cubanism, which is the basis of Afro-Cuban literature. Nevertheless, for all those who are engaged in the study of the African presence and contribution to Cuban and indeed Hispanic Caribbean literature, the book is an invaluable resource in the continued debate.


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In 1999, Puerto Ricans became a bump in the road for Hillary Clinton’s erstwhile campaign for Senator of New York State. In short order, the American public was reminded again about the existence of a community that is essentially ignored despite its long history and ties to the United States. President Clinton’s proposal to pardon more than a handful of Puerto Rican political prisoners given unusually long sentences for such crimes as conspiracy and possession of firearms also reminded us that Puerto Ricans have not accepted meekly either their public obscurity or their colonial relationship to the United States. Puerto Ricans, in fact, have a long and memorable history of radical politics. From 1920 to 1960, Puerto Rican radicalism centered on labor organizing in the fields and in the factories. Community based radical organizing among Puerto Ricans during the 1960s is the focus of The Puerto Rican Movement.

The chapters in this edited volume provide mostly first-person historical accounts of the many Puerto Rican organizations of the left in the cities of New York, Philadelphia, Hartford, and Boston. Andrés Torres provides a comprehensive and insightful introductory chapter that covers the history of Puerto Rican radicalism in the northeast United States and helps to put in perspective why it emerged, what it meant, and what its legacy was for contemporary Puerto Rican politics. As such, the introduction is a useful guide for the following chapters on particular Puerto Rican organizations of the left (the Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño, the Young Lords, Puerto
Rican Student Union, etc.) as well as leftist struggles in the Puerto Rican communities of New York, Hartford, Boston, and a few other places in the northeast. The introduction, however, failed to establish an analytical perspective sufficient to assess the true strength and impact of radical politics on Puerto Ricans in the United States.

The issue of validity is, in fact, the major question mark, not just for the introduction but for the entire volume. Torres, for example, claims that Puerto Ricans are resentful that they were never given the chance to rule their own destiny and are indignant over their treatment in this country (1998:12). But he presents no evidence to support this very important claim. This is also true of the contributors who tell their stories from memory and without the support of documentation. José E. Cruz, for example, admits to this methodological weakness when he poses the question of how, given the fragmentary and incomplete nature of the materials we use to reconstruct the past, we know we got the story right (p. 86). Documentation is nearly impossible where, as Torres admits, the historical record on this experience is almost nonexistent (p. 1). This is probably why the editors do not pitch the book as a history. It is more of a political handbook, a marker of pitfalls and traps, a source of ideas for continued struggle, and above all, a wellspring of hope (p. xiii). With no other published account of this important period in Puerto Rican history in the United States, this volume is, nevertheless, pioneering and necessary.

The reader is probably best served by treating the authors of the chapters as paper informants and triangulating the truth about particular organizations and leaders by comparing what different authors say about them. A chapter by José E. Velázquez is devoted, for instance, to the activities of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party in the United States. But references to the activities of this important organization of the Puerto Rican left are also found in a different chapter about the party in Boston, in the autobiographical story of Carmen Vivian Rivera (a Puerto Rican woman activist), and in a chapter on radicalism in Hartford, Connecticut. Similar strategies can also be used to establish a truer picture of the experience of Puerto Rican women in leftist struggles, and of the role of Puerto Rican college students.

The book, as a whole, is rich and rewarding reading. The Puerto Rican left took very little for granted in U.S. politics, tried to probe deeply into its very foundation, embraced complicated theoretical work, and tried to untangle the forces of race, class, and nation. These are the issues all of us, scholars and activists alike, must take seriously in our efforts to understand and act in this modern political world.

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The Dominican Americans presents a comprehensive introduction to one of the largest Latino groups in the United States, filling a glaring vacuum in the burgeoning discipline of Latino Studies. Using an interdisciplinary methodology, the book narrates the story of a Caribbean people whose massive migration started in the 1960s and continues to this day. In the course of an introduction and five chapters, it explores the historical, political, and economic impetus for immigration and the ensuing hybrid culture in the epicenter of the Dominican diaspora: New York City.

The authors must be commended for striking an effective balance between breadth and depth, for while the book is an ambitious introduction, it offers keen insights about the effect of immigration on notions of Dominican cultural identity. They tackle a central question in the study of immigration: what impact does immersion in a new culture have on the immigrant’s earlier conception of self and society? For Torres-Saillant and Hernández, immigration causes Dominicans to “begin to reconfigure their conception of cultural identity, reevaluating the issues of class, gender, and race” (p. 145). The work adeptly supports this thesis. Any shortcomings stem from the introductory genre itself, which often allows little room for detailed evidence.

Appropriately, the book first reviews how Dominican identity is constructed on the island. The authors affirm that despite the “mulatto” nature of Dominican culture, a rampant negrophobic and anti-Haitian sentiment informs the way in which governing white elites construct national identity. By describing elite nationalist culture in these terms, they stand apart from many island-based scholars who, whether by default or design, condone a racist vision of Dominican culture. This historical discussion tills the soil for their later consideration of how many Dominican Americans embrace the African portion of their cultural heritage. By proposing that Dominican cultural identity undergoes a racial transformation in the diaspora, Torres-Saillant and Hernández implicate Dominicans within a broader pattern of immigrant racialization similar to that of Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities in the 1960s and 1970s. The book also con-
siders how the exigencies of diasporic life transform gender relations. Unlike women on the island, Dominican women in the United States are active in the work force and community and come to be seen more as partners than subservient mates in the diasporic household.

With respect to class, Torres-Saillant and Hernández are careful not to portray the Dominican community in monolithic terms. They highlight the differences between elite migrants who arrived in the early twentieth century and those of the post-1960s generation who are of working- and middle-class origin. Furthermore, they illustrate how Dominican immigration after 1960 coincided with a decrease in industrial and unskilled jobs in New York City. This discussion helps offset the emergent stereotype in American popular culture that portrays Dominicans as "the drug dealer." By juxtaposing this criminalized image with the realities of life in "postindustrial" New York, the book soundly reinterprets the rise of drug dealing as a symptom of social disempowerment rather than an indication of moral depravity.

Even though the authors demonstrate much sensitivity to the social, economic, and cultural barriers facing immigrants, they never indulge in visions of victimization. Instead, they offer an account of how Dominicans forged a community in the heart of the Big Apple. In this sense, The Dominican Americans is a valuable resource, for it provides a history of Dominican business, civic, social service, and cultural organizations, and lists important political and cultural leaders.

The most groundbreaking aspect of the book is its discussion of Dominican American culture. Unfortunately, its strongest contribution is also its greatest weakness. In primarily providing biographical sketches of Dominican American artists, the authors miss an opportunity to engage culture as a form of social criticism. Instead, Torres-Saillant and Hernández argue that diasporic culture addresses issues of marginality, racism, and sexism, without letting the artists and artworks speak for themselves. How do diasporic artists — in the imagined world of cultural production — re-articulate what it means to be Dominican? This task is left for future scholars.

Taken as a whole, The Dominican Americans argues that the diaspora allows marginalized Dominicans greater access to a public sphere in which they can articulate new versions of Dominican identity. Scholars interested in Dominican immigration should certainly take their cue from this work. New studies, for example, can explore how Dominican men and women cope with the move from a patriarchal society to a more egalitarian one, or how the re-conceptualized — and apparently negrophilic — identity of Dominican migrants is received on the island. Humanists, in turn, might consider how these racial, class, and gender issues play out in the work of Dominican American artists. In the end, the book’s clear prose and solid research will appeal to both general readers interested in a new American
subgroup and seasoned scholars interested in issues of transnationalism and globalization.


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In academia, where new interests emerge (and disappear) at an increasingly rapid pace, it is rare for anthropologists to devote their career to a particular ethnographic field. Sally Price and Richard Price’s long-range, indepth research on the Saramakas in Suriname is a happy exception. During the past three decades they have produced an impressive series of publications on various aspects of Maroon life. The present book offers a detailed documentation of the development of Saramaka art through time and concludes with a general discussion of the “deep culture-historical roots” of Maroon arts.

The authors argue that Saramaka art has evolved in the New World in an interplay between continuity and change. A syncretic inter-African understanding of aesthetics, which has remained at the core of Maroon artistic expression, first emerged as different Africans came together and shared the same experience of plantation slavery in the New World. A central component of this aesthetic revolves around the importance of creating unique art forms that allow artists to display their particular individuality. The association between identity making and art, the authors suggest, may be related to the Maroons’ historical experience of slavery which threatened their identity. Saramakans assert their individuality as artists by being innovative and this involves, among things, continuously adopting new materials, tools, or techniques from the outside. Thus, when Saramaka men began to travel for wage labor after the abolition of slavery in 1863, which allowed them to journey more freely outside their local area, they acquired a number of specialized tools that enabled them to produce more intricate and elaborate forms of woodcarvings than previously. And as Saramaka women were exposed to different forms of cloth and embroidery they created new styles within their textile art. Maroon art forms therefore have undergone constant change as artists have incorporated a wide range of outside elements into their work. This change, however, has been in accordance with a body of...
well-defined principles. Maroon cultural history, in other words, has been characterized by “continuity in change, by creative and dynamic processes operating within a general framework of broadly African aesthetic ideas” (p. 302).

The authors conclude the book with a critique of the theory that Saramaka art is directly derivative of African art. This theory is often substantiated with examples of the apparent similarity between select pieces of African and Maroon art. The Prices argue that some of the Saramaka art forms, regarded from this theoretical point of view as being particularly African, are of fairly recent date and therefore cannot derive directly from Africa. Furthermore, they demonstrate that artworks from as disparate parts of the world as Alsace and Timor bear a striking similarity to Saramaka art, even though no contact whatsoever can be documented. They therefore argue for the need to “go well beyond a look-alike logic and to trace the evolution of Maroon arts in the context of their full social, economic, and cultural settings as they unfolded over time in the New World” (p. 297). Indeed, they state, only such studies can show how Maroon arts “stand as enduring testimony to African-American resilience and creativity and to the exuberance of the Maroon artistic imagination working itself out within the rich, broad framework of African cultural ideas” (p. 308).

The authors' conclusions make an important contribution to the ongoing debate on ethnicity and cultural heritage within and outside the academy in the West, particularly in North America. I wonder, however, whether the authors might not wish to let further analysis of Saramaka art be directed more by ethnographic concerns than by such Western cultural political issues. The authors emphasize that Maroon arts do not have a deeper symbolic significance and they refer to the “tired notion” that insists “the ‘meaning’ of art in nonliterate societies is a matter of deciphering a symbolic code, typically imagined as one in which sex, fertility, and the supernatural loom large” (p. 8). The authors assert that art and aesthetic commentary, usually focusing on such matters as technique and design, are an integral aspect of Maroon society. Yet reference to the content of this commentary is curiously absent in the book, making one wonder what sort of discussions, and imaginings, occur, for example, in connection with the appropriation of new styles or materials.

We are told that “Maroons have always found it possible to be fiercely anti-European in their outlook yet enthusiastically supportive of creative new cultural ideas developed on their own terms” (p. 293). How does this attitude find expression in their incorporation of European/North American cultural elements into their art? What did the woman intend by sewing her husband’s and her own names on her husband’s shoulder cape, in the same manner as she probably was taught to do on “European” style samplers at German missionary schools (p. 84)? Similarly, what made a Saramaka
dancer don a rubber mask of Richard Nixon at a dance held at a funeral ceremony in 1961 (p. 244)? What sort of comments might these innovations have engendered? The Prices’ enormous contribution to the understanding of Maroon life thus continues to generate new questions which makes one wait, impatiently, for their next study.


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These are turbulent times for West Indian cricket and, even if reports of its demise are decidedly premature, its recent ups and downs – downs much more than ups – make the appearance of Hilary Beckles’s two-volume study of the past, present, and possible future of the game in the Caribbean all the more timely and compelling.

Volume One, subtitled “The Age of Nationalism,” is essentially a restatement, already articulated by Beckles in his earlier contributions to An Area of Conquest (1994) and Liberation Cricket (1995), of the familiar “resistance theory” of Caribbean cricket, according to which the colonial Caliban takes over Prospero’s magic, turns it against him and, by dint of defeating him at his own talismanic game, liberates himself from the thrall of foreign hegemony; “liberation cricket” is, in this reading, the vanguard, instrument and expression of political, psychological, and cultural liberation at all levels in the former British Caribbean, the matrix of modern West Indian nationalism and seedbed of its political democracy, with bat and ball, wrested from Massa’s hands, now transformed into the armes miraculeuses with which, wielded by Headley, Sobers, or Richards or hurled by Constantine, Hall, or Holding, Caliban wreaks revenge for the physical and psychological scourgings of the past. Convinced, following C.L.R. James, that “in the West Indies, history made cricket, and cricket made history,” Beckles advances this now well-worn thesis with considerable passion, reading the development of West Indian cricket as a series of “antisystemic resistances” through which “colonized West Indians took the plough share of empire and
turned it into a sword which they later placed at the throats of the imperial order" (pp. 70-71). Beckles is aware of "the dialectical process of accommodation and resistance that resides at the core of Caribbean history" (p. 80), but does not explore in any depth the possible ambiguities of contesting the power of the Master on the Master's own terrain, a process which may involve incorporation into the Master's values and worldview even as it contests them; in Michel De Certeau's terms, West Indian cricket is not so much a strategy of resistance undertaken from outside the Master's hegemony, but a series of oppositional tactics, replete with all kinds of contradiction and paradox, conducted within that hegemony (see De Certeau 1980, Burton 1997). Beckles devotes much attention, rightly enough, to the power struggles between whites and blacks as manifested on and around the cricket pitch, but says nothing of the problematic relations between Afro- and Indo-Caribbeans in West Indian cricket which have, on occasion, led to East Indians boycotting Test matches in Port of Spain and Georgetown (see Birbalsingh & Seecharan 1988, Yelvington 1995). There is a valuable chapter on women's cricket in the Caribbean which raises, but does not directly confront, the important issue of whether cricket may have strengthened gender stratification in the Caribbean even as it challenged the hierarchies of race and class, and a discussion of the presentation of cricket in West Indian literature and music is followed by a concluding chapter entitled "The Anti-apartheid Struggle at Home and Abroad" on the troubled cricketing relations with South Africa.

The principal shortcoming of the author's insistently repeated "anti-imperialist" theory is that it confines his discussion almost entirely to international cricket (and principally to matches with England) and leads to his neglecting other levels and forms of cricket in the region: inter-territory cricket, club cricket, schools cricket, village and plantation cricket, street cricket and beach cricket, these last being the basis on which Caribbean cricketing prowess ultimately rests. In pursuing his political and ideological reading of West Indian cricket, Beckles passes over its anthropological meanings, failing, for example, to situate it within the context of the "play element" in Caribbean culture generally and, specifically, within the "reputation culture" of West Indian males that anthropologists such as Peter Wilson (1973) and Roger Abrahams (1983) have explored with such insight. The result is a one-dimensional, even rather puritanical, account of West Indian cricket in which play and pleasure are steadfastly subordinated to ideological self-assertion and political intent whereas, in reality, the two dimensions constitute a single seamless whole. This reader would have welcomed more "thick description" of the grass-roots of West Indian cricket and less talk of "hurling missiles at the Columbus project" (p. 88), but Volume One nonetheless offers a wide-ranging, if hardly original, discussion of what the author calls the first and second paradigms of West Indian
cricket, colonial cricket (ca. 1800-1950) and nationalist cricket (1950-ca. 1990). A fully theorized and anthropologically aware history of West Indian cricket remains, however, to be written.

Volume Two, subtitled “The Age of Globalization,” is of considerably greater interest and originality. It represents a first attempt to engage with the “third paradigm” of West Indian cricket, namely, its “post-nationalist” phase beginning in the early 1990s when the West Indies’ remarkable fifteen-year domination of world cricket began to falter, pending its apparently total collapse in the disastrous defeats by Pakistan (1997) and South Africa (1998), both of which occurred after the writing of this book. Beckles begins by asserting, perhaps a little prematurely in the light of the West Indies’ recent fightback against Australia, that “all around, there is compelling evidence of the collapse of the nationalist sensibility within which West Indies cricket came to an ideological maturity in the Clive Lloyd-Viv Richards era” (p. 1). On the cricket field itself there is the “evidence,” if such it is, of the ignominious defeat by Kenya in the 1996 World Cup and the loss of the 1995 series to one of the finest post-war Australian sides. Beyond the boundary, there is the growing popularity amongst West Indian youth of both soccer and basketball, the latter beamed by satellite every evening into tens of thousands of West Indian homes, and the corresponding decline of school and village cricket. Michael Jordan and Dwight Yorke are the new role models for the young West Indian male, and, where cricketers are admired, it is more for their diamond-studded earrings (pp. 13, 21) than for their prowess as batsmen and bowlers; in the new cricketing paradigm they are “apolitical” or “transnational” entrepreneurs rather than sportsmen representing and articulating the democratic-nationalist aspirations of a politically conscious people. Cricketing officials are increasingly recruited from the business milieu, and their aim is to secure global financial sponsorship no matter what the cost to the image of West Indian cricket, whence the proposal – eventually dropped – that the international team be known as the “Kingfisher West Indies.” As West Indians transfer their affections to soccer and basketball, so foreigners move in; Chapter 2, “When Kensington Looked Like Lord’s,” gives a somewhat peeved account of the “invasion” of Kensington Oval by English holiday-makers during the 1994 series against England, which transformed the fourth Test into a virtual home match for the visitors, with no fewer than “89 Union Jacks waving on the first day compared with 12 Barbadian flags and 3 West Indies flags” (p. 39). The impact of what is loosely called “globalization” or “post-modernity” on West Indian cricket is explored insightfully, if somewhat repetitively, in the following chapters, at the end of which the author offers a series of proposals, involving the participation of West Indian governments and the University of the West Indies, geared at strengthening West Indian national cricket (and, by corollary, West Indian
national identity) in the face of the corrosive pressures of, on the one hand, the "subnationalisms" of the region's constituent countries and, on the other, the supranationalism of the age of globalization. The object, of course, is to restore to West Indian cricket its historic role of "resistance," though Beckles is fully aware that what needs now to be "resisted" is far less easily identifiable, and hence far more insidious and menacing, than the British colonialism of old.

Like all such attempts to situate sport within broader socio-economic and political contexts, *The Development of West Indian Cricket* regularly succumbs to what Francis Wheen (1996), in an anthology of "new cricket writing," has called "the athletic fallacy," namely the belief that a successful national team (be it cricket, soccer, rugby, or whatever) necessarily and automatically expresses a strong and secure national psyche and that, conversely, national sporting failure necessarily reflects or presages some crisis of national identity, itself linked to a wider crisis of society, politics, and economy. But, though there are obviously connections between "sport" and "society," these are rarely causative in any straightforward one-to-one fashion, and a nation's success on cricket field or soccer pitch is no necessary indicator of its broader health and security; significantly, England's two brief periods of cricketing supremacy (1926-29 and 1953-58) occurred at times of marked national crisis and uncertainty. *A contrario*, the zenith of the kind of radical nationalism whose apparent demise is bemoaned in this book — say from the Rodney Affair (1968), via the "February revolution" in Trinidad (1970), to the PNP landslide in Jamaica in 1972 — coincided with one of the weakest periods in recent West Indian cricket, while the second half of the *quinze glorieuses* of West Indian cricketing hegemony — say from 1983 to 1990 — took place against the disintegration, precisely, of the "nationalist cosmology" (p. 92) of the 1960s and 1970s. Sport ultimately is an epiphenomenon, and while the development of a particular sport and that of a particular society may at times intersect (as occurred most obviously in 1950 in the case of West Indian cricket), each has its own internal logic and momentum which prevents any neat each-to-each correlation between them. Does the fact that Australia recently failed, against all expectation, to defeat a supposedly supine West Indian side signal some "crisis of Australian identity"? And this is the final paradox of West Indian cricket that Beckles does not — perhaps cannot — address. The West Indies have no mandate from God, History or any other agency to dominate world cricket as, thanks to a combination of factors explainable largely in cricketing terms, they were able to do so brilliantly and ruthlessly between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s. The West Indian need for cricketing success — not just to win every series but, apparently, to win every match — may say more about the weakness of the national psyche than about its strength, and the continuing, if waning, obsession with, in particular, defeating the ex-
Master at his own game could indicate how little, rather than how much, West Indians of the nationalist generation have escaped from the colonialist mind-set in which they grew up. Their cricketing omnipotence a thing of the past, the West Indies will in the future win some matches and series and lose others just like any other national cricketing eleven, and it will not necessarily affect the wider issues confronting the Caribbean one jot. Perhaps, in short, the time has come for West Indians to be liberated from “Liberation Cricket” as just one further colonial legacy and to transcend the violent swings between hubris and nemesis – both equally illusory – that cricketing nationalists’ obsession with victory at all costs has brought in its train.

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Religion, Diaspora, and Cultural Identity: A Reader in the Anglophone Caribbean. JOHN W. PULIS (ed.). Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1999. xi + 417 pp. (Cloth US$ 90.00)

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This volume brings together the work of fourteen scholars of West Indian religious beliefs and practices. It will be a handy guide for future research, especially since the chapters, taken together, usefully summarize the literature to date on religion in the Caribbean and in Caribbean diasporic communities. The editor is to be commended for providing a sense of coherence to the very disparate case studies presented here. The analytical focus of the book is the formation of West Indian religiosity in the diaspora - and, indeed, as Aisha Khan puts it forcefully in her contribution, of the very idea of religion itself, constructed as a cultural and an analytical domain separate from other domains of social life. Refusing to view Caribbean religion as either made up of timeless traditions or as cut from whole cloth, and resisting temptations to see diaspora as a unidirectional flow from the Caribbean to immigrant communities in North America or to view cultural hegemony as a process emanating from North America southwards, the volume’s contributors see diaspora itself destabilizing the traditional/modern dichotomy. Several contributors reveal the utter embeddedness of rational secularism and modernity, with their narratives of progress and development, in dominant Western religious cosmologies, and Caribbean religions’ implicatedness in the constitution of specifically West Indian modernities at home and abroad.

The book is divided into two parts. The first contains chapters emphasizing the West Indian diaspora in particular northern locales such as New York City and the Netherlands as well as in dispersed global mediascapes. The second is focused on West Indian communities in the Caribbean, mainly Trinidad and Jamaica. All of the chapters, save Ineke van Wetering’s, concern the Anglophone Caribbean and its diaspora. Each part is introduced by a short commentary reviewing the contributions of the chapters that follow – the first by Kenneth Bilby and the second by Carole D. Yawney. The book contains an introductory essay by the editor, and a historical overview of religion in the Caribbean from before the Conquest to the present by Robert J. Steward. The entire volume is framed with a forward by John Szwed and an afterword by Richard Price. Overall, then, the editor has created an impressive package. Its shortcomings include the uneven quality of
the contributions, the inevitable trade-off between maintaining theoretical coherence and striving for encyclopedic scope, and perhaps an over-emphasis on Rastafarianism. But these are the sort of faults one expects in edited collections. Fortunately there are some real gems here that more than suffice to carry the volume.

In Part One, John Homiak criticizes the mapping of the local/global distinction onto scholarly appreciations of Rastafarianism as a “cult” versus a “transnational community and international network of black cultural resistance” (p. 87). His analysis of new media technologies in the formation of a globalized Rastafarian mediascape points up the ever-present “interplay between local developments and global events” (p. 87) that have characterized the movement since its inception. Carole Yawney tracks Rastafarianism from Jamaica to Toronto, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and beyond. Recounting a chant that begins and ends with the phrase “we are only visitors here,” Yawney reflects on the ephemerality and “being-in-transition which pervades” not only the Rastafari world but also its scholarly engagements. Philip W. Scher recounts the Crown Heights affair in Brooklyn, which brought the Caribbean and Hasidic Jewish communities into conflict. He argues that city-based policies allocating resources dependent on a community’s ability to appear as a single “tile” in a great “ethnic mosaic” demonstrate the resource-competition model of ethnicity to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, not an analytical verity. Wallace C. Zane shows how the Vincentian Spiritual Baptist repertoire, including “travel to different lands” (p. 26) like Africa and Caanan, resonates with their more mundane but no less significant transnational journeys in which the Vincentian Converted demarcate themselves from other Spiritual Baptist communities. Ineke van Wetering demonstrates a similar boundary-maintenance, the result of colonial hierarchies between Creole Surinamese and Ndjuka and Saramaka Maroons which persist in the metropole.

In Part Two, Garth L. Green writes on the controversy surrounding Paul Minshell’s 1995 “Hallelujah” float, which brought contending visions of faith and some marginalized Pentecostal congregations a certain degree of public prominence. At the same time, because it centered on Carnival, the debate over Hallelujah became a debate over the character of the nation itself. Stephen Glazier’s article on Spiritual Baptist music in Trinidad blurs the analytical boundary between sacred and secular, and troubles the search for “a simple, linear path of development from a single [cultural] source” (p. 278). James Houk’s chapter on orisha in Trinidad considers the incorporation of Kabbalistic and other religious traditions in mourning rituals. He situates his chapter in terms of Victor Turner’s “communitas/structure” dichotomy. Part Two contains two more essays on Rastafarianism: Barry Chevannes writes on the theological problem posed, for a faith which emphasizes a spiritual “triumph over death” (p. 348), by the passing of
Rastafari heroes (a problem resolved by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's mortuary practices); John Pulis discusses "citing-up," a form of scriptural reading in which the textual is subordinated to the spoken. Kenneth Bilby's insightful essay interrogates "community" as a keyword in diverse forms of Jamaican religious belief and practice (Kumina, Convince, and Rastafari), and finds varying configurations of identity and place in the imagined spaces of a specifically West Indian modernity. Diane Austin-Broos's chapter on Pentecostal communities in Jamaica, a taste of her most recent book (Austin-Broos 1997) brilliantly recounts the indigenization of North American Pentecostalism. She shows how the poetics of Pentecostalism provide spiritual and material evidence, for believers, of the poverty of narratives of "history" and "progress" underlying dominant modernities. Finally, Aisha Khan's fascinating interrogation of the analytical category "religion" through ethnographic material from her work among Indo-Trinidadians calls upon us to examine "local determinations of what can be categorized as 'religion,' and why" (p. 249). Defining "religion," then, becomes more a matter of hegemonic cultural practices than universal analytical categories.

Indeed, in their respective foreword and afterword both John Szwed and Richard Price find this volume's main contribution to be its unsettling of some of the received categories of Caribbean studies: syncretism, accommodation, resistance, religion, traditional, modern. In the end, then, this book is about much more than "Caribbean religion" narrowly defined. It is about the enduring problematics of modernity and hegemony through diasporic spaces and temporalities, calling into question the imagined and the real, the transcendent and the mundane.

**Reference**


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Over the years the often complicated, and sometimes violent, encounters between traditional West African religious cultures and Protestant Christianity in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jamaica has produced a rich historical literature. Lawson’s short, and essentially synthetic, study will come as something of a disappointment to those of his readers who are familiar with this literature.

His principal concern is with what he correctly describes as the ongoing interplay of rivaling and often contradictory value systems in the institutional context of Jamaica’s Anglican, Baptist, and Methodist churches. The first two chapters of the book, getting on for half his text, are taken up with a discussion of the African origins of syncretism in the Jamaican religious tradition and the theological and historical roots of the island’s Protestant churches. Although these chapters provide a necessary background to what follows, they amount to little more than a rehearsal of what to specialist readers will be quite familiar ideas and arguments.

Much the same is also true of the second half of the book, where Lawson focuses his attention on the implications and ramifications of Wilberforce and Buxton’s attempts in the early 1820s to secure the amelioration of slavery. Their efforts to effect Parliamentary intervention, he correctly argues, proved to be a pivotal, and absolutely crucial, turning point in the relationship between mainly Anglican slave owners and their mainly Baptist and Methodist bond people. Lawson rightly claims that the contest for power, which occurred both inside and outside their churches, between Afro-Jamaican and Euro-Jamaican Christians that took shape during the 1820s, a very different contest indeed from that which had preceded it, had as one of its most significant outcomes the overt militancy of Native Baptists in the 1830s.

There can be no serious disagreement with the broad outlines of Lawson’s argument or with the detail that he provides in support of his case. The main problem is that, rather like his first two chapters, his discussion of the struggles, events, and personalities of the 1820s and 1830s will hold few surprises for those who are familiar with the work of Mary Turner, Gad Heuman, and more recently Robert Stewart. Lawson fully acknowledges the contributions of these scholars but unfortunately he has fallen some way short of
his promise to offer "a new focus on well established data" (p. 2). In fact, there is little that is entirely original or novel about this work. Finally, it would have been helpful had the publisher seen fit to provide an index.


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It is refreshing to read a further addition to those texts that treat the transatlantic African world as a continuous culture region that contains as an integral process, the constituting of New World African culture. The book begins with a survey of early Christianity in Africa and especially West Africa in order to put the view that the religions brought by Africans to the New World were already, to some degree, mixed genres that would make their practitioners receptive to new religious modes including New World revivalist Christianity. With these observations the authors place the emphasis where it rightly belongs on New World Africans as cultural creators and innovators rather than simply as bearers or reproducers of culture. Nonetheless, their second chapter focuses on the elements of Old World ritual practice that were retained in the New World, including the obeah, curing, and funeral rites that plantation owners and others would find so distinctive among the slaves. They seek to trace the transition from the modes of leadership involved in these practices to new modes of leadership within Christianity. Central here, it is proposed, were overlaps between forms of African belief and New World evangelical ideas of "instantaneous regeneration" of the person that created a bridge for exponents of African ritual practice in a New World environment. This overlap had been lacking in earlier attempts by the planter-aligned Anglicans to interest slaves in the Christian order.

Frey and Wood adopt a mode of tracing these leadership issues that reflects that their concern is not simply with issues of individual authority, but also with the creation of style in culture – a style that has made "African American Protestantism" a distinctive New World genre. Chapters 5-7
develop the theme of a distinctively New World African Christianity and for this reader constitute the best part of the book. The discussion of the divergences in white and black ecstatic behavior is especially interesting. The authors remark that the Methodist revivals of 1758 in Britain set a precedent for nineteenth-century modes in North America including "groaning and shrieking" and "violent contortions of the body and spasmodic jerkings, rolling and spinning, running and leaping." These ecstatic forms were regarded, however, more as a breach of normative ritual than as integral to a mode of rite. New World African forms, on the other hand, developed out of rhythmic performance – musical, oral or both – that enfolded ecstatic response back into ritual form. This focus on the production of style through the different positioning of practice in different genres of rite allows Frey and Wood to acknowledge the findings of previous literature on European-derived forms of Christian practice – sung psalms and lining-out songs in this case – and yet demonstrate the cultural creativity that was brought to the New World African experience. Their analysis also indicates how much more scope there is for using Christianity, ironically like jazz perhaps, as a central medium for exploring the Geist of New World African culture. The book then traces, for the first quarter of the nineteenth century and following the North American Great Revival, the growth of black churches with their emergent cultures both along the North American seaboard and in the British Caribbean. It concludes with a consideration of black Christian practice and family and community life that notes the bias in Protestant practice generally toward condemning the "immorality" of women rather than men, be they black or white Christians. This concluding focus on community allows the authors to raise again those issues of leadership, values, and politics with which the study began and to enter a mild caveat on Protestantism in America as a principal vehicle for mobilization. They refer to "the material as well as the moral costs of embracing evangelical Protestant Christianity" clearly felt by many New World Africans who did not take Christian practice into their cultural repertoire.

An interesting book points to issues for debate or at least to issues for further reflection. I mention a few of these. Although the study is presented as a survey of the American South and the British Caribbean, the Caribbean remains as a fairly shadowy presence in the text. Some hesitancy in presenting the Caribbean scene is suggested by the fact that the Caribbean churches for the period (to 1830) are characterized both as majority black churches led by white pastors and as churches more influenced by African survivals and less by the assimilation modes that infused some American bi-racial churches. What is unremarked is that in the Caribbean practitioners often had multiple affiliations with orthodox Christian groups and with groups that also practiced curing and other rites that derived mainly from an African source. Liele, Baker and their associ-
ates in Jamaica, for instance, were assimilated to a degree into a British Baptist order that stood in a very ambivalent relation to these other practices. It was only following the 1860s when the American Great Revival arrived with force in the Caribbean following that Revival’s transport to Britain, that there ensued a process of integrating the different sites of Caribbean ritual practice. This was made possible by the increasing prominence and prevalence of black pastors notwithstanding the British-influenced Revival in the Caribbean. This progress of integration has continued through the twentieth century to produce a distinctive Caribbean variant in New World African Protestantism.

Another issue of considerable complexity concerns the dynamics of initial “conversion” to Christianity. Frey and Wood’s study would have benefited from some of the discussions that have taken place on the subject of conversion within African and Caribbean anthropology. Robin Horton and Jean and John Comaroff have canvassed different aspects of Christianization in Africa, particularly the elements of domination and rational response to a changing world. My own work on Jamaican religion has raised the issue of ontology, arguing that as peoples’ worlds and oral constitutions of the self shift in response to historical events, so do their ritual responses and symbolic renderings of life. The processes involved here are not simply ones of domination or resistance, of acts on an intentional plane, but also a question of how the world seems as one generation succeeds another and as practice responds to new environments constituted through orders of power that are never univalent or complete. Tied to this general issue is a more specific one concerning the relation between social organization and ritual practice. Frey and Wood remark that the experience of slavery usually “destroyed the ties of family and kinship” though it did not destroy “memory, beliefs, experience and expertise.” Along with their concluding discussion of family and religion, these remarks suggest that they might have taken a closer look at the integration of kinship and ritual practice in both Old World and New World African culture. Certainly the turn to Christianity was linked to the difficulty of sustaining social persona in the New World defined in terms of African kin relations which also informed ritual life. Just as certainly, distinctive styles of New World African rite are engaged in the interrogation of moral injunctions concerning European Christian marriage and notions of family form. Many New World African Christians and especially black women Christians know that their mother-centered family forms are entirely compatible with Christianity and in fact empower them for evangelism.

Finally, I would have liked to see a little more consideration of the relation between the domains distinguished in modernity as “politics” and “religion,” respectively. It may be that New World African Christianity can present a very different perspective on how power is negotiated in a racial-
ized world. Tracing the relations between organizational power and ritual practice through stateless and enstated African societies, New World plantation society, and the New World societies of early and late modernity may sensitize us to a fuller range of reasons and cultural contexts in which people distinguish or do not distinguish the domain of religion from politics, and when they do, take up one organizational mode rather than another. Although religious adherence can be indicative of powerlessness, it is not always or only indicative of restricted access to power. If religion can be characterized in terms other than simply a “second best” to politics, its importance to New World African peoples may be better appreciated and new light shed on the over-used domination/resistance dichotomy. These and other interesting issues are raised by this very informative book.


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The publication of a new edition of Walter Ralegh’s classic 1596 exploration account of his travels down the Orinoco in search of El Dorado would be a matter for thanks and celebration even without this volume’s extra features. The amount of attention being paid to this early work of colonialism, of travel, of courtier strategy, and of ethnography in the last decade or so suggests its importance for many fields – from history, literary history, and criticism to cultural studies, geography, and now anthropology. But the most recent edition dates to the 1940s, and massive research since then into related topics and geographies has stood in serious need of being gathered and appended to a faithful new one. Anthropologist Neil Whitehead’s edition is richly annotated and illustrated (with commentary on the illustrations, and new maps), his scholarship impeccable (though he missed the 1596 copy in the John Carter Brown Library), and his interdisciplinary skills awesomely evident.
But what is even more exciting than this necessary and satisfying edition, which will change the study of Ralegh’s crucial text and issues related to it in many disciplines, is the book-length monograph which constitutes the Introduction. An important work of scholarship, synthesis, and interpretation itself, it provides both evidence and polemic for new developments in cultural studies, and its value for theory (if word is spread) will be great. Because Whitehead is well-read in recent literary and cultural theory, especially of the “new historicist” varieties (as evidenced by his stimulating critique of the major literary treatments of Guiana [1995:53-74]), he is capable of bridging the gap of what sometimes seems like incommensurability between literary and historical or anthropological work on the “same” but of course differently framed topic.

For theorists of representation, especially such consequentially interested representation as reports connected to colonial exploration and settlement, Whitehead’s fieldwork in the region discussed by Ralegh will be particularly salient. It would seem that the phantasms of colonialist desire are not alone responsible for such images as El Dorado, Manoa the Golden City, the annual decoration of a chiefly figure with gold dust, the spotting of Sir John Mandeville’s headless “Acephali,” or Ralegh’s promises of gold in the upper reaches of the Caroni and Mazaruni rivers (at the confluence of the Orinoco and Amazon river basins). There seem indeed to have been indigenous goldworks in the area sought after by Ralegh: in the 1990s, goldminers brought to a Guyanese museum a golden pendant in the shape of a two-headed eagle dredged from the mid-Mazaruni. In the Colombia region also discussed as a possible location of “El Dorado,” “a tunjo recovered from Lake Siecha ... depicts El Dorado himself, aboard the raft and surrounded by his retinue, paddled annually to the center of a lake, there to cast in the tunjos, as an offering to divinity” (p. 72).

This and masses of other nuanced description of local geography and indigenous trade networks do not, of course, make the case that the alien desires of foreigners don’t shape reports and muddy their information value, nor that literary challenges to the credibility, transparency, or usefulness of such texts have been unfounded or themselves unuseful. But Whitehead’s account suggests that more nuance will be required in literary and rhetorical analysis to match the carefulness of the anthropological interpretation of this text, and to account for the new light it sheds on the texts that constitute the immediate prehistory of ethnology. The Imaginary is a more multi-dimensional terrain than we had thought.

For historical anthropologists and ethnohistorians, the rigor and care of Whitehead’s synthesis of historical and geographical information with textual analysis should provide considerable insight into the complex social actualities of indigenous life in northern South America during the first century of “contact.” Ralegh’s book is often dismissed by Spanish scholars as
too dependent on the reports of previous Spanish explorers such as Antonio de Berrio to provide significant additions to our knowledge. Whitehead rightly disagrees: “insofar as the Discoverie as text emerges from a dialogic encounter between Ralegh and the indigenes of Orinoco it becomes ethnographic in character, and it is this anthropological aspect of the Discoverie which justifies ... this present edition” (p. 28). Whitehead’s task is to restore the usability of this text, and he sees that careful editing and hermeneutic sophistication are tools as valuable as new archeological evidence and a knowledge of topography. His reading of narratological literary analyses by Louis Montrose and myself enables him to diagnose Ralegh’s precise distinctions as “detailed information that Ralegh’s drive to narrativity in the Discoverie requires” (p. 63). His chain of properly handled resources can open out at last into the addition of a new densely informative resource, the Discoverie itself.

For instance, we can place more trust in Ralegh’s accuracy if we realize that such “attempts to ‘modernize’ orthography” as those of the Ramos-Perez Spanish edition (1973) “led to ... a failure to appreciate the significance of Ralegh’s observation due to the resulting homogenisation of native terms and the subtle transformations of meaning ... through the hispanization of geographical terms” (p. 20). Whitehead analyzes the term “Ezrabeta Cassipuna Aquerewana,” recorded by Ralegh as the name and title by which indigenous people referred to the Queen, whose picture he had shown them. This provides a marvelous instance of the potential ethnohistorical value of the text for those who can read it in a confident and sophisticated way: “the word ‘cassipuna’ is an ethnonym that has been associated exclusively with caribe populations of the Caribbean, but here Ralegh’s implicit reportage reveals to us the continental distribution of this ethnonym and so makes possible a better interpretation of caribe and aruaca ethnogenesis” (pp. 60-62).

There is not space in this brief review to do justice to the many admirable features of Whitehead’s edition (including his incisive critical history of previous major editions in several languages). But I must make one complaint, which I presume reflects upon the publisher and not the author-editor. The volume seems never to have been copy-edited or proofed. This problem of presentation has been growing in both America and Britain, and we will have to keep complaining until the publishing houses take us seriously. It is not only maddening for the reader who must silently correct so much of the text, but in a documentary edition of an early modern work, it may not even be possible to make accurate silent corrections. This is particularly ironic given the revelations this editor’s careful reading and research have been able to produce from minimal orthographic changes. So valuable a contribution to scholarship and understanding deserves a cleaner second edition.

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Pillaging the Empire is a chronological overview of piracy in the Americas between 1500 and 1750. Based neither on original archival materials nor on primary sources, the book is a synthesis of the standard secondary sources on piracy in America and as a result draws heavily on the works of scholars such as Peter Earle, Kenneth Andrews, Charles Boxer, Peter Bradley, Peter Gerhard, Clarence Haring, Robert C. Ritchie, and Marcus Rediker.

Lane criticizes previous pirate histories for having neglected Spain and its colonial subjects and indicates that, although his focus is on the post-conquest enemies of the Spanish and Portuguese in the New World, “the overall subtext is Spanish response” (pp. 6-7). In this respect the book fails, for throughout, it centers on pirates, not the Spanish. The same holds true for the conclusion, where again, the pirate legacy holds center stage instead of that of the Spanish, who are casually written off in the final paragraph with comments to the effect that pirate attacks notwithstanding, Spain continued to build its colonial empire; that in the overall scheme of things, pirate raids were not as significant as some historians have believed; and that despite the fact that the exact cost of piracy can never be known, Spain and its colonies would certainly have been happier and more prosperous without it (pp. 201-2).
Lane is far more successful in his endeavor to place the "seaborne attackers of these Iberian powers in a broader, world-historical context" (p. xvi). The strength of the book lies in its brevity and in the succinct chronological structure that Lane has superimposed on what can otherwise appear as a confusing and incoherent series of heists, raids, and attacks. For all the political and religious motivations often attributed to pirates, Lane sees them as having acted primarily for economic, not nationalistic, reasons.

First to challenge Spanish hegemony in the Americas were French corsairs who sailed between 1500 and 1559. By way of introduction, Lane precedes this episode with a brief treatment of sixteenth-century piracy in the Mediterranean as background to the fact that the French threat in the Americas coincided with the rise in anti-Spanish piracy along the Barbary coast (1530-60). In describing the Mediterranean after the battle of Lepanto (1570) as a hotbed of piracy where rescate (ransom) prevailed, Lane has focused on the Trinitarian and Mercedarian religious orders as the middlemen in this operation. In failing to cite Peter Earle's *The Corsairs of Barbary and Malta* (1970), he has overlooked the important role played in the ransom process by Jews.

Part of the impetus for French corsair activity stemmed from Huguenots, who wanted to found colonies in the midst of Spanish and Portuguese territory, especially Florida, through which Spanish treasure galleons passed en route from Havana to Spain. Interestingly, an expedition to expel French corsairs, who wanted to trade for dyewood led to the Portuguese founding of Brazil in 1533. Nevertheless, much of the anti-Spanish piracy of this early period took place closer to Europe than to America. Between 1535 and 1547, although Spain lost sixty-six ships to French corsairs, forty-one were taken in the Atlantic triangle off the Spanish coast.

Under the Elizabethans, the center of piracy moved from the Old World to the New where, during 1559-68, individual English merchants challenged Spain's monopoly trade by smuggling slaves; in the period 1568-85, outright pirates including Sir Francis Drake challenged Spanish commercial and bullion fleets; and between 1585 and 1603, open warfare featured unprecedented levels of officially commissioned English privateering. In response, the Spanish were forced to fortify such Caribbean ports as Havana, Cartagena, and San Juan de Puerto Rico, whose defenses were funded through higher local taxes.

After the death of Elizabeth I, the British were overshadowed by Dutch sea rovers whose activities represented an outgrowth of Holland's struggle for independence from Spain and Portugal (1580-1648). This struggle was given economic urgency because Dutch herring fishermen needed salt which the Portuguese at Setúbal refused to sell them. When their attempts to exploit the salt pans of the Cape Verde islands were rebuffed, the Dutch challenged Spain at Punta de Araya on the Northeast coast of Tierra Firme.
During this period both the war and the piracy were on again off again. The first serious threat posed by the Dutch came with their capture of Brazil in 1630, which they held until 1654, but their sustained efforts to attack Spanish settlements off the Pacific coast of Chile, Peru, and Mexico proved more costly in the long run.

The final three of Lane's six chapters are devoted to the buccaneers and their offshoots, "freebooters." Lane associates the rise of the buccaneers with both the political and economic decline of Spain and the advent of Cromwell and Louis XIV. The buccaneers illegally founded the first permanent non-Spanish bases in the Caribbean at Tortuga, Jamaica, and St. Thomas. The 1650s and 1660s were the heyday of commissioned buccaneering out of Jamaica in ways reminiscent of the manner in which Barbary corsairs obtained "commissions" from the local beys of the Ottoman empire. Such was the strength of their force that in the Treaty of Madrid (1670), the Spanish finally agreed to recognize English holdings in the Caribbean. But, the height of this success would also spell the beginning of the end for buccaneers whose acts of piracy constituted a danger to the colonies that England was trying to establish. The buccaneers' demise, usually said to have occurred in 1697 with the sack of Cartagena by the French, was preceded by thirty years of vacillation where colonial governments claimed, on the one hand, to suppress them and, on the other, actively encouraged them. The fact that, after 1677, pirates could be executed in British overseas courts and were prevented from sailing under foreign flags as privateers without permission from their home governments caused the buccaneers to push from the Caribbean into the South Seas and to begin raiding the commerce of their own nationals. Buccaneers not driven to the South Seas took their enterprises off the eastern seaboard of British North America, where merchants, during the 1680s and 1690s, defied British colonial policy to trade with them in such ports as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. The War of the Spanish Succession (1702-13) afforded one last opportunity for buccaneers to legitimize themselves as privateers. Thereafter, the 1710s and 1720s would witness the last gasp of piracy in the Caribbean under such independent freebooters as William Kidd and Blackbeard, until English property law, pressure from the East India Company, and British suppression campaigns, more than Spanish military resolve, finally completed their extermination.

_Pillaging the Empire_ will provide helpful background information for anyone trying to understand or prepare a course on piracy in the Americas, and I wish I had had such a resource for my own past endeavors. As a bare bones account, much of the colorful and idiosyncratic detail of the various episodes has been lost, and thus, the book could not stand alone as reading material for an entire course. Ironically, the colorful detail it presents focuses almost exclusively on the Holy War and the anti-Catholic actions of
largely Protestant pirates, detail usually not found in general pirate histories. In 1579, for example, a member of Drake’s band, participating in the desecration of a chapel, broke a crucifix against a table and proclaimed the Spanish to be not Christians, but “idolators who adore sticks and stones” (p. 48); in 1586, when attempts by Thomas Cavendish’s men to pull down a large wooden cross overlooking a bay failed, the Catholics, as is often their wont, saw a miracle and began selling splinters of it as relics (p. 54); and in 1680, one of Bartholomew Sharp’s men shot a friar, who, regarded simply as one more mouth to feed, was jettisoned while still alive (p. 136). Nevertheless, the book is so simply and straightforwardly written that undergraduates could use it to provide chronological linkage of one pirate episode to another, and thus, I recommend it for undergraduates and general readers alike.

DAVID BARRY GASPAR & DAVID PATRICK GEGGUS (eds.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. xiii + 262 pp. (Cloth US$ 35.00)

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Two social historians who are specialists of slave cultures in the early colonial Caribbean, along with six other contributors, have produced an interesting and somewhat innovative volume on the region in the age of democratic revolutions. With reason and en connaissance de cause, David Geggus observes in a solid, comprehensive chapter that nowhere else in the Americas did the French Revolution have such a strong impact, and that as well as (if no more than) the arrival of subversive ideas with shipments, it was the collapse of colonial institutions along with that of political authority that offered new spaces to free coloreds and slaves. A Turbulent Time sets out to explore the variety of strategies and the difference in aims and magnitude that characterized these “slave rebellions and conspiracies, 1789-1815.” (The very useful synoptic list of these rebellions and conspiracies on pp. 46-49 would have been enhanced by a map.) The space charted by these social movements is what Gaspar and Geggus term appropriately “Greater Caribbean”: not only the Antilles, large and small, but also the Caribbean fringes of the continental Americas, from Venezuela and
New Granada to Louisiana and Florida. Indeed, almost half of the book deals with Florida, which was Spanish at the time.

The view that export trade based on plantation agriculture (and with it, all sorts of currents and relations established between the islands and the lands surrounding them) was the primary factor during the eighteenth century in shaping a new cultural sphere – that of the Greater Caribbean – is strongly corroborated by this reviewer’s own research (Estrade & Pérotin-Demon 1991). Gaspar and Geggus’s volume amply illustrates its validity, in particular by locating in this Caribbean framework of slavery, trade, and revolution the Spanish colonial empire, its continental outposts and islands mostly with incipient plantation economies. The chapters on the Spanish-American Caribbean slaves bring some of the newest perspectives on Caribbean slave rebellions. One such is Jane Landers’s essay on the way Florida’s maroon leaders (some of whom were veterans from the war of St. Domingue-Haiti, on the royalist side) negotiated their status as free persons against their loyal participation in the continuous Seminole wars. As in Kimberly Hanger’s discussion of the free people of color of New Orleans, we are led to grasp complex and versatile situations and the way slaves made the best of it to obtain their liberty in principle and in fact, whether they had to take the revolutionary or the royalist side of the whites to do so.

A keen awareness that this “turbulent time” was one of war is another aspect that commends the volume to our attention. This is made clear by the introductory remarks as well as in a number of contributions, including Gaspar’s on the guerre des bois waged in St. Lucia in the 1790s and Geggus’s on the turn Jean Kina’s career as an English soldier took in the early 1800s. To borrow Richard Pares’s classic title, “war and trade” was replaced by revolution and war. Military history is a British tradition and the editors have mustered some of the finest British military historians. The chapter by Michael Duffy offers an analysis of the outcome of this shift from trade to revolution: having by and large won a century-long fight with the French over a Caribbean sugar empire, Great Britain opted for a different kind of imperialism altogether in the Caribbean, more market-oriented than territorial.

It can be argued that revolution brought along the militarization of Caribbean rebellions (those that took place in Martinique and Tobago in the early 1800s are cases in point), as well as their shift from the plantation to the cities. After all, it was in the cities that rising colored militias had steadily concentrated in the second half of the previous century, in the three colonial empires. One would have liked a closer look to be taken at the urban experience per se of slaves to assess precisely that shift of slave rebellions from the plantation to the city. This volume leaves also for a future one the task of redefining the nature of war experience so as to encompass the female side of it and documenting the changing if not increasing contrast...
between the genders at work in the slave culture at that time. But one should judge the merits of a book according to what it promises to deliver: A *Turbulent Time* accomplishes the task its authors set for themselves by increasing both in depth and scope our understanding of the Caribbean connections between rebellions and revolutions. One incidental remark, however: several authors call the slogan "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité" revolutionary, but this is an anachronism, the three words having been coined as the *devise* of the Republic late in the nineteenth century. During the French Revolution, the official letterhead reads, first, "Liberté, la Nation, la Loi" and subsequently, "Liberté, Égalité, la Loi," while "Salut et fraternité" became the usual way to close letters.

**REFERENCE**


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In this fascinating book, Louis Pérez explores the connections between dominant historical narratives, popular memory, and official discourse regarding the 1898 U.S. military intervention in Cuba’s war for independence against Spain. Arguing that the meaning of 1898 remains largely ambiguous, Pérez proposes that this ambiguity is incredibly instructive. In fact, he contends, North Americans have consistently vested their renderings of the story of 1898 “with the ideals by which [they] wished to define and differentiate their place in the international system.” Serving as a means by which to affirm “what the nation is, or perhaps more correctly...
what the nation thinks itself to be," discussions of 1898 changed as political circumstances changed over time (p. x).

Critically, Pérez reveals the process by which the consciousness of both historical actors and historians evolved with the ebb and flow of their own need to rationalize and justify the contradictions of U.S. policies. He thus demonstrates how notions such as insular "stability" and "pacification" underwent repeated redefinition. As U.S. officials rushed to staunch the hemorrhaging of Cuba's sugar economy at the hands of rebels, they sought desperately to fend off charges that they operated by the same "imperialist impulse" then overtaking Europe (pp. 30-39). As Pérez aptly shows, deep-seated racism and a desire to impede Cubans from attaining complete sovereignty over Cuba underlay the stated objectives of U.S. officials. In disguising the self-interest behind U.S. manipulation of Cuban struggles, U.S. politicians and officials relied on a humanitarian discourse that found an abiding resonance in the annals of historians (see pp. 45-56). But, Pérez notes, the combination of fact and fantasy which found its highest expression in North American accounts of the U.S.S. Maine's 1898 explosion also gave rise to a number of silences.

In the book's exciting fourth chapter ("Constructing the Cuban Absence"), Pérez examines the hidden meaning behind one such silence: the discursive disappearance of Cubans from North Americans' depictions of the War and its aftermath. Not only did U.S. policy-makers seek to cover-up their military's incompetence by depicting both Cubans and Spaniards as more incompetent; they also sought to prevent Cubans from participating in their own liberation by banishing them from the front-lines and relegating them to the role of by-standers during negotiations for peace. The purpose of this was to spare contemporaries and their chroniclers the burden of having to act (or think) in a manner consistent with democratic principles. Ironically, Pérez's best efforts to illuminate the complexity of contradictions in which North Americans' perceptions of 1898 are ensnared only reveals more contradictions - itself a commendable achievement.

While this book is brilliant, it is also somewhat disappointing. Certainly, it represents a departure from most of Pérez's previous work which relies heavily on a narrative style and even more heavily on materialist, rather than discursive, modes of analysis. The combining of the two methods for this book is highly laudable. But Pérez remains mute on the question of how his own perspective and political moment influence his rendering of 1898: odd silences permeate his analysis. For instance, although Pérez claims that his primary inspiration for the book comes from Cuban historiography (p. xi), he cites almost no works written or published by Cubans. Indeed, those which Pérez does cite were, on the whole, published prior to 1959. Although the book's objective is to examine the relationship between U.S. historiography and policy, one is left to wonder how the anti-imperialist works of
Cuban historians of the Republic related to Cuba's Republican state (pp. 125-26). Moreover, while Pérez does acknowledge how profoundly the 1959 Revolution affected Cuban perceptions of 1898, he ends his discussion of its impact with 1961 (pp. 126-33). At this point, Pérez remarks, Cubans came to a consensus that 1898 was a symbol of how U.S. imperialism had stolen the promise of liberation from them. But since 1961 the Cuban state initiated policies of centralization and control of information that undoubtedly affected the story's telling all the more. Thus, it seems a curious omission for Pérez to avoid the questions of how Cubans perceived 1898 after 1961 and how memory and the evolving nature of Cuban officialdom changed over time.

Finally, Pérez excludes both historians and actors whose views resist the myths he analyzes. For instance, Philip Foner, who made many of Pérez's same arguments much earlier (1972), is mentioned only in passing (pp. 78, 131). Walter LaFeber, at one point considered a maverick for his deconstruction of U.S. foreign policy objectives, is entirely absent. Additionally, Pérez depicts the U.S. military as monolithic in its advocacy of racist, exploitative objectives. In fact, the War of 1898 was distinctive for the large number of African-Americans who fought in U.S. ranks. As North Americans who had an entirely different view of the largely black Cuban forces and their cause of freedom, these soldiers have been the subject of various works, including that of James Guthrie (1899), a collection of letters (Gatewood 1972), and several recent essays (Kaplan & Pease 1993). Indeed, only by understanding alternative, even marginalized narratives of history and memory can we fully understand the internal contradictions of hegemonic ones - or discover how and why they got that way.

Overall, Pérez skillfully raises the issue of how "truths"—historical, remembered, or imagined—are always multiple and usually mercurial. His book is an exciting contribution to Latin American and U.S. historiography.

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This prize-winning work focusing on a single Jamaican plantation from its establishment in the eighteenth century to its demise in the twentieth is the culmination of an ambitious research project B.W. Higman has been conducting and coordinating over the past quarter-century or more. Although the author has been whetting our appetites through the years with occasional essays and papers on aspects of the study, his monograph is a tour de force that realizes our highest expectations and cements his position in the first rank of Caribbean scholars. In awarding its 1999 Elsa Goveia Book Prize to Montpelier, the Association of Caribbean Historians cited the "masterly portrait of the life (and death) of a historic Jamaican community [that] brilliantly deploys a wide range of approaches and techniques to illuminate the lifeways and material culture of Montpelier’s people."

Slave labor created Jamaica’s booming sugar economy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when Montpelier developed as one of the island’s premier plantation complexes, a holding of some 10,000 acres in western Jamaica with hundreds of enslaved Africans and African-Jamaicans (reaching 958 by 1817) attached to its two sugar estates at Old and New Montpelier, and the pen at Shettlewood. Slave rebellion (1831-32), emancipation (1834), and full freedom (1838) devastated Montpelier’s sugar economy — production had ceased entirely by the 1850s — and the subsequent, much-diminished agricultural enterprise shut down in the early twentieth century.

Higman ably chronicles the entire two-hundred-year life-course of the plantation, but weights his analysis to reflect the primacy of sugar and slavery — the sine qua nons of Montpelier’s existence, in an era that left both the best documentation and the richest archeological record. He evinces characteristic thoroughness in assembling disparate and diverse sources (manuscript materials, maps and plans, government documents, primary and secondary printed works, as well as results of excavations conducted over the
past twenty-five years) and remarkable facility in crafting them into an insightful, erudite narrative reconstructing plantation village life.

After a brief introductory chapter on the history and archeology of plantations in the Americas, Higman spends two chapters on Montpelier’s establishment, ownership, population and production, and a third detailing the plantation’s operation and spatial organization. The following three chapters, analyzing in turn family villages, village architecture and villagers’ possession, derive their particular strength from the rich trove of archeological findings (to which Tony Aarons, Karlis Karklins, and Elizabeth Reitz made important contributions) and an extensive documentary record. Chapter 8 shifts focus and tone in examining, within the broader Jamaican context, the resistance by Montpelier’s slaves and freedpeople that found its most overt expression in the Baptist War of 1831-32. Higman’s thoughtful and thought-provoking final chapter, “People and Place,” seeks to locate “a concept of community ... for the people who occupied the plantation space of Montpelier” (p. 290) in terms of locality, kinship, language, values and reciprocity.

The text is supported by three appendices, including revealing analyses by Reitz and Karklins respectively of the vertebrate fauna and beads excavated at Montpelier, as well as numerous tables and figures, but the muddy reproduction of a few of the latter, for example the Baptist War map (figure 8.1), somewhat diminishes their value. Higman’s notes, bibliography, and index are, as usual, exemplary. This handsomely-produced volume is a notable addition to the already prestigious catalogue of The Press University of the West Indies.

Recent contributions in slavery scholarship have been directing attention to the extraordinary vitality of slave community life and to the strength of slave culture, as the millions of men and women who lived and died in bondage throughout the Americas confronted the grim circumstances of their coercion and forged worlds of their own. Montpelier substantiates and advances these historiographical developments as Higman links intricate analyses of the slaves’ material lives – their houses, furnishings and possessions, clothing and bodily adornments, and dietary patterns – to a detailed reconstruction of family and household structures, that confirms the existence of “an autonomous slave culture ... rooted in a dynamic community” (p. 2), in contrast to the “parasitic dependence” (p. 305) that characterized the white residents’ role. Although emancipation doomed Montpelier’s villages, aspects of community life accompanied the freedpeople in their forced or voluntary relocation beyond the plantation’s boundaries, and gave shape to an enduring African-Jamaican culture. These conclusions suggest directions for future research. For example, the collection of oral testimony (which interestingly was not part of Higman’s project) could help locate the twentieth- (and twenty-first-) century legacies of
a culture whose birth in the oppressive conditions of plantation slavery is portrayed so cogently in Montpelier.


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Espace et identité à la Martinique reveals a century of social history which had previously been omitted, forgotten, or even denied — that of a Martiniquan peasantry. Basing her research on encounters with small farmers in the northern part of the island and retracing the history of the acquisition and use of land, Christine Chivallon argues that in the period immediately after the abolition of slavery, an economic alternative to the plantation system was already operating, opening the way to the development of a true peasantry.

The book focuses on the period from 1840 to 1960, during which the economic and social structures of this peasantry were formed. Chivallon consulted archival sources (the land registry, titles to property, notarized deeds, and the civil registry) and compared the information they yielded to the oral histories she collected. As a result, she was able to trace the demographic and property-owning evolution of three communities: Basse-Pointe, Rivière-Pilote, and Morne-Vert.

She demonstrates that land was purchased by means that were fully legal and aboveboard. Forged by the plantation system, the freedmen were conscious of the value of owning property and the inviolable status legal ownership conferred upon it. For example, the appropriation of the Caplet district of Morne-Vert was accomplished by the purchase of 7.5-acre parcels between 1870 and 1880, following the break-up of the plantations. Elsewhere, properties were of smaller size. These agriculturalists had worked on the plantations as paid laborers, but had also been able to save enough to accumulate nest eggs from the sale of produce from kitchen gardens or by plying a trade. The purchasers appear to have been pioneers motivated by “a will to break away, prepared to take advantage of the tiny loopholes remaining in a power system no less totalitarian than in the pre-
abolition era” (p. 83). They were operating on the basis of a firm conviction that land represented “a source of nourishment; the only guarantee of survival, of a future free of insecurity; as a resource, the land confers upon its owner control of the economic function; as a symbol of belonging to a world, the land confers lasting settlement in a certain place” (p. 83). Even today, when families recount their histories, they refer to a collective memory of genealogies related to the purchase of land, of the pioneers who settled in the area where they were brought up. Chivallon depicts a general process in which the presence of traditional plantations until 1860-80 was followed by the freedmen’s purchase of land parcels, created by the division of plantations and offered for sale by the former owners or their agents, thus forming the agricultural districts (p. 90). This social dynamic was based on “the principles of hierarchization and accumulation” (p. 98), not upon “an egalitarian, communal construction,” although a highly structured mutual aid system did exist.

The property base has developed the family and the constitution of a heritage. Today the family structure in the hills is nuclear (which throws doubt upon the theory of matrifocality), whether the marriages are legitimate or common-law unions, so that property is usually transmitted from generation to generation in the paternal line. To avoid excessive pressure on the land, co-heirs generally move away or agree on some other arrangement. This strategy has made it possible to maintain a family property heritage without breaking up parcels which were already small.

The aim of the organization was “to protect, guarantee, and perpetuate a self-sufficient economy” (p. 236). In fact, outside of the context of the plantation, the freedmen planned and developed a garden-produce farming operation which supplied its own commercial circuits. The situation was in direct conflict with the interests of the plantation: peasant farming diverted labor from the plantation and competed with it for the appropriation of the space; furthermore, its trading was not based on the exportation of agricultural products and the importation of consumer goods (p. 154). The planters therefore demanded coercive measures to protect themselves from this competition. To circumvent the legislation, the small farmers adopted a strategy of compromise, engaging in several different activities. They would work as laborers on the plantation during the cane-cutting season or as merchants (p. 158). Nevertheless, food-growing lands decreased decade by decade, while lands cultivated for cash crops grew (p. 176).

This book demonstrates that a Martiniquan peasant class did indeed exist, contrary to previous assertions. It throws doubt upon theories of “non-history” or victimhood which fed the rhetoric on alienation, assimilation, and the dispossession of identity. There is now no doubt about the construction of a social structure following the abolition of slavery, with small farmers constituting their own autonomy and endowing themselves with the necessary legal, technical, and economic means. This is indeed a case
of a collective repossession of the land and its means of production in a space freed up by the plantation.

As she explicitly states, Chivallon chose to find out the "regularity" and "stability" operating within the social organization afforded by the practice of farming (p. 33). Her aim, in conducting ethnographic interviews, was to reconstruct the physical geography of the districts and their history in relation to family history, economic organization (farming methods and mutual-aid systems), and the "farming cosmogony." Nevertheless, this reader would have appreciated more details about the agriculturalists' daily life, yearly routines, and so on.

The study changes the historical perspective on property and territoriality in Martinique. The hills were transformed into a home, a dwelling, thus becoming a source of collective identity. "The land is for producing and expressing" (p. 191). At a time when assertions of "nomadic identity" are fashionable, this research fills the breach opened by certain ethnologists who have made studies of territoriality and the production of collective identities with a historical basis (see Benoît 1989, Dubost 1996). It is unfortunate that Chivallon's discussion on this point engages only the writings of Édouard Glissant and Francis Affergan.

In this book, the paradigm of the appropriation of space as a producer of identity is applied to a specific experience — that of economic, spatial, social, and symbolic self-affirmation (p. 239). This experience reveals "the tonality of an identity destined entirely to be localized" (p. 239), without limiting it to that. Here dwells "diversity, due not to a collage or jumble of influences, yet nevertheless unique, but rather due to the multiplicity of ways that people situate themselves in the world" (p. 239).

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During the final weeks of the ten-year "apprenticeship" program in June 1873 that marked the formal end of slavery, the first shipload of Asian Indian (locally called "Hindustani") indentured laborers arrived in Suriname, the beginning of a sustained labor migration from colonized Asia to the Dutch Caribbean colony. All in all, 34,304 laborers were recruited from British-occupied India through 1916 and another 32,962 from Dutch-controlled Java between 1890 and 1939. Focusing particularly on Suriname's largest sugar estate, Marienburg, Hoefte's study surveys the experiences of these Asian migrant laborers and the laws and conditions guiding their migration and livelihood from the 1870s to the 1930s.

As in neighboring British and French colonies, Suriname's planters posed abolition and indentured migration as intricately connected issues. After a series of small-scale, private, and generally unsuccessful initiatives to contract laborers from China, Madeira, the British West Indies, and Africa, the Dutch government reached "an imperial deal" with British officials in 1872 that swapped territorial claims in Africa and Asia and also authorized the recruitment of laborers in India for Suriname (p. 31). And once the powerful Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (NHM-Dutch Trading Company) became involved in Suriname, most notably in its purchase of Marienburg in 1880, Dutch officials in The Hague and Batavia (Jakarta) relented to planters' appeals for government subvention to defray transportation costs and the right to recruit laborers from the Dutch East Indies.

Modeled after the British system, indentured labor migration to Suriname included exacting regulations on contract terms, recruitment methods, sex ratios, and laboring conditions, ostensibly designed to protect the rights of workers. But the entire system, as Hoefte makes it clear, was liable to violation and abuse by recruiters and employers. Recruiting agents and sub-agents, for example, avoided mentioning the penal sanction of labor contracts in Suriname and planters, in turn, resorted constantly to the criminal courts to discipline and punish indentured laborers. The laborers, on the other hand, held the legal right to file complaints against their employers, but faced formidable obstacles in doing so. In addition to language and cul-
tural barriers, they were obliged to obtain a pass from the plantation management first. The state, Hoefte argues, reflected the contradictions inherent to the indenture system, including the patent discrepancy between legal mandates and everyday realities. District commissioners, who stood as the workers’ immediate protectors, for example, also acted as their prosecutors.

In drawing these observations and conclusions, Hoefte places her work firmly in line with past studies that have highlighted the exploitative aspects of indentured labor migration. For instance, gendered wage rates, sexual harassment, and uxoricide, she argues, must be taken into account in assessing the degree to which migration afforded women a path to social liberation. Indentured labor migration, through its legal and ideological structures, translated into unequal social relations where Hindustani and Javanese laborers, particularly the women, found themselves at the bottom of the plantation hierarchy with few avenues for upward mobility.

In spite of the preponderance of planter power, according to Hoefte, Asian migrants expressed their discontent, protest, and aspirations in a number of ways. Malingering, suicide, arson, desertion, and violence against plantation authority – both individual and collective – were persistent features of the indenture system and ethnically conscious political movements attracted a growing body of Hindustani and Javanese residents in the twentieth century. Perhaps the most persistent source of conflict centered around definitions of tasks and wages that sometimes boiled over into mass uprisings, as described in the last chapter. Yet more than “incidental violence” that “did not challenge the system of exploitation,” Hoefte concludes, acts of “less open resistance” characterized Asian migrants’ response to indentureship. The high volume of cases before the courts for contract violations provided “the best proof of persistent dissent” (pp. 200, 202).

Hoefte divides her chapters thematically, discussing summarily the migration systems, demographic changes, government institutions, plantation hierarchy, working conditions, socio-cultural traditions and adaptations, and workers’ resistance over the entire period of Asian migration. Her extensive presentation of population figures, wage rates, real property valuations, hospital costs, and other statistical information attests to the impressive array of documents she has examined. Hoefte’s interpretive approach, however, limits her inquiry into historical processes and contexts and what emerges in the end, above all else, is a series of snapshots of how plantation and government officials viewed and treated Asian migrants. An explanation of what the Muharram festival meant to Suriname’s peoples or an analysis of the colony’s political framework, for example, seem necessary in understanding the significance of the various protest movements Hoefte describes in the last two chapters. The overall result is an interesting profile of compelling subjects whose struggles warrant further investigation.

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This chronicle of the threshold years of the Cuban Revolution, focusing on Matanzas province, is a welcome addition to research on a period when the revolution took shape in lasting ways. García-Pérez argues that the Sierra Maestra guerrillas were only the military wing of a broader revolution that turned preponderantly rural, martial, and centralist in 1957-58, as urban student and worker militance fizzled out or was crushed by the Batista regime in provincial cities across Cuba. The 26th of July Movement, “as a party giving form to a consolidated underground under a decentralized command in provinces, regions, and municipalities, with a powerful network all over the island, was converted into a structure of civil-military support for the rebel army” (p. 99). Until 1958, the M-26-7 countenanced armed insurrection only in the context of a national general strike. The Movimiento’s change in strategy came about as a result of the failure of “insurrections” on all fronts: the tragic students’ assault on the presidential palace, March 1957; the failed naval rebellion of September 1957, with M-26-7 participation, which ended in a massacre of more than three hundred; and the disastrous general strike, April 1958.

García-Pérez’s argument overlaps with others who recognize the weakening of various anti-Batista sectors by 1958, yet who denounce Castro for capitalizing on, or indeed planning this scenario (e.g., Banachea & San Martín 1974). García sketches a broader, regionally-strong, and popularly-based anti-Batista resistance with deep roots in Cuban history, which contextualized the M-26-7 (somewhat along the lines of Morán 1980, though Morán’s account turns more on Santiago de Cuba). García contends that the fidelistas gained national support in 1957-58 because they represented the last hopes of the broad anti-Batista milieu – which of course had also partially shaped the barbudos themselves. Castro led the Ortodoxo student youth and admired Eduardo Chibás, the legendary Ortodoxo leader. The Moncada assault in 1953 was to signal mass insurrection by broadcasting
over the radio Chibás’s most famous speech. “In political terms, Castro simply recovered the popular basis of the Chibás program and different forms of grassroots action” (p. 66).

And of course, the Sierra Maestra guerrillas were not simply of military character; they were of civilian origin and their mode of operation had a specific logic that jumbled distinctions between civilian and military. The guerrillas, that is to say, were hardly the product of a military uprising; for these, too, failed against Batista. Many of the guerrillas were men from Oriente who had been trained by Frank País in the M-26-7 underground and remained loyal to País until his assassination in 1957. García-Pérez is persuasive in demonstrating that distinctions between the civil and military wings of M-26-7 were often a matter of time and space, and should not be confused with the larger political and historical meanings that were in flux.

While García-Pérez locates her account firmly in the national context (sometimes too much so), her sights are set on Matanzas: we learn, for instance, about Dr. Mario Muñoz, the first leader of M-26-7 in Matanzas, active in opposition since Batista’s first coup in the 1930s, and a key participant in the Moncada assault. Or Joaquín “Quino” Torres, of the huge, American-owned La Rayonera textile mill, who led the 26th of July workers section in Matanzas (p. 49); or Enrique Hart Dávalos, less well-known than his brother Armando, who led the bank workers trade union, later became a key 26th of July underground figure in Matanzas, and met an early death (p. 52); or Leonor Arestuche and Ida Fernández, who joined the M-26-7 youth brigade that engaged in sabotage; or any of the dozens of workers, students, and middle-class people whom García-Pérez is at pains at least to name.

We also learn about forgotten, inventive varieties of sabotage and conspiracy in Matanzas: setting canefield fires by throwing ping-pong balls filled with chlorate and sulphuric acid from passing cars; stealing the gear levers from urban buses; the picapostas, utility-pole cutters; the hiding of grenades behind a Matanzas church altar ... García-Pérez clearly wishes to break the hold that a few major figures, and one major strategy, has had on our imaginario of the Cuban Revolution.

*Insurrection and Revolution* may be the first “revisionist” interpretation of the Revolution to come out of Cuba by an author living in Cuba, a researcher at the Institute of History and the Center for Martí Studies. The book revives an important discussion, not undertaken by a major publishing house in twenty-five years. It is also pathbreaking in its use of interviews of local and regional leaders as well as judicial and police archives at the provincial level, all indispensable sources for reappraisals of the Revolution.

The book’s catchy title, it turns out, is misleading. There is a far less linear relationship between “insurrection” and “revolution” in 1950s Cuba than the title suggests (see, similarly, Bonachea & San Martín 1974). The book is less about insurrection and armed struggle than about diverse, inchoate, civil
forms of resistance that only momentarily, if ever, coalesced into a single revolutionary movement in 1958-59. Other difficulties in the book may stem from its brevity. One misses a discussion of works on the Cuban 1950s and the coming of the Cuban Revolution; the more concentrated and significant studies on the topic are not so numerous as to discourage consideration, and their arguments are close enough to García-Pérez to warrant her perusal (Bambirra 1974; Bonachea & San Martín 1974; Winocur 1979; Morán 1980). And of course, one would like to read more than names and schematic profiles of regional leaders, and more on rank and file members and women. Race, too, seems oddly absent from García-Pérez’s account, even though Matanzas is probably the province with the strongest Afro-Cuban presence.

On the whole, García-Pérez raises important questions that stimulate further research. Her answers remain, perhaps fruitfully, ambiguous. The Sierra Maestra guerrillas capitalized on previous popular, civilian movements; at the same time, Castro brought anti-Batista forces victory, such as could be had, in the real world and in the shadow of the American empire; and the Sierra Maestra guerrillas struck a quick victory in the lowlands due to the vacuum left by the defeats of 1957-58. We may speculate as to the import of Insurrection and Revolution for current U.S.-Cuban-Cuban exile relations. But clearly García-Pérez’s focus on the Cuban Revolution’s multiple origins and dimensions, and on its more local levels, stimulates and enriches debate on the Revolution and prods it in directions that challenge the conventional wisdom of both its supporters and critics.

References


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The study by Preeg analyzes Haiti in the 1990s from the standpoint of demographic forces and U.S. foreign policy. The perspective is that of a Washington foreign policy insider, a former ambassador to Haiti (1981-83) and official with the United States Agency for International Development (1986-88). Preeg defines the dilemma of the book’s title in terms of the inadequacy of U.S. policy, which prioritizes short-term objectives over long-term efforts to confront the unrelenting demographic forces that underlie the Haitian crisis.

The demographic model that frames this book has three defining elements: rural population pressure on arable land – the “Malthusian prophecy run wild” (p. 27), rural/urban migration, and outward migration. Haiti’s problems cannot simply be attributed to its demography; however, its demographic forces are without a doubt extremely important. If anything Preeg underestimates the sheer scale of current rural/urban migration in Haiti and the singular importance of Port-au-Prince as Haiti’s primary urban destination. Oddly enough, there is little discussion of the quality of demographic data – projections of census data collected a generation ago (1982). Projections of the late 1990s, taking into account urban sprawl, suggest that urban areas may now be 41 percent of the population, of which 80 percent is concentrated in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, mostly in teeming slums. The massive peasant base that has traditionally defined Haiti may be less than 59 percent of the population rather than the two-thirds or 70 percent commonly attributed to the rural sector (Smucker 1999).

The most striking element of this study is the discussion of U.S. interest. In the post-Cold War era, the most immediate vested interest of the United States in Haiti is “protection of U.S. borders” (p. 96). Specifically, geographic proximity and the threat of a large outflow of people are the driving forces of U.S. Haiti policy, including military intervention in 1994...
U.S. policy is also affected by a domestic population of Haitian-Americans estimated at one million and Haiti’s role as a transshipment point for drugs. According to Preeg, other factors influencing U.S. policy include humanitarian and human rights considerations, nation-building, free trade, and eventual incorporation of the Caribbean into the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). In assessing Haiti’s future prospects, Preeg views human resources and geography as the country’s key assets in the emerging “new Caribbean economic order” – labor intensive industry, nontraditional agriculture, tourism, and other services based on proximity to the U.S. market and NAFTA. Overall, these assets and economic sectors sound very much like the old Caribbean economic order – revisited.

From a cultural perspective, the discussion of “national character” is inadequate, based primarily on political studies by outsiders. Despite pertinent references to Haitian novels, the study has inaccuracies in the interpretation of creolisms and Haitian social arrangements. It is not fair to say “voodoo defies explanation as religious experience” or that traditional culture is necessarily resistant to change. Preeg’s positive assessment of the business class significantly underestimates its internal contradictions and the powerful influence of old tendencies toward monopoly and protectionism. Duvalier further centralized political power but the U.S. Occupation (1915-34) had long set the stage for unprecedented domination by Port-au-Prince. Despite the longstanding interest in Haiti shown by members of the congressional Black Caucus, some would take issue with the notion that Haitian-American ties with African-Americans are deeper than ties among Hispanic-Americans of contrasting national origins.


It would have been useful if the author had situated Haitian migration in the broader regional context. Large-scale population movements and forced migration have long been defining elements of Haiti and the Caribbean. Out-migration has been a common escape valve in this century, a solution to poverty in dependent island economies of the Caribbean.

Rotberg’s edited volume is a collection of papers drawn from an interdisciplinary conference on Haiti held in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, in September 1995. The conference, whose theme was Prospects for Political and Economic Reconstruction in Haiti, brought together an unusual mix of
sponsors and contributors from academia and government including the World Peace Foundation, the U.S. Army War College, the Haitian Studies Association, and the University of Puerto Rico. The volume emphasizes contributions by political scientists, but also includes anthropologists, economists, a geographer, a lawyer, and an educator. The papers stress political analysis and policy options for economic development, education, and the administration of justice. Rotberg proposes the volume as an agenda of critical issues for Haitian reconstruction (p. xi).

It is perhaps not surprising that political issues predominate in this collection of papers. The conference took place about one year after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was returned to power by U.S. military forces – after having been ousted by the Haitian army in 1991, and just prior to new presidential elections in 1995. These dramatic events reflect Haiti’s still unresolved political crisis precipitated by the fall of Duvalier in 1986.

Contributions include the preface by Robert Rotberg, a conference report by Jennifer L. McCoy, and papers by Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Mats Lundahl, Donald E. Schulz, Robert Pastor, Robert Fatton, Jr., Robert E. Maguire, Michel S. Laguerre, Clive Gray, Anthony V. Catanese, William G. O’Neill, and Marc E. Prou. Themes include dismantling the predatory state, “reconstructing” Haiti, national identity, economic growth, poverty alleviation, redefining the state, justice and security, and the creation of a democratic political culture.

Political prospects constitute a key underlying theme in virtually all papers in this volume. The political analysis tends to be framed along the lines of political culture or class-based analysis. Trouillot’s contribution emphasizes the importance of a new social contract as the basis for genuine change, arguing that Haiti’s political problems are firmly rooted in social and economic inequality rather than the political sector per se. Like Trouillot, Bellegarde-Smith notes the historic exclusion of the rural masses from the political process, and the role of peasant lifeways as a longstanding counter-culture of resistance to the predatory state and urban hegemony. Looking to the future, he proposes Haitian religion (vodun) and language (kreyol) as defining cultural elements for a shared national identity that cuts across class, rooted in a rich vein of Haitian tradition that is local, democratic, and largely rural.

As a possible case in point, Maguire (p. 154) takes note of local grassroots peasant organizations as a training ground for new leadership, and the electoral success of peasant leaders in rural and municipal government and parliament in 1995. Laguerre emphasizes the growing role of the Haitian diaspora in domestic Haitian politics and civil society. He views the diaspora, especially Haitian-Americans, as a “guarantor” of democratic transition and a major factor in opening up a closed political system (pp. 177-80). Laguerre
stresses the influence of the diaspora in Haiti, but makes no mention of the ambivalence commonly expressed by Haitians toward the *djas* (diaspora).

Pastor links Haiti's democratic prospects to maintaining civilian control over national security forces (p. 124). He takes note of the "artificial quality" (p. 134) of Haitian transition to democracy due to the ongoing presence of international forces, yet emphasizes the need for a long term U.N. presence. Pastor also observes that Washington has a very narrow definition of success for a Haiti policy governed primarily by domestic U.S. politics (p. 114). Fatton notes that repressive organs of the old predatory state still remain. American military intervention in the 1990s demonstrates once again that violence is the "decisive element" in Haitian politics (p. 136). He argues that prospects for democratization are defined by the underlying balance of class power rather than an "inherent Haitian cultural norm" (p. 137).

Contributors to this volume generally recognize the "economic substructure of violence" (Schulz, p. 100) and the importance of alleviating poverty as a key to democratizing Haiti's national political culture. O'Neill stresses the importance of creating a functioning, independent judiciary (p. 199). Prou views the education system as "moribund" and "beyond renewal" as it presently stands (p. 218). A number of papers raise the question of whether democracy is possible in a context of low economic development combined with high illiteracy (Pastor, p. 133).

Lundahl concludes that peasant agriculture is doomed, and the national economy is at its lowest ebb in history. In keeping with Preeg's formulation noted earlier, Lundahl, Gray, and others commonly look to privatization and the light assembly industry as economic alternatives. In contrast, Catanese proposes investment in the rural economy and the poor majority. In the discussion of alternatives, there is virtually no mention of investment in secondary cities as an alternative to Port-au-Prince and its present status as a dysfunctional, mega-city. Lundahl errs in suggesting that government as a dominant constraint has been removed (p. 87). In any case, the democratization of the Haitian state remains "a fragile project in the making" (Fatton, p. 149).

These volumes on Haiti reflect at least in part the local consequences of globalization in the world economy – dependency and foreign intervention, the diaspora as a transnational citizenry, free trade policies, and the decline of peasant agriculture in a society strongly marked by its massive peasant base. Haiti's predatory state is itself rooted in sharply stratified divisions of society dating from the colonial era and the globalizing forces of the past five centuries.

In reading these volumes, there is an odd dissonance in frequent references to Haitian political culture. The anthropologically oriented contributors talk more of class than culture – cultural politics rather than political culture. Political culture is undoubtedly a useful analytical stance but many...
contributors exhibit a limited sense of the underlying cultural context. In discussing political culture, it would have been useful to draw more heavily on distinctions between archaic and modern states.

**REFERENCE**


*The Repositioning of US-Caribbean Relations in the New World Order.*  
(Cloth US$ 59.95)

*U.S.-Caribbean Relations: Their Impact on Peoples and Culture.*  
(Cloth US$ 49.95)

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It is hard to think of an issue more central to the future of the Caribbean, economically, politically, and sociologically, than its relationship with the United States. Yet the academic debate about U.S.-Caribbean relations is presently neither extensive nor nuanced. This makes the two books devoted to this question and edited by Randy Palmer all the more welcome. Both derive from the same conference held at the Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center at Howard University in April 1996. The focus of the first volume, published in 1997, is politics, economics, and international relations, more or less traditionally conceived; the focus of the second, published in 1998, is more cultural and sociological in tone. Unfortunately, neither book constitutes the comprehensive yet penetrating analysis of the current dynamics of the U.S.-Caribbean relationship which is so needed. Although each book has its merits, each also has weak chapters, and it is hard not to feel that the attempt to generate two volumes from the one conference was a mistake.
The 1997 volume explicitly divides its discussion into the political and economic aspects of U.S.-Caribbean relations. In the former section there are three contributions. Cedric Grant offers a competent account of the recent history of these relations, starting with the emergence of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), going on to the threat that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) posed to CBI preferences and the difficulties into which all attempts to legislate some form of “NAFTA parity” for the CBI countries have run, and concluding with a discussion of the new Association for Caribbean States (ACS) as a potential institutional base from which Caribbean Basin states can more effectively negotiate with the United States on trade and other matters. Grant clearly still hopes that the ACS can develop the capacity to play a constructive role in regional affairs, but he is realistic enough to appreciate that “US reaction to the organization completely discounts the ACS as a mechanism for facilitating the development of relations between the Caribbean and itself” (p. 44). He is referring here to U.S. statements that, with Cuba as a member, the ACS is thereby ruled out as a valid interlocutor. U.S.-Cuban relations thus remain a special case within U.S.-Caribbean relations nearly a decade after the end of the Cold War. In the next chapter Michael Erisman shows that U.S. policy continues to be driven by “the desire to put Castro’s government and the Revolution in a position where they would be so weakened, so discredited, or so dispirited that they might disintegrate” (p.53). In what is, in my view, the best chapter of the book – well informed, astute, politically sophisticated – he charts the “moving goal posts” by which over the past several years new demands and preconditions for normalization have been set by the United States, often for reasons of domestic electoral expediency, whenever previous demands have been satisfied. Alex Dupuy then completes this section of the book with an account of the U.S. military intervention in Haiti in 1994. Although he points out that it could be said that the United States itself “created” the Haitian army, he concedes that a situation was eventually reached whereby the United States could no longer control it except by destroying it. In that sense, he judges that the intervention does show that “right-wing or would-be right-wing (military) dictators in this hemisphere can no longer count on unwavering US support” (p. 86).

By comparison, the analyses of the economic aspects of the current U.S.-Caribbean relationship are less thorough. The one exception to that remark is constituted by Gregory Schoepfle’s chapter on trade relations over the last decade. This contains a huge amount of useful, detailed material on CBI, the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), the Andean Trade Preference Act, and NAFTA. It does not offer an exciting read, but it will be referred to. Beyond this, Kathleen Dorsainvil presents a few brief and limited observations on trade relations between the United States and Haiti, Wilfred David makes some familiar criticisms of structural adjust-
ment programs and calls idealistically for something called "authentic development," George Dalley talks about post-NAFTA U.S. trade policy from the perspective of a lobbyist seeking to influence that policy on behalf of Caribbean governments, and John Harrington and Peter Johnson, representing Caribbean/Latin American Action, an influential pro-business interest group based in Washington, argue that the Caribbean should focus determinedly on the process of building a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), as promised by President Clinton at the Miami "Summit of the Americas" held in December 1994. This last contribution is very short, but it does demonstrate a hard-edged realism about the political and economic prospects facing the region that is sadly lacking in some of the other contributions. Harrington and Johnson conclude that

"the Caribbean must maximize its internal economic strength ... should strengthen, not weaken its association with the US ... [make] better use of the natural strengths of the Caribbean diaspora ... [to] ... strengthen US policy toward the Caribbean ... [and finally] ... must aggressively engage the FTAA process as a subregional group." (p.180)

Or, as they put it even more pithily, "there is indeed a repositioning underway for US-Caribbean relations [but] it has absolutely nothing to do with the ACS" (p.180).

The 1998 volume, as indicated by its title, seeks to address the impact of U.S.-Caribbean relations on the lives of the peoples of the Caribbean. This is unquestionably an important dimension of the relationship, not least because, as Palmer himself notes in his introduction to the preceding volume, the repositioning of the relationship "will not depend on trade alone; it will also depend on the culture and identity of the traders" (p. 7). The chapters in this collection range accordingly over such issues as economic development, tourism, migration, culture, and religion. There are some interesting discussions, notably Joyce Toney's account of the politics of the West Indian Carnival in New York, but generally the tone is bland, the material familiar, and the style that of papers published largely as they must have been delivered to the conference.

This is a real pity, because the emphasis implicit in the approach of this volume – namely, that economic, social, and cultural interaction between the United States and the Caribbean has reached such a significant level that it has changed the nature of the relationship – is the key insight missing from the first book. Here the intellectual parameters of the authors, whether they be political scientists or economists, are still predominantly grounded in a state-to-state or national economy-to-national economy view of international relations. This may, however, already be somewhat dated in the
U.S.-Caribbean context where the process of entanglement between what one might call the U.S. state-society complex and the many Caribbean state-society complexes has now given a transnational, as opposed to an international, character to contemporary relations. In my own recent research I have sought to explore this by reference to the notion of an emergent “Caribbean America,” defined essentially as the structural context that now links the political economies of the United States and the Caribbean, albeit in a fashion that is far from being symmetrical or mutually beneficial. This broad claim can be fairly easily sustained by reference to recent patterns of trade, financial flows, migration, and narcotics movements, although more work manifestly needs to be done to develop and test all the implications of the hypothesis. Nevertheless, it may provide an appropriate means with which to begin to probe the many subtle and complex interactions that constitute contemporary “U.S.-Caribbean relations.” It is certainly an argument that is no more than hinted at in these two edited volumes.


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*After the Hurricane* focuses on some long avoided issues in the management of emergency assistance resources. The use of the resources to initiate mitigation interventions, access to these resources by the poor, and the role of external aid organizations in decision-making about the use of such aid are scrutinized by the authors with the intention of defining some principles of organization, decision-making, and resource management that can promote the introduction and sustainability of recovery interventions. The book moves in a logical evolution from general concepts and principles of disaster management, through modeling of sustainability and recovery to case studies, lessons learned, and the way forward.

Chapter 1 presents the global context of disaster impacts and economic dislocation and makes the link to sustainable development issues. While noting that sustainable development has come to focus attention on the role of resource consumption and environmental protection in economic devel-
opment, Berke and Beatley offer a lucid demonstration of how sustainable
development issues can be linked to recovery policy making and planning.

Chapter 2 builds on the conceptual infrastructure of sustainable develop-
ment established in Chapter 1 to articulate a general model of post-dis-
aster recovery. In fact it is this analytical platform that exposes the current
myths about post-disaster coordination and capacity of local organizations.
In particular, the observations that external agencies focus primarily on
compliance with rigid administrative controls and that they generally view
impacted governments as being too weak to be accountable and to lead, are
at the heart of difficulties in making the link in emergency assistance
between recovery and sustainability development.

Chapter 3 is an excellent exposé of the prevailing operational environ-
ment that militates against the basics of sustainable development and high-
lights the need for a change in the philosophy and practice of disaster assis-
tance, particularly to developing countries. It especially makes the case for
a review of disaster delivery, recovery, and development aid systems that
are so distorted by outsiders who justify and perpetuate their own projects
at the expense of the suffering people.

Chapters 4-6 examine a number of response recovery and development
issues in four Caribbean islands affected by Hurricanes Gilbert (1988) and
Hugo (1989). The analytical framework and the operational model devel-
oped earlier are used to examine the recovery experiences in Jamaica,
Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts-Nevis, and Montserrat. The cases in gener-
al suggest that where the principles of sustainable development are used in
disaster recovery there is a more participatory and empowering outcome.
Berke and Beatley understandably do not address the question of which, if
any, of the principles were essential for an effective link between recovery
interventions and sustainability, but they do highlight a number of issues
that are critical to a redirected path for disaster planning in the Caribbean.

Chapter 7 identifies top-down strategies, inadequate disaster plans, the
piecemeal approach to recovery, and weak development control mecha-
nisms as areas in need of immediate attention in disaster planning practice
in the region. The vision offered for future directions in Caribbean Disaster
Planning, centered around sustainable development, as a framework for
integrating hazard reduction with other social and environmental goals.
This vision is increasingly being shared by disaster management stake-
holders in the region.

It is worth noting that the field data were generated in 1990. Since then
two of the case study centers – Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts-Nevis
have been affected at least twice more by hurricanes. The authors missed an
opportunity to validate their initial findings or modify their analytical mod-
els based on real experiences.
Although the book has been thoroughly researched, readers need to be cautious about the extent to which statements made by individuals are presented as generally reflective of actual conditions on the ground. There are several instances of this in the book. After the Hurricane should, nevertheless, be recommended reading for personnel in aid organizations and sustainable development programs, as well as for policy managers, disaster management officials, and anyone in environmental and disaster management studies.


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It has been repeatedly reported that the process of democratization that accompanied the winding-up of the colonial empires after World War II has been most continuous and successful in countries that were part of the former British empire. This observation has prompted scholars like Weiner and Huntington to assume that British political culture, based on the rule of law, a system of representation and election, and norms of competitive politics, has been decisive in maintaining liberal democracy in these countries, a great number of them being part of the Caribbean.

The survival of liberal democracy in the Dutch Caribbean, particularly in Suriname, is often attributed to its consociational character. Following Lijphart, adherents of this theory believe that stability and democracy in a plural society are achieved best by a system of proportional representation, cooperation of segmental elites, and a coalition of political parties each representing a social segment and possessing a mutual veto and a high degree of segmental autonomy. Dew has been most influential applying this pacification model to Suriname.

Ledgister holds the opinion that the continuity of liberal democracy is not a consequence of the political culture introduced by the former colonial power. He thinks that this is due to the way the colonized took over the colonial state. Crucial in the Caribbean, he believes, has been the embed-
ding of two-way class alliance politics in the liberal authoritarian state from the 1930s. In his view this two-way alliance between the working class and the middle class – lower-class party supporters acting as a check on middle-class party leaders and middle-class elites legitimizing themselves on the basis of working-class support – has sustained democracy in the region.

In order to prove his theory and to refute the Weiner/Huntington and consociational theses (the "conventional wisdom" as he labels them) Ledgister compares the political history of two former British colonies and one former Dutch colony in the Caribbean: Jamaica (a "Creole society") and Trinidad (a plural society) upholding the majoritarian Westminster model of democracy, and Suriname (a plural society) enjoying a consociational form of democracy. Ledgister argues that the three countries followed similar patterns of decolonization, but notes that in Suriname there was a disconnection between the worker protests of the 1930s and the emergence of party politics in response to the grant of universal suffrage. As a result, class alliances in Suriname were one-way rather than two-way alliances, which induced the regression of democracy after 1975. In Jamaica and Trinidad, the presence of two-way class alliances safeguarded the survival of democracy.

Ledgister's line of argument seems most valid in the case of Jamaica. Here, the labor revolt of 1938 inspired Alexander Bustamante to form the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) and Norman Manley to establish the People's National Party (PNP), which was affiliated to the Trade Union Council. In anticipation of the first elections on the basis of universal suffrage in 1944, Bustamente in 1943 used his BITU to found the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP). Since 1944, the PNP and the JLP, both as alliances of the lower and middle classes, have been Jamaica's chief contestants for state power and have controlled the country's dynamic two-party system.

In Trinidad, the "dominant party system" has primarily been the domain of the Peoples' National Movement (PNM) led by Eric Williams. However, the PNM was formed in 1956 and not in the wake of the labor unrest in 1937 and the introduction of universal suffrage in 1945. These gave rise to a number of political parties, but according to Ledgister these were merely campaign machines at the disposal of political entrepreneurs and did not give way to a party system. Ledgister calls the PNM the first mass political party in Trinidad, bringing together middle-class leadership and lower-class support. Adopting a statement made by Williams himself, Ledgister considers the PNM as the heir to the labor movement of the 1930s and the social democracy of the 1940s. In this (rather contrived) way he fits the PNM into his model.

Ledgister rightly points out the discontinuity between the labor revolt of the 1930s and the political awakening of the 1940s in Suriname. Labor leaders like Anton de Kom and Louis Doedel managed to inspire the work-
ing class, but their actions were suppressed by the colonial authorities thereby preventing the establishment of any mass organization that might demand social and political reforms. After World War II, political parties created mass bases allying labor and middle-class activists. These alliances, Ledgister argues, were one-way: middle-class politicians mobilized the masses assuming that the middle class within each segment was the “proper leader” of an ethnic solidarity. Unlike Jamaica and Trinidad, Ledgister concludes, Suriname had a liberal democracy that did not rest on a foundation of social democracy. It should be added, however, that in the early 1950s, the NPS and the PSV had established close ties with the two major Suriname labor unions whose rank and file had a profound effect on the policy of these parties. From those years onwards, democracy in Suriname did represent the interests of all classes.

In his lengthy essay Ledgister pays attention to a factor in democratization processes which no doubt deserves serious consideration. He properly observes that class alliances have played an important role in Caribbean politics and takes up the challenge to analyze these roles from a comparative point of view. Yet, the fact that Jamaican and Trinidadian democracies on the one hand and Suriname democracy on the other have different origins, does not necessarily mean that these origins determine their sustainability and duration. In fact, the validity of this determinism is questionable. In Guyana and Grenada, for instance, labor unions formed a catalyst for political parties as well, but two-way class alliances did not prevent the dissolution of democracy in the 1970s and 1980s.

Assuming a mono-causal relationship between the presence of two-class alliances and the survival of democracy, Ledgister focuses on the initial political structure. He neglects the development of Caribbean democracies over the years and the stance and actions of politicians who were involved in this process. It is common knowledge that studying political leadership is also crucial in understanding liberal-authoritarian states. To give an example: explaining the decline of democracy in Suriname, one cannot ignore the fact that Henck Arron – in marked contrast with his predecessor Johan Adolf Pengel – in 1973 executed a “coup” trading a multi-ethnic for a mono-ethnic government, thus breaking with the principles of consociational democracy. Unfortunately, the author invariably tends to exclude aspects such as these from his class-alliances thesis.

Ledgister’s book is interesting since it tries to work out an alternative for the Eurocentric Weiner/Huntington and consociational theses. The author provides some thought-provoking comments and observations, particularly on the genesis of Caribbean democracy. His theory, however, is built on a small empirical basis and lacks the power and conviction to serve as a substitute for the theses it opposes.