Book Reviews


When Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1757) first visited Jamaica in 1687, he witnessed women feeding sick children a mixture of milk, sugar, and cocoa. Sensing opportunity, he brought the recipe back to England and began marketing “Sir Hans Milk Chocolate” for medicinal uses. Aside from his entrepreneurial interests, Sloane began a program of collecting, transporting, cataloguing, and studying plants from the Caribbean, many of which ended up in the Chelsea Physic Garden, an institution from which emerged such innovations as double-glazed glass windows for greenhouses, cultivated teas exported to plantations on the Indian Subcontinent, and cultivated rubber trees, sent to Malaysia. Sloane’s chocolate became big business; the recipe was bought by Cadbury’s. It is easy to read Sloane’s story as a familiar tale of the intertwining of science, the market, and colonial extraction. It is more challenging, and more important, to ask how the intellectual project, the system of knowledge/power Sloane represents, is replicated by contemporary Caribbeanist scholarship and its forms of knowledge. The author of this stunning book poses this latter question and, in the process, calls upon contemporary Caribbeanists to consider the ethics and politics of the way Caribbean studies as a field has helped to constitute the objects of its investigations.

At the most general level, this book is about the “invention” of the idea of the Caribbean in Euro-American culture” (p. 8). Sheller takes the reader through the familiar ground of the Caribbean’s simultaneous incorporation in and exclusion from modern intellectual discourses. Often proclaimed to be the first site of modernity, the origin of Europe’s wealth and rise to world dominance, the proving ground of capitalist forms of production and work discipline, the laboratory for modern ideologies of race, the Caribbean just as quickly fades from view, not exotic enough to occupy anthropology, not dis-
tant enough to be considered part of the world outside the West, not important enough to remain in the center-stage of the grand theories of modernity, capitalism, postmodernity, and colonialism.

More specifically, the book tracks the forms of mobility and immobility, the “economies of movement, touch, and taste” (p. 4) that create “the Caribbean” as an object of inquiry, desire, and despair. Sheller proposes to put consumption at the center of the study of the Caribbean, and insists on seeing the Caribbean as “an effect, a fantasy, a set of practices, and a context ... [that] defies separation into the real versus the imagined” (p. 5). She is interested in “what something called the Caribbean has come to mean and to do for people from Western Europe and North America” (p. 8).

The book is not a simple exercise in reflexivity or denunciatory critique. Sheller is not interested in lumping Caribbean studies together with colonial science, nineteenth-century travel writing, and twentieth-century export agriculture and tourism for rhetorical effect to argue against the very possibility of knowledge about “others.” Rather, borrowing a page from Caribbean history - the ethical consumption movement of the abolitionists who boycotted slave-grown sugar – Sheller attempts to outline a new kind of ethical consumption for those who live in worlds made and re-made by the postslavery Atlantic.

The method of the book is different, too. Rather than lining up the good, the bad, and the ugly in the history of the world’s engagement with and construction of the Caribbean, Sheller traces out the dense networks of “human, floral, faunal, capital, visual, and informational movements that constituted (and constitute) the transatlantic world” (p. 21). The book thus has affinities with theoretical developments in science studies; figures like Bruno Latour and Sarah Franklin appear throughout the text. Studying how networked agents, objects, and knowledges create new agents, objects, and knowledges lets Sheller examine what she terms “the binding mobilities of consumption” (p. 15), the past flows that inform, inflect, and direct present ones, as well as the discontinuities, unintended consequences, and misfired desires that led to new possibilities for resistance and change. Everything comes under scrutiny in this form of inquiry – not just slave narratives, for example, and the circuits of affect, literacy, politics, and communities of regard that produced them, but also modern Caribbean literary studies, grounded in the idea of “the slave narrative.” Not just touristic images of tropical isles, but past and present environmental consciousnesses that require and feed a “nature” supposedly unspoiled by human culture. Not just the place of the Caribbean in the global AIDS epidemic and global AIDS discourse, but the place of Caribbean blood plasma and hormones in the transnational pharmaceutical industry (which have eerie precursors in Sloane’s collection of Caribbean people’s skin and body parts).

The book consists of an introduction and six chapters. The introduction lays out the project of the book. Chapters 1 through 3 examine different natu-
ral and material products of the Caribbean and their formation in consumption circuits, knowledge circuits, and natural circuits. Chapter 1 is a broad overview of Caribbean political economy and Euro-American knowledge, beginning with Sloane and ending with offshore finance and luxury gated communities. Chapter 2 looks at nature and landscape through travel narratives and botanical science. Chapter 3 concerns the “classic” Caribbean commodities, from sugar to bananas. Chapters 4 through 6 examine different understandings and formations of the “bodies” of the Caribbean region. Chapter 4 returns to travel narratives, and asks how Euro-Americans have “oriented” themselves to the Caribbean. The play on words is intentional, as Sheller examines how the Caribbean has served to orient discussions of the distinction between east and west, primitive and civilized, as well as how, beginning with Columbus’s initial voyages, the Caribbean has been “entangled” (p. 108) with histories and imaginations of Asia as well as Africa. The Caribbean, in Sheller’s analysis, makes explicit the instability of the geographical referents of Euro-American orientalism. Sheller also examines histories of the elisions between the Levant and the Caribbean in colonial discourse. Chapter 5 takes up the problem of cannibalism, and the literal and figurative ways that Europe and North America have eaten up the Caribbean. Here, Sheller not only takes the reader through the literary canon, beginning with Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, but also through the drug wars of the 1980s and 1990s, and the enlistment of Caribbean bodies in discourse and practices of disease and pharmacology. Chapter 6 turns to the domains of theory, asking why it has been so easy for cultural theorists to appropriate the metaphor of creolization for contemporary cultural hybridities. “Language, literature, and theory itself are all subject to [the] same processes of mobile but risky consumption” that characterized colonial science, travel writing, slavery, tourism, and agricultural production (pp. 202-3). Sheller concludes the book with a call for “historians and theorists of Western culture” to “begin to recognize [the Caribbean’s] centrality in the making of ‘our’ modernity” (p. 203).

Sheller’s book is a remarkable accomplishment. It does not present new findings so much as it helps us stop thinking about the old ones in familiar ways. Erudite, theoretically acute, and, incidentally, richly illustrated with images from primary documents, this book locates the problem of the Caribbean firmly within the problem of the ethics of knowledge. I would quarrel with some of its elisions. Sheller sometimes takes continuity for granted when it should be unpacked or justified. For example, statements like “from reading seventeenth-century descriptions of the first glorious taste of a pineapple, we can slide effortlessly up to contemporary debates about fair trade in tropical produce” (p. 23) rub against the grain of historicist sensibilities; seeing a “clear path” from slavery to the global division of labor (p. 23) begs the question of whether persons, bodies, and work as such can be abstracted from their historical situations to become elements of a uni-
versal theory. The language of networks and paths in the book sometimes tidies concatenations of persons, ideas, and things that might better be seen as tangles or knots. There is also, in general, a lack of attention to the differences between seventeenth-century quasi-feudal or tributary relations and cosmologies and later, more Enlightenment or capitalist ones. Nonetheless, this is an exciting and insightful contribution to Caribbean studies, one that brings much-needed theoretical rigor to new understandings of its objects and its forms of knowledge.


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The field is the laboratory of the cultural anthropologist. (Melville J. Herskovits, Man and His Works 1947 [1951]:79)

History is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous.
The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility;
the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.
(Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Silencing the Past, 1995:xix)

This revelatory pamphlet is about the hidden power of ethnological paradigms in the presentation of ethnography. The data are plumbed by the authors from the handwritten diaries of Melville J. Herskovits and Frances Shapiro Herskovits, now deposited in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The diary entries are compared with the presentations in the Herskovitse's' publications Rebel Destiny (1934) and Suriname Folk-Lore (1936). The Prices are two ethnographers and historians of Maroon peoples of the same region to which the Herskovitse traveled with their entourage. The work explicates a story told by the Herskovitse about their insights into Saramaka Maroon provenience based on their brief brokered encounters over several weeks during two summers in 1928 and 1929 with the people who
became the African diffused epitome of the Herskovitses’ anthropological “root” of what was to become one branch of Afro-American ethnology.

In 1922 Bronislaw Malinowski published his first book about the life of the people of the Trobriand Islands off the coast of New Guinea, underscoring the point that modern ethnography is based on the canon of understanding the native’s point of view, a key to which is long-time residence with people, field research without brokers, competence in local vernaculars, and native insights into symbols and tropes. This position was appropriated by the writings of the Herskovits team, but not applied in their own research with Saramaka, or other, people.

By 1929, when the Herskovitses made their second venture into the rainforest of Suriname to “mine” the rich African data of the Saramaka Maroon people, Malinowski had published four more books to ground his widely accepted canon extolled in M. Herskovits’s undergraduate textbook and in his ethnographies. But the actual activities and methods of the Herskovitses in Paramaribo and Saramaka-land radically contrasted with this position. The Prices’ pamphlet documents the contrasts to shed light on problematic historical questions that relate to the history of anthropology in general, and to African diaspora studies in particular.

On the seventh day in Asindoopo, the village of the Saramaka paramount chief, a crisis that ended the Herskovitses’ field research is expressed in this diary entry: “because if they’re afraid of what we learned, anything is possible; we’re watching our food & water” (p. 1). In this second and last trip to Suriname, Frances Herskovits seems to have learned more and more about Saramaka cultural life, working into their language and getting along with women with little difficulty. By contrast, Melville, the expert on Africa from his readings (which included a doctoral dissertation at Columbia University on the cattle complex of East Africa), relies almost entirely on outsiders, mostly white, and seems to have lectured arrogantly to the Saramaka about the African origins of what he observes, and what he imagines, even showing them photographs and drawings of “authentic” African peoples and artifacts.

Frances, taking her husband’s expertise as threatening to the people whom she is coming to know, generates a marital dyadic paranoiac drama in which Melville’s knowledge of the Saramaka must be a threat to the people who, the Herskovitses are convinced, keep their Africanisms secret. In the midst of public squabbling among the members of the ethnographic entourage and disquiet among some Saramakas due to indiscretions of one of Melville’s imported informants from Paramaribo, the Herskovitses flee. Thus ends the Herskovitsian “ethnography” of a Maroon people in the Americas who soon thereafter are epitomized as the “most African” on the “Scale of Intensity of Africanisms” that is to be reproduced in scholarly papers, books, and a textbook on cultural anthropology.
Unlike Malinowski, who raised the question of how people perceive their relations to life and strive to realize the visions of their world as they have come to understand it, Melville J. Herskovits sought hegemonically to reproduce his professional career-oriented diffusionist perspective onto the people. (I am not so sure of Frances S. Herskovits in this.) The Prices write "that he never quite got the Saramaka ethnography right seems in the end not to have mattered much, to him or to anyone else. Go figure" (p. 87).

I have been "figuring" about this paradox of shoddy ethnography as the basis for an entire subfield of highly contested study – Afro-American Anthropology – since I first undertook a systematic reading of Melville Herskovits’s works in 1959. My own radical rejection of hegemonic diffusionism took a turn toward social anthropology, symbolism, ritual, and later native historicity and cultural transformations. Every time I looked “back” at Herskovitsonian models I increased my mistrust of the techniques and methods involved in any search for pre-imagined “retentions” and “reinterpretations” – remnants all – that may be manifest in “syncretisms” that configure within “the culture” as some sort of “focus.” The syntagmatic chain of core culture-Africa-secrecy-darkness-jungle (bush)-distance-dangerous-and place of no return may be the stuff of the “Heart of Darkness paradigm” (p. 32) but is lodged within a mindset inimical to understanding cultural systems in time and through time.

R. Price must have experienced some of the same misgivings when he wrote Saramaka Social Structure for his doctoral dissertation at Harvard University, completed in 1969 and published in 1974. The fact that he followed this up with the masterful and now classic First-Time (1983) after an exhaustive study of Maroon societies in the Americas seems to me to suggest strongly that social structure, cultural dynamics and transformations, and indigenous historicity are complementary facets of the same overall phenomenon of cultural integrity, the understanding of which is the basis for contemporary and historical ethnography. As anthropology gains strength in its sophistication, it may be losing ground in the very political workshop of the academy which Melville J. Herskovits, as one of the banner Boasians, cultivated so well, for so long. This political workshop now houses programs of African American Studies very weakly articulated to contemporary anthropology in many instances.

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In June 1997, the John Carter Brown Library sponsored an international conference entitled "The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West." This thick volume is the end product of that project, its twenty-five chapters presenting the work of a number of distinguished scholars who contributed to the library's ground-breaking effort to examine the Jewish role in the westward development of Europe and its Atlantic theater before 1800. Among these are such luminaries in the field as Jonathan Israel, Patricia Seed, Gerard Nahon, Anita Novinsky, David Katz, Jonathan Sarna, Seymour Drescher, and Pieter Emmer, accompanied here by a fair number of rising young stars. The book's title effectively captures its axis points, although the order inverts the actual emphasis since the story of the Jews is necessarily subordinated here to the story of the expansion of Europe, as the editors freely admit (pp. xii, 1). Paolo Bernardini's introduction does an admirable job of summing up the content of the chapters, but neither in his introduction nor in Norman Fiering's preface do readers get a coherent argument for how this project broadens previous historiographical perspectives on the Jewish role in the development of the New World. Bernardini claims (p. 1) that this project embarks on a new historiographical thread, but never defines what that is or how other scholars might pick it up and contribute to its development. While the book deserves applause for its breadth of scope and its inclusion of Christãos Novos, Conversos, and "Marranos" in its discussion of the Jewish experience, the lack of an overall vision for the work will leave most readers wondering about its true intent. Is it Latin American history, European history, or only a very peculiar kind of Jewish history? Where is the expansive vision that will persuade skeptics in the field that the efforts of the contributing scholars constitute more than antiquarian marginalia? It seems that the editors have missed an opportunity here to set the historiographical bar for further research in this area.

One might also anticipate that in a work with such an ambitious reach, close scrutiny would be given to the Caribbean as a key geographic arena in which the nationalist claims of Europeans were so hotly contested in the
wake of the Columbian “discovery.” The reader who approaches this book with that expectation will be disappointed. Coverage of the Jewish role in the development of the Caribbean basin is spotty here: only five articles (one-fifth of the book) pay direct attention to Caribbean colonies – those by John Garrigus on St. Domingue, Wim Klooster on Suriname and Curacao, and Rachel Frankel on Suriname are the strongest of these. Overall, the Dutch and French colonies in the New World are heavily covered, and Brazil receives an appropriate share of attention; but both the Spanish Main, from Nicaragua to Colombia, and the British islands are mentioned only in passing. Given the relatively large size and economic importance of Jewish communities on Jamaica and Barbados during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not to mention their significant link to the Mosquito coast and intercolonial trade on the Main, their absence here is indeed glaring. The geographical mismatch is typical of the book’s overall topical imbalance: Mexico, Brazil, and Hispanic South America receive the lion’s share of their coverage here in seven articles covering aspects of Converso identity and the Inquisition, while the role of Jews and Conversos in the economic development of these areas is neglected. The section on international trade suffers from similar problems, where four articles discuss only the Jewish involvement in the sugar and slave trades, which were dominated by the Dutch and the Portuguese. (Two articles that generally discuss Jews in French Atlantic trade are relegated to a separate section.) Other important trade commodities with which Jewish merchants were heavily involved – including indigo and other dyestuffs, logwood, spices, cocoa, textiles, and Portuguese wines – are sadly neglected.

One simply could not describe this book as comprehensive in its coverage of the pertinent topics. There are important lacunae, subjects left entirely vacant for future exploration. Nevertheless, due to the emphasis on European expansion through the process of conquest and colonization of the New World, much of the analytical substance of the individual chapters does provide useful background for detailed study of the history and development of the Caribbean. This is, in short, a book aimed at the accomplished scholar rather than the general reader. As such, its strengths lie in the questions it poses and the historiographic weaknesses it identifies (if only by their absence), rather than in the wealth of material it presents. Indeed, the idea of transatlantic study of the Jewish experience is only just beginning its emergence from the shadows of European Jewish history and has yet to make serious inroads into either Latin American history or American Jewish history. It is in this sense that The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West makes its deepest contribution. While the book lacks application for classroom use, as the first serious effort to bring European Jewish history into the New World it constitutes an effective spur to further scholarship that includes the study of Jews within the purview of the burgeoning field of transatlantic studies.
In a review essay of four books on slavery and antislavery published in this journal two years ago, I commented that the cover art showing images of African freedom used by three of them (including Drescher’s *From Slavery to Freedom*) seemed a little incongruous in that the lives and struggles of the enslaved and the freed were hardly center-stage in their pages. The same lack of fit between cover art and content can be seen in the present work: a striking contemporary painting of an African-Caribbean family celebrating its liberation graces a study of metropolitan debates about free and slave labor in which the people of the nineteenth-century Caribbean are absent.

Seymour Drescher, one of the most prolific and wide-ranging historians of antislavery in the Atlantic world, takes as his subject in *The Mighty Experiment* “the intrusion of social sciences into the politics of slavery,” the appeals to the authority of the new disciplines of economics, demography, and anthropology, by those involved in advocacy and policy-making on slavery in the British Empire. A study of an important aspect of British intellectual and political history in the nineteenth century, this book is an erudite and original analysis of the antislavery debates (in the press, in Parliament, in academia) especially between the 1820s and the 1850s, and their relation to the newly fashionable social sciences. British emancipation came to be seen, Drescher states, as “an unprecedented experiment in human development... the supreme test of controlled social change,” both to test modern social scientific theory, and to provide a model to the world of successful liberation of slaves.

Economics was the first of the sciences to be drawn into the debates, with Adam Smith’s famous (if cautiously worded) assertion: “The experience of all ages and nations, I believe, demonstrates that the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any.” Free labor ideology, appealing to the authority of Smith, was certainly central to British antislavery; yet in the early nineteenth century few economists followed the master in asserting the universal superiority of free over coerced labor, and after emancipation, especially after the crises of 1846-48, even the abolitionists largely abandoned it. Demography and the authority of
Malthus played an important role in the antislavery debate, particularly in the 1820s, when the inexorable decline of the slave populations of the Caribbean sugar colonies (except Barbados) furnished the most striking argument for emancipation. And the "science of man" – anthropology, as it came to be called – was also drawn into the slavery discourse. Theories of racial hierarchy, of innate inferiority of Africans, played little role in the public British discourse on slavery and emancipation between the 1780s and 1830s (in contrast to the United States). It was after 1838, and especially after about 1848, that the "science of race" rapidly gained ground as an explanatory device for the "failure" of British Caribbean emancipation, as British anthropology moved to more strident assertions of racial hierarchy and genetic inferiority.

Drescher’s second key theme, closely interrelated with the first (the salience of the new social sciences in the discourse on slavery and freedom), is the way in which British emancipation was conceptualized and shaped by the notion of experiment: emancipation as an experimental science, to borrow one of his chapter titles. Sierra Leone and Haiti, attempts to give slaves wages in Barbados, the importation of Chinese laborers and American ex-slave soldiers in Trinidad before 1834 – all were scrutinized by both sides in the antislavery debate to see what empirical data could be "scientifically" retrieved and utilized. And the Parliamentary and press debates that preceded the passage of the Emancipation Act in 1833, brilliantly analyzed in Chapter 8, swirled around the central trope of a "mighty experiment" in human affairs. The triumphant years between 1833 and 1840, with apprenticeship ended ahead of schedule, and reports pouring in of the material and "moral" improvement of the Caribbean ex-slaves, created high hopes for the "expansion" of the experiment all over the Atlantic world, symbolized by the World Antislavery Convention in London (1840).

From then on, it was all downhill for British antislavery; Drescher’s Chapters 10, 11, and 12 show how the "mighty experiment" was "eroded," "in crisis," and "abandoned." From the point of view of economics, the experiment had failed: sugar could not be more profitably produced by free wage labor in the tropics than by slaves (Barbados alone excepted because of its "superabundant" population). If Mauritius, Trinidad, and British Guiana were doing reasonably well by the 1860s it was due to indentured Indian labor, which the abolitionists had been forced to accept, climbing down from their strong disapproval in the 1840s. Gradually the Caribbean colonies and the great experiment itself faded into relative insignificance in British political and social scientific discourse. By 1884, the jubilee of emancipation was celebrated in Britain as a noble act of humanity; the moral dimension took precedence over its economic results or its utility for testing theories about free labor superiority. The great experiment had virtually no impact on British imperial policy in the 1880s and 1890s, and the economists lost interest in slavery and emancipation.
This erudite, well-written, and always interesting book should enhance Drescher’s reputation as a leading authority on Western antislavery discourses in the nineteenth century.


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This collection of essays, written primarily by historians at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, is dedicated to three pioneering figures in the writing of Jamaican and Caribbean history: Clinton Black (1918-93), Elsa Goveia (1925-80), and Douglas Hall (1920-99). The book is well edited, written, and illustrated (though it would have been enhanced by an index). Each chapter is a significant contribution to the understanding of Jamaica in slavery and freedom, and together the essays provide a rich focus on various aspects of Jamaican history before and after emancipation. However, the inclusion of “heritage and culture” in the subtitle begs the question of an anthropological perspective, which at times is noticeably missing.

In a useful introduction summarizing the eighteen essays, the editors argue that they “point to the importance and relevance of history to everyday life, indicating its explanatory and interdisciplinary roles, and to history’s relationship to questions of national identity, culture, and political, economic and societal developments” (p. xv). These are excellent perspectives, but a fuller focus on the continuous social and cultural processes linking the past and the present would have counter-balanced the constraints of historical periodization to enable a more effective integration of history, heritage, and culture.

The first three essays constitute Part I, “Sources and Historiography.” Joan Vacianna, of the Mona Library, highlights both the richness and under-use of primary sources in the library for studying Jamaican and Caribbean history from the mid-seventeenth century to the twentieth. Drawing on some of these sources in Chapter 2 and discussing the role of “stories” in constructing “histories,” James Robertson explores the construction of Anglo-Jamaican identity by the early postconquest settlers who portrayed Jamaica,
in the late seventeenth century before sugar plantations and slavery took hold, as an empty land available for English land grants. In Chapter 3, “Early Post-Emancipation Jamaica: The Historiography of Plantation Culture, 1834-1865,” Carl Campbell addresses some trends and debates (particularly regarding the organization of agriculture) in the growing historiography of the postslavery British West Indies, especially Jamaica.

Part II, “Society, Culture and Heritage,” contains six chapters. Trevor Burnard, studying the period 1655-1780, points (in a comparative discussion) to high mortality rates as the explanation for the failure of the white population to establish a settler society in Jamaica. There are also rich chapters by Maureen Warner-Lewis (of the Department of Literatures in English) on African cultural continuities in contemporary Jamaica; Anthony Harriott on the persistence of obya to the present; Brian Moore and Michele Johnson on Christmas celebrations, including Christmas markets (1865-1920); Elizabeth Pigou-Dennis on the “language” of the Jamaican bungalow in the early twentieth century; and Sharon Chako on the politics of museum representation of the Taino marking the Columbian quincentenary.

Equally enriching of under-researched areas of Jamaican history are the nine chapters in Part III, “Economy, Labour and Politics.” Trevor Burnard contributes again, now focusing on urbanization by examining the economic role of Kingston in the mid-eighteenth century. Veront Satchell highlights the co-existence of slave labor with technological advancements in the sugar industry (1809-30). Kathleen Monteith and Lorna Simmonds illuminate the significance of coffee plantations (Monteith) and the Afro-Jamaican urban marketing system (Simmonds) during slavery; while Barry Higman examines responses to emancipation at Friendship and Greenwich sugar plantations in Westmoreland. Swithin Wilmott reveals the political role of free and freed blacks (1831-65), and Marleen Bartley assesses the reasons for the failure of “the colonial government’s land settlement policy” (1923-49) to generate “real agricultural development of land” (p. 337). The concluding chapters by Glen Richards and Anthony Bogues (formerly in Mona’s Department of Government) explore the role of race and class: Richards in relation to labor politics (1900-34), and Bogues with reference to nationalism and political thought.

Among the essays that particularly interested me as an anthropologist were those on Afro-Jamaican marketing by Moore and Johnson and by Simmonds, and on plantations and peasantization by Campbell and Higman. However, these chapters also begged questions regarding the links between history, heritage, and culture. There are several points of continuity and transformation that could have been explored between the internal marketing system in the historical periods studied and Jamaican markets today, such as the “Bend Down” and Christmas markets of Falmouth near the former slaving port and postslavery free village of Martha Brae in Trelawny Parish (Besson 2002,
Likewise, Professors Campbell and Higman could have addressed assessments of Douglas Hall's reconsideration of the flight from the estates informed by the historical anthropology of Trelawny's free villages, which evolved both in the plantation heartlands and at the vanguard of the exodus (Besson 1992, 2002; Smith 1995). Such assessments highlight the significance of access to land in the peasantization process both before and after emancipation, synthesizing the debate. Campbell's portrayal of my theoretical perspectives on free villages and peasantry is also inadequate (he considers one 1988 article). Wider coverage would have answered his interesting query regarding the processes involved in the Caribbean culture-building of family land from slavery to the present.

The most effective chapters showing the "relevance of history to everyday life" (p. xv) include those by Warner-Lewis, Harriott, and Bogues. However, Harriott's dichotomization of obya and myal could be modified in light of recent work (e.g., Handler & Bilby 2001; Besson 2002). Likewise, in calling for "a reperiodization of Jamaica's official history" (p. 384) — at present a twentieth-century brown creole nationalist narrative — to include a black nationalism originating in the nineteenth century, Bogues could have further set aside constraining periodization; for Jamaica's gendered black nationalism is rooted in the Ethiopianism and obeah-myal ideology of the eighteenth century (Besson 1995, 2002).

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Over the span of her thirty-year career Jean Besson has proposed that Afro-Jamaicans and, to a lesser extent, Afro-Caribbeans were culture-builders within the plantation and continued to build upon these cultures when the plantation was ruined. Her new book further elaborates this proposition. Drawing directly from twelve of her thirty-seven essays concerned with culture building, written between 1979 and 2002, it examines at length the creole culture of the residents of Martha Brae in Trelawny, Jamaica, paying special attention to customary or family land tenure and the familial relations that derive therefrom.

Besson argues that the development and decline of Martha Brae as an Afro-Creole town is attributable to its development and decline as an agricultural adjunct to the plantation. The book’s first chapter describes the plantation via planter’s histories. It goes on to describe the plantation’s decline and the resultant consolidation of lands under customary land tenure, which differs from European unilineal descent laws and their Caribbean derivatives. For Besson, this consolidation represents not only a reaction to the plantation’s decline, one among many that she cites, but also the outgrowth of a seminal form of creole resistance, beside which all other forms pale, emanating from the ex-slaves to their descendants. Because planters withheld land during slavery, after emancipation peasants sought to acquire it, often under the auspices of churches and philanthropists, and these acquisitions became the basis for customary land tenure.

The establishment of customary land was critical to the agenda of the ex-slaves in such free villages as Martha Brae. Today it not only survives in name, but constitutes the very basis for contemporary village life, a conclusion at which Besson arrives after examining the transformation of Trelawny land-use patterns, precipitated in part by the rise of the tourist industry and the resultant influx of landless workers. She maintains that, despite these changes and the polarization of Martha Brae’s inhabitants into those who were born ya (“born here”) and those who are new-comers, Trelawny’s free village stands fast, and any variation in land-tenure patterns represents a
continuity with the range of strategies used by protopeasants, Maroons, and
emancipated slaves to acquire land (p. 137).

Besson relies on the oral histories of various Martha Brae families. Through them emerges an image of individuals hemmed in by plantations and, later, estate monopolies, driven to devise strategies to acquire land which all but bypass the notice of the state and of the nation’s elite. That elderly citizens recall their family ties through the recollection of the places and of the properties which situated them may be understood as further evidence of the importance of land in the lives of the peasantry – as Besson suggests, a tradition. But these oral histories also suggest a fair amount of migration, family mobility, land sale, and land loss. Moreover, differentiation in terms of land ownership, religion, and transnational kin suggests that several creole frontiers, combining different temporalities in terms of their relation to kin and capital, coexisted. Though traditions persist, over the course of time the contexts in which they persist are changed, and readers might wonder what causes the inhabitants of Martha Brae to retain forms which elsewhere have been altered. They might likewise wonder whether a tradition retains its meaning within a community, or village, as Besson points out, increasingly tied to commodity agencies for marketing, through external price determination, the physical transport of their produce and the introduction of a technical package of agro-chemical inputs – even for peasants in relatively isolated places like the Maroon community of Accompong, at the edge of Cockpit country (Barker & Spence 1988: esp. p. 205).

No community is static, of course. That Besson must momentarily address Martha Brae as such in the interests of accentuating the continuity and unity of creole resistance may be forgiven considering the interesting insights she offers her readers – foremost among them, that family land tenure was a symbolic practice through which these individuals realized freedom. Let readers not forget the many forms of freedom and the many means to the realization of those forms. The so-called protopeasant also embodied the wage laborer, the tenant, the independent worker, the migrant worker, and a host of others, in a complicated political economy of land ownership.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot reminds his readers that the plantation, as such, never existed historically, not even in the Americas of slavery. Rather, thousands of plantations tried to conform to the ideal type, but always within the limitations imposed by specific circumstances, thus leading perhaps to different social relationships and creole traditions (Trouillot 2002:201). Besson’s readers might do well to apply Trouillot’s caution likewise to the idea of Europe, the single entity that may be convenient to imagine as the origin of all planters. Having done so, Besson’s readers are bound, as I am, to thank her for the scrupulous scholarship and the fine detail she brings to the subject of land-based working people in the Caribbean.
At several points in his study of the slave traffic to Puerto Rico, Joseph Dorsey notes the difficulty in researching the topic. Given that the Spanish government signed several treaties with Great Britain to police and suppress the trade, most of it was carried out clandestinely, resulting in a paucity of direct evidence. As Dorsey says in the introduction, “due to gaps in documents that point both to proslave trade policy and the inner spheres of slave acquisition, our understanding of Puerto Rican slave commerce is sketchy at best” (p. 12). Nonetheless, Dorsey mines documents from Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish, and British archives to reconstruct the networks and interests of the Puerto Rican slave trade in the early to mid-nineteenth century, when the island experienced a significant expansion of plantation agriculture. Moreover, he brings to this history a truly Atlantic-world focus, discussing trends and events not only in the Caribbean, but in Europe and Africa as well.

Like Cuba, Puerto Rico remained a Spanish colony until the end of the nineteenth century. One of the factors that perpetuated the colonial bond was the growth of sugar and slavery in both islands. Though Puerto Rico never approached the scale of the Cuban slave trade or sugar production, it did undergo its most dramatic social and economic transformations since the Spanish conquest. Plantations sprouted around the coast of the island and the trade brought significant numbers of African slaves. Not satisfied by the
volume or reliability of the slave traffic, Puerto Rican planters and government officials also devised strategies for coercing the free peasantry onto the plantation, chiefly through the *libreta* system introduced in 1849.

Puerto Rican planters were thus hungry for unfree labor. As Dorsey demonstrates in careful detail, they went to great lengths to secure it through the slave trade. Spain signed several treaties in this period (in 1817, 1835, and 1845) that were designed to diminish, if not ban, the slave trade altogether. Therefore, to circumvent the agreements with Great Britain, Puerto Rican slave buyers, often working with Cuban traders, used a number of subterfuges, including re-exporting slaves from the Danish colony of St. Thomas or buying slaves from ships that flew the flags of countries unencumbered by agreements with Great Britain, such as the Dutch.

Dorsey puts his study in a dense, multi-layered Atlantic-world context. He is sensitive to the dynamics of Caribbean commerce and politics, to the clash of empires, and to changing patterns of trade along the west coast of Africa. Historians have long noted that Puerto Rican planters found it difficult to compete with their better-capitalized Cuban counterparts when it came to purchasing slaves. Yet Dorsey takes our understanding of the slave traffic’s rhythms to a new level by inscribing them in the complex political and economic networks that joined the Caribbean to Africa and Europe. *Slave Traffic in the Age of Abolition* thus joins works by Arturo Morales Carrión (1978) and Francisco Scarano (1984) as necessary reading on the rise, decline, and destruction of Puerto Rican slavery.

While this is an admirable work, I do have two criticisms, one general, the other in reference to my knowledge of colonialism in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. First, Dorsey’s prose is frequently overly complicated. For example, in describing and explaining Spain’s stratagems for circumventing the various treaties with Great Britain, he writes, “the aim, in effect, was the construction of practices guided by a policy of metaphysical deconstruction, the inscription of nonclosure, the creation of fixed and flexible openings in a newly formed cul-de-sac” (p. 66). This mish-mash of jargon does nothing to illuminate his argument; on the contrary, it threatens to obscure it.

Second, regarding Dorsey’s treatment of the retrenchment of Spanish rule in Puerto Rico during this period, I found some of his conclusions to be out of touch with recent scholarship. In writing about relations between colony and metropolis, Dorsey observes, “Spanish liberals began to undermine the authority of high officials sent to the colonies. By the close of the 1830s, metropolitan forces had eroded much of the hegemony associated with captains general, governors, and intendants” (p. 78). In contrast, Josep M. Fradera (1999) has argued that the Captain General’s office took on increasing power over the course of the century. Cuba was the focal point of the reduced colonial system, and this was reflected by the prominence of the Captain General, a position held by several of liberal Spain’s most powerful political/military...
figures including Leopoldo O’Donnell, Francisco Serrano y Domínguez, and Arsenio Martínez-Campos. Puerto Rico and the Philippines also hosted major powerbrokers, such as Juan Prim y Prats and Valeriano Weyler.

These comments are not meant to detract from a work of sophisticated and careful scholarship. Shedding light on an important aspect of Puerto Rican and Caribbean history, Dorsey has also made a dynamic contribution to our knowledge of the rise and fall of African slavery in the Atlantic world.

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In 1999, the governments of the U.S. Virgin Islands (the erstwhile Danish West Indies – St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas) and Denmark signed an agreement that would establish the means whereby they might initiate the sharing of access to their common history by creating a guide to mutually-generated archival materials, by cataloguing and repacking materials in the West Indies Archive, by providing internet accessibility to these materials, and, finally, by setting up an archival commission of the interested parties to oversee the process.

The Danes held the Danish West Indies as a colony from 1671 until 1917. During that time, records were generated by the Central Administration in Denmark, which held jurisdiction over the colonies, as well as by the govern-
ment and its functionaries in the islands themselves. The collected documentation of the former has come to be known as the West Indian Archives, while the latter is termed the West Indian Local Archives. The work under review concerns itself with the West Indian Archives; a projected second guide for the Local Archives will be undertaken at a later date.

The first step in the intergovernment plan was the creation of a comprehensive guide to the documents of the West Indies Archive in the Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet). The selection of senior archivist and noted historian Erik Gøbel for that task was a wise one. Both his professional expertise in the National Archives and his considerable erudition in Danish West Indian history, amply demonstrated over the past twenty-five years in scholarly publications, have endowed him with a knowledge of the colonial period and its documentation that is matched by few scholars anywhere. After two years of dedicated labor, the Guide appeared in 2002, considerably sooner than some observers thought possible.

The Guide is presented in four parts. Part One ("Literature," pp. 15-43) is a concise historiographical essay that begins with a selection of the general works, bibliographies, and published guides about the history of the period (1671-1917). It next offers a thematically organized review of more specific scholarly literature in both Danish and English on topics scattered across such domains as religion, education, sugar, slavery, architecture, military affairs, language, and so forth. I risk egregious understatement when I say that this introduction is helpful in orienting readers to the matters treated in detail in subsequent parts of the Guide.


Each of these eighteen chapters is in turn divided into sections in which the classes of archival holdings for that chapter are adumbrated and analyzed. For example, a typical chapter has the following sections: an "Introduction," which presents an overview of that archive; "The West Indies," which describes the records of the particular institutions that generated them; "General Remarks," which characterizes the nature of the colonial activities which that particular set of archives treats; "Archives," which gives a brief account of the archives themselves, their history, their content and their condition; "Finding Aids," which renders a few bibliographic citations of any
works specifically related to that archive; and "Literature," which cites the materials relative to that set of archives, with complete bibliographic information. This modular approach provides users with the tools and information necessary to reduce a mountain of archival materials (approximately 1,500 linear meters) to manageable proportions.

Part Three bears the title "Catalogs" and comprises Chapters 22 through 25 (pp. 159-331) of the Guide. Each of these four catalogues contains lists of references to boxes, bundles, and volumes of West Indian documents in the National Archives. They cover the materials generated by the four principal institutions of the central government that administered the Danish West Indian colonies successively from 1671 until 1917. These were the West India and Guinea Company (1671-1754), the Chamber of Revenue (1754-60), the Chamber of Customs (1760-1848), and the Central Directorate for the Colonies.

In each chapter, lists of references to archival materials are arranged thematically. For example, the important chapter on the West India and Guinea Company contains subsections on charters, conventions, resolutions, special transactions, correspondence, sugar production and trade, legal actions, and the like. Each document or set of documents under these headings is prefaced by a reference number and a date or range of dates. These are followed in each citation by a brief précis, in which have been embedded search elements, such as personal names and technical terms, along with specific dates and occasional cross references.

Finally, Part Four (pp. 333-50) consists of a double-column list of the names of Danish institutions and titles, with facing English translations or equivalents. The suffering English speaker who has ever struggled with rendering the likes of Generalkirkeinspektionskollegiet or Byting will appreciate this kindly envoi.

In what manner might this new Guide most effectively be employed? Anyone able to visit the National Archives in Copenhagen can simply apply by specific reference numbers for any of the catalogued materials in the Guide and then use them in the reading room. In addition, the same materials might be ordered and purchased from the growing list of those that have been microfilmed for sale. Finally, web-savvy researchers can search the Guide on the internet site that has been set up for just that purpose: http://www.virgin-islands-history.dk (in Danish) or http://www.virgin-islands-history.dk/eng (in English). As useful as these provisions might be, it is nevertheless to be hoped that microfilm copies of the actual documents will soon be available in libraries in the U.S. Virgin Islands, whose people have so long been deprived of direct access to the materials under discussion here by considerations of distance and linguistic constraints.

The present Guide may rightly be considered a fitting beginning for a project that has as its goal allowing two cultures and their respective people
to enjoy equal access to their commonly shared past. With this handsome volume – thanks to the industry and scholarship of Erik Göbel and his associates – emerges the possibility of placing within the reach of the present generation of students and scholars an impressive portion of the written documentation generated by both the Danish colonial enterprise in the Caribbean from 1671 to 1917 and the variegated response of Caribbean people to that undertaking. As such, it demonstrates that governments can occasionally cooperate on mutually beneficial scholarly projects for the greater good of their respective peoples. With that thought in mind, we anxiously await the appearance of the promised second volume.

_Haitian Revolutionary Studies_. DAVID PATRICK GEGGUS. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. xii + 334 pp. (Cloth US$ 49.95)

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It is fitting that a collection of David Geggus’s essays has been issued in time for Haiti’s bicentennial. Geggus has been, for more than two decades, one of the most prominent and prolific contemporary Anglophone historians of the Haitian Revolution. After the publication of his first book, _Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793-1798_, Geggus has produced a torrent of meticulous, carefully argued scholarship – all of it in the form of some seventy articles in books or journals (plus his editorship of several important scholarly collections). Now, conveniently, a baker’s dozen of his essays are collected here, including two pieces never before published. Hidden within the carefully argued pages of this collection, occasionally rising to the surface like a Caribbean reef, is the problem of interpreting this deeply contested and politically charged world history event.

_Haitian Revolutionary Studies_ poses a challenge for the reviewer. A collection of discrete essays, the book does not present an obvious over-arching thesis that is explicitly argued throughout the book. Moreover, while Geggus makes it clear that a great deal is at stake in presenting a factual account of the Haitian Revolution, he is not explicitly self-reflective in defining his own assumptions or interpretation. Thus one must work rather diligently to try to situate _Haitian Revolutionary Studies_ within the larger context of historiography on Haiti.
The articles are organized into six sections. The first two sections ("Overview" and "Historiography and Sources") present an introductory survey of the events and secondary and primary sources of the Haitian Revolution. The middle three parts ("Seeds of Revolt," "Slaves and Free Coloreds," and "The Wider Revolution") treat the revolution's origins and participants, and the wider Atlantic responses to it. The epilogue, on the naming of Haiti, examines why the Amerindian term was selected by the largely Europeanized revolutionary elite. Though originally published between 1978 and 1997, most of the essays reprinted in this book have been revised since their original publication to incorporate some of the more recent scholarship, especially in the notes.

But the essays can just as easily be grouped another way: by their tone and scope. While a handful of essays are pointedly argumentative (notably Chapters 5, 6, 8, and 13 on the origins of the 1791 slave revolt, Toussaint Louverture's decision to abandon Spain and throw his forces behind the French republican cause, and the naming of Haiti), the majority of the essays are more temperate in their presentation. These more moderately argued essays are either trained on the Big Picture (Chapters 1, 4, 10, and 11, which give a narrative overview of the revolution, compare it to slave rebellions in world history, examine the Parisian republican responses to the threat of colonial secession and demands for racial equality and the abolition of slavery, and analyze the Spanish and British responses to the revolution) or rather mystifyingly narrow, focused on the fates of individual participants in the revolution. (More on this mystification in a moment.)

In the text of the more pointed essays and buried elsewhere in the notes, Geggus's frequent adversarial position becomes clear. He sharply criticizes those "black nationalist" historical accounts that mythologize the importance of Maroons and vodou in the leadership of the revolt or the influence of the original Taino Indians on the rebels. His method is to carefully scrutinize early surviving documentation of the events to determine which evidence is reliable or the source of spurious interpretations, and to try to pin down exactly what transpired. The outcome is sometimes frustratingly indeterminate ("The scope for speculation [on Toussaint's motives for reneging on the Spanish and allying with the French republicans] is ... still great and will probably remain so ... the man remains ... an enigma" [p. 135]) and sometimes surprisingly banal: a pig was indeed likely sacrificed in anticipation of the insurrection (the "Bois Caïmen ceremony"), but probably a week later than the date that is currently celebrated. Nevertheless, the scope of Geggus's evidentiary database is extraordinary and the method of argumentation formidable. Drawing upon archival and published sources in three languages from more than eight countries, his magisterial command of the material is compelling. This is especially true in two of the most recently composed pieces, "Slave Leaders in Exile" and "The Naming of Haiti."
Yet Geggus’s challenges to the interpretations of Jean Fouchard, Jean Price-Mars, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, among others, seem to overlay a deeper political rift. In his culminating essay, “The Naming of Haiti,” Geggus asserts that “racial awareness” did not motivate Toussaint Louverture; rather, he argues, Toussaint wanted to “remove the stigma Europeans attached to blackness by pointing out that race does not determine behavior” (p. 209). Geggus’s rejection of race as a determinant of action sheds light on the “mysterious” chapters mentioned above. All focus on nonliterate black combatants – soldiers who fought on behalf of the planter class (Jean Kina and the “Suisses”) and others who had fought under the Spanish herald. They all fought, in Geggus’s marvelous phrase, “on the wrong side of history” (p. 201); that is, they are not part of the triumphal narrative thread that accounts for emancipation and the foundation of the Haitian state. It may be that Geggus includes these chapters as a way to underscore his contention that race was not the determining factor in historical agency. Thus, though not explicitly advertised, a fundamental unifying theme in Geggus’ work would seem to be to break the mythological hold of race-thinking on Haiti’s historiography.

The strengths of this book are many: its careful examination of wide-ranging archival and published primary sources, the connections made to the wider Atlantic, its rigorous logical argumentation, and the seasoned knowledge of an expert in the field. At the same time, some readers will be disappointed in Geggus’s resistance to fully and self-reflectively engage in the larger problem of interpreting such a profound historical event, the documentary evidence for which was largely composed and archived by the powers that sought to undermine its success.

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In spite of much reporting by travelers, journalists, and scholars, Haiti continues to be an enigma to the general American public. AIDS, Vodou, zombies, poverty, and political corruption are lavishly associated with this country which celebrated the 200th anniversary of its independence on January 1, 2004. This is why Elizabeth McAlister, like other scholars who care about the Haitian people, goes to great lengths to explain the results of her research in ways designed to lessen the opportunities for misrepresentation. Rara! represents an attempt to tie up all the loose ends, and to present Haitian cultural practice as an organic component of the Haitian worldview.

After more than a decade of study in Haiti and its diaspora (Brooklyn, New York), McAlister became intimately associated through kinship (p. 17) with the people and the country. She understands clearly that any cultural manifestation of Haiti must be viewed in terms of power (politics), for Haiti is, more than any other place in the Caribbean, a political entity in every sense of the term. Haiti is about socioeconomic exchange, challenge of the historical status quo, and revolution. Haiti is about liberation from oppression and material limitations. Haiti is about dreams, drums, mysteries, and fantasy. Thus, McAlister links Rara to Vodou, from which it springs, and to the concepts of power and performance – at once public and private, manifest and latent.

"Rara" means "to make merry" in the language of the Yoruba, one of the twenty-one West African ethnic groups, or nansyon (nations) as the Haitians call them. In Haiti Vodou practitioners and Rara performers also refer to 101 nations that make up the country’s population. In Rara, Haitians celebrate the spring harvest in the African tradition of holding a cultural festival of thanksgiving to the eternal deity Mawu-Lisa or Olorum, and the ever-present ancestors, the Iwa, who guide the people’s daily activities and destiny. In this regard, Rara is a multidimensional phenomenon, and pertains to the past, present, and future of a displaced people striving to maintain its integrity in the face of great odds. Historical displacement and diaspora conclude this presentation of the Haitian saga, from Africa to the Caribbean, and on to
Brooklyn, for an understanding of Haiti compels both lineal and dialectical views of its present predicament.

McAlister follows in the footsteps of Jean Price-Mars and Jacques Roumain, the fathers of Haitian ethnology, as well as Haitian Vodou’s first generation of scholars (Melville Herskovits, Milo Rigaud, Katherine Dunham, Maya Deren, Lavinia Williams-Yarborough, Jean Jacques Honorat, Louis Maximilien, and Emmanuel C. Paul). She also follows a second generation of exponents of Haiti cultural reality who have researched and written extensively on Vodou, touching on Rara (in various degrees of depth and interest) as an expression of popular culture linked to Mardigras/Carnival, Kombit (communal work parties), and the Bizango or Sanpwel (the secret societies) – Leslie Desmangles, Max Beauvoir, Michel Laguerre, VêVê A. Clark, Dolores Yonker, Gage Averill, Lois Wilcken, Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, and Gerdès Fleurant, to mention just a few. It is from that privileged vantage point that McAlister embarks on her study of Rara. Her merit lies in an ability to devote prodigious energy and scholarly talent to this genre to produce the first monograph on Rara, and to give it a near exhaustive treatment.

McAlister develops the major themes in Rara and presents a wealth of detail on the political, social, economic, sexual, and religious dimensions of this aspect of Haitian popular culture. Prominent in Rara, both in Haiti and in Brooklyn, are the political undercurrents of Haitian life and lore. Rara songs tell the story of politically powerful figures in the history of the country. They tell the story of the common people too, particularly the women who bear the brunt of the gossip in a macho and sexist society. They tell the story and mythology of the Iwa or the Vodou spiritual entities, ever present in Haitian life and lore. Rara, the most representative aspect of Haitian culture, unlike Mardigras, which is concentrated mostly in the major cities, is primarily a provincial or countryside activity. The Artibonite Valley, the Greater Léogane area, Arcahaie, the Central Plateau, Pétionville and its environs, the Plains District, and Croix-des-Bouquets, are usually considered the main venues of Rara which, for all intents and purposes can be found throughout Haiti’s countryside. In this regard, Rara is one of the truly national festivities covering the whole of Haitian society, and it is curious that until now, no one had devoted a full monograph to it. McAlister is to be applauded for doing so in such an eloquent fashion.

In keeping with the political undercurrents of Haitian life, McAlister does an excellent job discussing the French-Creole debate and the Vodou-Christianity dynamics as they pertain to Rara. Rara, like Vodou, faces the ambivalence of the elite class in Haiti. It is only in New York that some members of the literate class have embraced Rara and, so to speak, let their hair down. Rara in New York City has become the conduit for expressing political dissension that most people would not be able to vent in Haiti. During the coup d’état that overthrew Aristide and sent him into exile in the United
States (1991-94), the Rara bands became the *diplomates du béton* (street diplomats) to articulate their support for the first democratically elected Haitian president in the country’s nearly two-hundred-year history. Drummers and *samba*, or raramen song-makers, became heroes by spinning old lyrics into new songs that bemoaned the past, but celebrated the present, and encouraged a new outlook on life through the upcoming revolution. These new heroes, as McAlister calls the raramen of the 1990s, are, of course, the heirs of the *Kilti Libète*, or Freedom Culture generation of the 1970s who made the “new song” the central element of their campaign for social revolution through cultural awareness. The present-day *Rasin*, or “Roots” culture movement proponents, the continuation of the *Bwa Kay Imam* congress (1791) that preceded the Haitian war of independence (1791-1803), and the twentieth-century movements of cultural affirmation like Indigenism and Négritude, emerged as a central dimension of today’s Rara in the diaspora.

A deplorable overemphasis on obscenities (Chapter 2) detracts from the work, and could lend to trivialization of Rara as an important aspect of Haitian culture. McAlister’s analysis of obscenities indeed establishes the political point of resistance of the masses to the predatory elites, but it is not the only method used to counter sociohistorical oppression. The Haitian masses have devised day-to-day strategies, many quite subtle, to survive their encounters with the entrenched and privileged segment of the society. *Mawonmange* (marronage) is the term Haitians have used to refer to such strategies which are manifested in a latent form through performance. Where certain behaviors are expected, Rara performers obliged perfunctorily, but given the opportunity to affirm their central concerns in more appropriate and respectable ways, they do so. An example is the support shown by Haitians living and working in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere for Rara societies in Desdunes, located in the Artibonite Valley, and Mirebalais, in the Central Plateau. Haitians working in the United States send considerable sums of money back home to celebrate and stage Rara festivals. A cursory look at the videos of these events brought back to the United States by the serviteurs or Vodou practitioners reveals a different approach. Grounded in the Vodou universe, the Rara songs in this case refer to the Kongo-Petwo Lwa as the foundation of the *lakou*, or Vodou family compound. Here, an intergenerational mix of children, adults, and older people (some of them quite wise) gives an utterly different view of a spring harvest festival offered in honor of the family ancestors. In fact, Rara, Kombit, and secret societies or societies for the protection of the community (in a word Vodou) stand as an eloquent testimony of the people’s resilience and resistance, as McAlister demonstrates. To the Vodou practitioner, obscenities are an appendix in Rara, but not a chapter.

Rara, which springs from Vodou, the soul of a country born from the encounter of three cultures, Amerindian, European, and African, remains one
of the most misunderstood aspects of Haitian culture in the American popular mind. The meeting of those cultures in a setting marked by brutality (with the invasion of the island by the Spaniards who exterminated the indigenous population, the Taino-Arawak, and replaced them with captives from Africa) forms the genesis of one of humanity's great tragedies in modern times. Yet, the history of the people who met each other in the New World paradoxically spawned one of the most vibrant artistic traditions of the Americas. In *Rara*, McAlister has succeeded in dispelling some of the mysteries surrounding Vodou and Rara, to present the simple beauty of the Haitian people.

The accompanying CD and its guide (pp. xv-xviii) help readers follow the story and give a taste of the music and context of Rara. This excellent monograph may well herald a new era of extensive research on this important dimension of Haitian culture.


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This book fits into the long tradition, in Latin American historiography, of publishing primary sources. It presents in something less than three-hundred pages a wide variety of documents on the history of the Dominican Republic. Starting with excerpts from the writings of the first Spanish colonists, the editors patiently move through (and provide insights into) colonial history, the nineteenth century, the U.S. domination at the beginning of the twentieth century, the notorious Trujillo dictatorship, and the turbulent political period that followed Trujillo’s assassination in 1961, including another U.S. intervention in 1965. Although at the end of their overview they present some sources on contemporary politics, the more recent period after the end of the so-called twelve years of Balaguer (1966-78) remains largely out of sight.

The book is aimed at a general public of students and foreigners interested in the Dominican Republic. The didactic purpose of the authors is evident from the explanatory texts that surround the sources. Where many earlier historians were convinced that “the sources speak for themselves,” Sagas and
Inoa clearly believe otherwise. Providing the readers with succinct and generally well-written introductions to the sources, they construct a fragmented but coherent historical interpretation of Dominican history.

Almost inevitably, this vision of Dominican history is mainly political and institutional. The editors attempt to present some sources on social and economic history, but that is by definition very difficult in this kind of collection. Adequate political declarations and institutional texts are much easier to find and to select than texts on sugar production, social change, or racial prejudices, which are often long and drawn out. The greater availability of texts concerning modern history has also led to a preponderance of twentieth-century materials. More than half of the book is dedicated to this period.

In order to present a coherent and succinct story, the editors include excerpts from some well-known secondary sources. There is, for example, a long fragment on the fortune of Trujillo written in the 1950s by the then-exiled opposition leader and historian, Juan Bosch, as well as an excerpt from the famous dissertation by Jesus Galindo who was later murdered by Trujillo. The choice to include such materials implicitly demonstrates the limitations of relying on primary sources for periods of dictatorships. The part of the book devoted to recent contemporary history is somewhat disappointing, perhaps because of the difficulty of making a good selection from a wealth of material without the necessary historical distance. Nonetheless, I believe the editors could have made more of this period which is so relevant for many of the potential users of the book.

It is difficult to judge how useful this collection will be for teaching Dominican history. Many lecturers will be tempted to use only one or two fragments that fit their own needs. For me, the lack of historiographical context would be the deterrent to using this book as a whole. In light of its clearly didactic objective, a good introduction and a bibliography of recent historical work would have been extremely useful, but there is none. A good overview of the recent historiography of the Dominican Republic could have provided a context for readers who want to understand the process of selection by the editors and the significance of the presented sources.

But these are minor quibbles. Anyone who has been involved in this kind of publication knows how much work – selecting, editing, and translating – is involved in its preparation. The editors should be congratulated for producing a well-edited volume that many interested observers of Dominican history will find useful for a long time to come.

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It is a common topic of conversation among students of the Dominican Republic that Dominicans of the older generation, particularly in rural areas of the country, remember the tyrannical dictator, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930 to 1961), with a strange mix of fear and reverence. Turits makes the bold move of taking such positive evaluations of Trujillo’s rule seriously, rather than dismissing these as false consciousness or a veiled critique of the country’s present state by idealizing its past. Through an extraordinarily meticulous and imaginative blend of archival and oral histories, Turits begins to uncover the historical substance beneath present-day idealizations of the trujillato. He is careful to note in detail that the dictator’s apparatus of terror and — at times, laughably — self-aggrandizing propaganda were main bulwarks of his control. Yet Turits also makes a convincing case that Trujillo’s despotism was leavened with a type of rural populism. This centered on land grants and other efforts to support smallholder agriculture and was also sustained by a paternalist ideology of “respeto” and the greater security of person and property provided by the extension of central government authority for the first time throughout the countryside.

This book will transform scholarly views of the dictatorship of Trujillo, and perhaps of other dictatorial regimes of Latin America and the Caribbean, which focus on corruption, brutality, and propaganda to the exclusion of quotidian governance. It is at this last level that Turits works, basing his study on thousands of daily intrastate documents, letters written to the state by peasants, and interviews with rural people in locales scattered across the country. Turits also carefully places Trujillo’s rural populism in the historical context of growing elite skepticism regarding the latifundium in the first decades of the century, which responded to the spread of the North American-dominated sugar industry and the imposition of U.S. military rule (1916 to 1924). Foundations of Despotism is thus history that takes account of both elite and subaltern perspectives and subjectivities. The oral testimony in particular reinforces Turits’s grasp of peasant points of view.
Turits is guided in his interpretation of these sources by the principle that no government can endure for decades solely on the basis of fear and lies. More specifically, "Trujillo's ideology of work and the working man could be effective only because it was backed up by concrete policies for promoting peasant agriculture" (p. 212). Beginning in 1934, official measures were taken to distribute uncultivated land to farmers without legal land titles. By 1945, a total of 178,793 hectares had reportedly been given out to 85,554 agriculturalists (p. 96). It was only near the end of his regime, after undercutting his own base of rural support by dispossessing tens of thousands of peasants to build his own sugar empire, that Trujillo began governing with all stick and no carrot.

Turits portrays Trujillo's rural policy as based more on hegemony than free consent. Propelling Turits's account is the tension between the gains in security provided to rural folk by Trujillo and their loss of political and economic autonomy under his rule. On the one hand, physical survival and socioeconomic reproduction as quasi-autonomous agricultural smallholders necessitated acceptance by the land-needy of the state's protection against the land-greedy. On the other hand, this protection came at the price of the rural population's sedentarization and concentration in space as well as their submission to the vigilant gaze of the state. In the process, "the Trujillo regime effectively incorporated and subjected to the national state a peasantry that for hundreds of years had remained largely invisible to it, eluding its control, surveillance, and taxation" (p. 83).

Even though Turits excels at summarizing his aims and findings, I cannot do justice to his complexly textured argument in a short review. Suffice it to note that a broad range of readers will greet this book with interest. *Foundations of Despotism* is a must-read for all serious students of Dominican society, and holds much for scholars of peasant-state relations, land reform, state formation, authoritarianism, and democratization throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. From my point of view as a student of Haitian-Dominican relations, I was particularly impressed by the new light this book sheds on borderland society, as well as by the new information it presents about the conduct of the Trujillo-led massacre and expulsion of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans of 1937.

The clarity with which Turits pulls the disparate pieces of his study together brings some unanswered questions to the fore. (That much is to be expected of a work of such great reach.) I remain uncertain how much of the land distribution was successful in the long run: Were the beneficiaries given enough good land, with sufficient water, road access, and other infrastructural support to sustain its use for decades? Geographical heterogeneity is mentioned but insufficiently analyzed: Did support for Trujillo vary regionally? I would like to know more about the author's research methods: How did he conduct his oral history interviews? How did he stitch together written

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and oral sources? From my (anthropologist's) standpoint, the book is insufficiently theorized. The book is not theoretically devoid: Antonio Gramsci and James Scott clearly stand out as main interpretive influences. Yet devoting more attention to its theoretical approaches would have further enhanced the book's appeal to nonhistorians. (I suspect many historians would disagree with me, and I myself consider this less a flaw than a missed opportunity to underscore the study's wider importance.) It is more certain that the book would have been significantly improved by the addition of a final chapter rounding out Turits's conclusions and drawing comparisons between the trujillato and other authoritarian and populist regimes of mid-twentieth-century Latin America and the Caribbean.

These misgivings aside, *Foundations of Despotism* masterfully gives insight into why Trujillo continues to be an object of fascination, so many years after his death. This book is worthy of being read in contrastive counterpoint with another recent great book inspired by the trujillato, Mario Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del chivo*. On very different scales, in totally different styles, and regarding distinct peasant and urban elite segments of the Dominican population, both bring us closer to the lived reality of "the Era."

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**Almoina, Galíndez y otros crímenes de Trujillo en el extranjero.** BERNARDO VEGA. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 2001. 147 pp. (Paper US$ 25.00)

**Diario de una misión en Washington.** BERNARDO VEGA. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 2002. 526 pp. (Paper US$ 65.00)

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In one "Peanuts" cartoon, Snoopy peers over the shoulder of a typewriting Woodstock, and says "Writing a book, I see ... Probably hopes it will be a best-seller ... They all do ... What's the title? ... *I Was Secretary for the Head Beagle.*" In 1950, another aspiring writer published a book entitled *Yo fui secretario de Trujillo*. The subject was a "head beagle" of a malevolent kind, the dictator Rafael Trujillo, who came to power in the Dominican Republic in 1930. *I Was Secretary for Trujillo* was a laudatory account of
“The Benefactor’s” government. Although the author, José Almoina Mateos, received a much needed payment from his former boss for writing the book, it failed to become a best-seller.

Almoina’s previous venture in publishing an account of the Trujillo regime, *Una satrapía en el Caribe*, had appeared in Guatemala the previous year. That pseudonymous book was a scathing revelation of the brutal domestic repression and reckless foreign policy that characterized the *trujillato*, including assassination plots against rivals abroad, based on Almoina’s inside information. Copies of *A Satrap in the Caribbean* were quickly purchased wherever they went on sale, not by the reading public, but by Trujillo’s foreign agents, who diligently suppressed unfavorable press about “El Jefe.” These agents also hunted down and murdered critics of the regime such as Almoina, who paid a heavy price for publishing his negative depiction of Trujillo. He was gunned down at Trujillo’s orders while living in exile in Mexico in 1960.

Bernardo Vega has written a book about this episode and assorted other “foreign crimes of Trujillo.” The most famous among them is the other case specified in the title, that of Jesús de Galindez, who was kidnapped off the streets of New York City and executed in the Dominican Republic in 1956. His sin had been to write a dissertation on Trujillo’s authoritarian exercise of power, which was due to be published when Galindez disappeared. An American pilot named Gerald Murphy, who flew Galindez to his horrible death, also lost his life to the Trujillo tyranny when he talked too much about his participation. The Galindez-Murphy murders led to a U.S. Congressional investigation and generated a great deal of negative exposure of the long-lived Dominican regime and its megalomaniac leader. Another man killed in the plot was Octavio de la Maza, a military officer the regime tried to frame in a spurious homosexual murder/suicide scenario to cover the execution of Gerald Murphy. De la Maza’s hanging, one of the heinous incidents in the spotlight here, motivated his older brother Antonio to join a conspiracy to assassinate Trujillo, which he and three others accomplished five years later.

Almoina and Galindez were two of four prominent authors who were killed by Trujillo’s assassins. Novelists Andrés Requena and Ramón Marrero Aristy, author of the Dominican literary classic *Over*, were the other victims. This book details their cases, as well as several less well-known expatriate killings, such as the shooting of Sergio Bencosme in New York in 1935, the first of many incidents when Trujillo’s bloody reprisals reached overseas. Nor did the vengeful dictator limit his anger to private citizens who had offended him. He also hatched plots to assassinate rival heads of state, as testified by the section of this book on the plans to kill Costa Rican president José “Pepe” Figueres in 1957. Later, when Trujillo’s terrorists almost blew up Venezuelan president Rómulo Betancourt, the Organization of American States imposed its first-ever sanctions against the Trujillo regime, presaging his fall, but that
attempt is beyond the parameters of this publication. The book does provide a full account of the nefarious activities carried out by the most notorious trujillista agents, the repulsive Felix Bernardino and Johnny Abbes.

Like Bernardo Vega’s previous work, a corpus of some twenty-six volumes indispensable to researchers of the Trujillo regime, Almoina, Galíndez y otros crímenes de Trujillo en el extranjero is packed with details pertinent to the subject, from a wide variety of sources. Twenty years after the fact, Vega continues to reveal information derived from his foray into Trujillo’s own archives during the administration of Dr. Salvador Jorge Blanco as president of the Dominican Republic. For instance, based on documents photocopied by Vega in 1984-85, the work under review demonstrates the role of the late Dr. Joaquín Balaguer in the Almoina case, among others. As ambassador to Mexico in 1948, Balaguer, who would become the dominant figure in Dominican politics from Trujillo’s assassination in May 1961 until his death in 2002, first placed Almoina under surveillance. Also like many of Vega’s earlier publications, this one has a wealth of photographs, but their sources are not cited. As in all of Vega’s work, he draws from rich sources, but does not always tell the reader what or where they are.

Unlike most of Vega’s previous books, which have appeared in a 7½ x 10½-inch format, each about an inch thick, this one is of a more manageable size. And while many volumes of Vega’s oeuvre have been compendia of undigested documents, this one has something resembling a narrative flow, which makes it more readable than most of those Vega has published through the Fundación Cultural Dominicana, which he founded. Vega never encountered a detail that was not worthy of inclusion in one of his books, and the Almoina/Galíndez volume is no exception, but with such a limited subject in this case, even exhaustive chronicling of the hunting and killing of the unlucky Dominican dissidents results in less than 150 pages.

Although both were emigrants from Spain, and shared the same fate, Almoina and Galíndez were dissimilar characters, whose names share the title of this book with a certain dissonance. Whereas Almoina was a sycophant who played a double game as a hack writer for and against Trujillo, Galíndez was a serious political scientist whose analysis of the trujillato, published posthumously, is still of great value to students of Dominican history. The same scholars continue to be deeply indebted to Bernardo Vega for his service as a researcher, editor, and author. Anyone interested in the Trujillo regime, or in the operations of dictatorships in general, will find a grisly compilation of evidence in this book.

Bernardo Vega has been a chronicler of Dominican politics, but he has also been a participant in his country’s history. He was director of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, governor of the Dominican National Bank, and Dominican ambassador to the United States from 1997 to 1999, having been appointed by President Leonel Fernández. The first three hundred pages of
Diario de una misión en Washington are almost exactly that: Vega’s ambassadorial diary. Two hundred culminating pages summarize the bilateral relationship between the Dominican Republic and the United States at the time, and reproduce the text of eight papers drafted by Ambassador Vega for presentation to various audiences. All in all, Vega has treated his own period as chief of mission in the United States as he might treat the documentary record compiled by one of his historical subjects, perhaps one of Trujillo’s emissaries to Washington, which is to say that he has included just about everything there is to include: the verbatim diary, official statements, photos, graphs... The result is an extremely useful volume packed with germane details, but lacking in narrative flow. In it, all aspects of Vega’s tenure as ambassador, from high-level talks on international drug enforcement policy with the Clinton administration to ground-level tree plantings at the White House with Sammy Sosa, find their place. Getting one’s hands on a diplomat’s private diary, especially a witty and introspective one like this, is the dream of many foreign relations historians, who wait many years for sensitive collections of public figures’ private papers to become available to researchers. But Bernardo Vega has treated his own period as chief of mission in the way historians would prefer, whereby the quotidian life of the Dominican ambassador from 1997 to 1999 is revealed now for all to see.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the specter of Trujillo that presided over Vega’s tenure as ambassador. In his official position, Vega pushed for the declassification of CIA documents concerning U.S. government complicity in the dictator’s assassination. He hosted an embassy dinner on the anniversary of the event, May 30, 1997, for four former U.S. embassy personnel who were posted in Ciudad Trujillo in 1961. He included the information he obtained from these efforts in his fascinating study, Los días últimos de Trujillo. Describing a Red Cross charity event among the right-wing “high society” of Palm Beach, Florida, Vega recounts how he “formally greeted an interminable line of people, and upon mention of my country, some of the oldest of them told me, with pride, that they had known Trujillo.” Reflecting on the evening, Vega confided to his journal, and now to us, “this job looks like it will be harder than I thought” (pp. 41-42).

REFERENCE

It seems like such a simple thing. When saving is impossible, and neither friends nor banks want to give a loan to pay that large expense, why not get together some friends who can pay each others’ large expenses collectively, in turns? This is the basic idea behind the *kasmoni*, an arrangement in which group members contribute money on a regular basis, giving one of the members the total amount of money in each round. The *kasmoni* can be classified as a ROSCA (Rotating Savings and Credit Association); the latter has received a lot of attention from economists, anthropologists, and students of development.

ROSCAs can be found in many parts of the world: they include the Chinese *ho* or *foet chen*, the Indonesia *arisan*, the Senegalese *tontine*, the Indian *bisi*, or the Trinidadian *susu*. The more we read in Aspha Bijnaar’s book, the more we learn about the complexities of such a folk savings device. It turns out that Suriname’s *kasmoni* is not something specifically for Creoles, is not only for women, and is not a remnant of a distant colonial past. Rather, it is a flexible arrangement adapted to many different economic contexts, suitable for many different purposes. Bijnaar’s book is an excellent example of such a study’s taking the social, economic, and cultural context into account. The result is a study both for specialists on the performance of informal savings and credit associations, and for those with a more general interest in Creole society in the Caribbean and abroad. The book allows readers a glimpse of the hidden world of money, trust, and savings, one of the best-kept secrets of Creole life.

Although as late as the early 1960s, Clifford Geertz (1962) was writing on rotating credit associations (particularly the Indonesian *arisan*), it wasn’t until the mid-1990s that the ROSCAs became widely perceived as “Aladdin’s lamp of information” (Bouman 1995), a rich source of information, and a window to the complex interrelationships between money, debts, social support, culture, and mutual trust (see also Ardener & Burman 1995).

Since the mid-1980s, the study of ROSCAs and ASCRAs (Accumulating Savings and Credit Associations) has gained momentum in the Netherlands, first with the Wageningen-based studies of Frits Bouman and Otto Hospes (1994), later because of the studies by Hotze Lont (2000, 2002) and Abram...
de Swaan (1996) at the Amsterdam School of Social Sciences. De Swaan, who wrote about the establishment of nation-states and nationwide welfare systems, took the study of collectivities such as ROSCAs as a starting point for understanding market development, and for what he calls a transitional phase in the development of precapitalist to capitalist societies with widespread collective welfare arrangements (De Swaan 1988:3). This interpretation has been heavily influenced by Norbert Elias’s evolutionist ideas on civilization processes and Clifford Geertz’s (1962:241) ideas of the ROSCAs being a “‘middle rung’ in development.” It is in this academic tradition that Bijnaar’s study should be placed.

Throughout the book, she struggles with these evolutionist ideas, while her study actually suggests that ROSCAs are more dependent on cultural factors than on the institutional or economic context. The book is a clear illustration of the fact that the kasmoni flourishes among all Creoles (except for the upper classes), both in Suriname and the Netherlands. If readers skip the evolutionary discussions, they will discover a fascinating study, one that offers a clear overview of the different forms of kasmoni, its members, and the social and cultural contexts in which they operate. The glimpses of Creole life in which kasmoni is embedded are among the most interesting parts of the book. The chapters on trust, networks of social control, and relationships between the Amsterdam Bijlmer and Suriname are particularly rich in ethnographic detail. It is a pity, however, that the book is poorly structured in some places and that it includes frequent repetitions — shortcomings that, when combined with the haphazard mix of theoretical notions and empirical descriptions, make for a rather cumbersome text.

In addition, although the book is quite comprehensive and covers an impressive number of contexts and people, the choice of these contexts and people seems somewhat random. Bijnaar presumes at several points to offer an overall view of Creole kasmoni, and the book is full of generalizing statements, but it is not always clear that these claims are justified. One example is found in the chapter on kasmoni participants’ motives. The motives appear to have been rather rigidly taken from the literature instead of from empirical observation. Moreover, Bijnaar’s positive statements about the scope and function of kasmoni as a strategy to improve peoples’ livelihoods and to overcome poverty seem more like wishful thinking than empirically tested assertions. The advantages of kasmoni are repeated many times, while readers are left with questions about the two-thirds of the population who are not involved, and about the many cases of fraud and default. And when Bijnaar mentions that the kasmoni is a strong tool to accumulate goods and capital, she mentions in passing that Creole society places “a strong taboo” on accumulation. It is statements like these that make readers rather curious about the scope and meaning of kasmoni in the wider migrant society.


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As part of the activities prompted by the fact that 130 years ago the first Hindustani – in most parts of the Caribbean one would say “East Indian” – contract laborers arrived from British India in the Dutch colony of Suriname,
a volume of articles appeared that addresses the history of their emigration and emancipation as well as the most important aspects of the present position in the Netherlands of those of their descendants who moved on to become Dutch citizens in that country.

As a community, these men and women are very conscious of their triple loyalty to their adopted country, to Suriname and, increasingly, though not dominantly, also to India. The volume that records the history of the past 130 years and analyzes the present position of the community advertises itself as a memorial book (gedenkboek). Its twelve articles or chapters, however, offer a thorough, though perhaps not exhaustive, state-of-the-art representation of the research done during the last decade or so into various aspects of the history, emancipation and cultural situation of the Hindustanis, as they prefer to be known in the Netherlands. The eight authors of these chapters are all Hindustanis themselves, which convincingly appears to proclaim the achievements and self-sufficiency of this minority group in Dutch society.

The authors undoubtedly intend to convey the impression of self-confidence; it is also justified. This is especially clear in the criticism with which all the authors courageously address the weaknesses and as yet unfulfilled promises in the process of Hindustani emancipation, e.g., when they speak of the life expectancy of the Hindustanis and the incidence of divorce among its members. Overall, however, they strike a note of satisfaction with the open and pluralist structure of Dutch society, which has enabled them to integrate as well as establish their own government-subsidized schools, to retain their identity and develop it, as well as to rise to higher levels of education and income.

Apart from the subjects indicated above, there are separate chapters on the religious organizations of Hindus and Muslims, on the emancipation of women, the dynamics of Hindustani youth culture, on Sarnami as the Hindi dialect that emerged in Suriname and still is very much a living part of the Hindustani heritage, and on participation in Dutch politics. The volume is particularly strong in its demographic analysis, and its many tables lend solidity to its conclusions.

There is, within the Hindustani community, still rather limited knowledge about the exact kind of Indian society and local culture that the contract laborers were a part of. The centuries-old tradition of migrant labor, or naukari, that they represented, survives in different forms in modern India and can hardly be traced or imagined even by those who visit India in search of the world their forefathers left behind. They therefore often seem to assume that Bhojpuri society (Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar) in the period of emigration resembled what we have assumed is typically Indian: a caste, dowry, and joint family (p. 138) system, in which the women lived in parda, i.e. veiled seclusion (p. 146). The practice of a girl's parents' asking a bride price, for example, is mistakenly considered as an adulteration of the originally pure custom of giving a dowry (pp. 51, 158, where the two customs
are confused). All these customs, however, hardly prevailed in the kind of society the contract laborers were brought up in.

As to the analysis of the present, however, the authors are at their best. Rather than a "transnational" part of a worldwide Indian diaspora, H. Ramsoedh argues, the Hindustani community participates primarily in Dutch society. On the other hand, no "institutional completeness," i.e. a situation in which all social functions are served by exclusively ethnic institutions, prevents its integration in Dutch society (pp. 114, 117). B. Lalmahomed, to give another example, candidly speaks of the method of bringing up children on the principle of thrashing (ranselpedagogiek) that used to prevail in Hindustani families. And C.E.S. Choenni, the main author of the volume, notices that, contrary to what is often assumed, Hindustanis have still not caught up with the Surinamese Creole immigrants in the Netherlands. The volume is a convincing witness to the intellectual potential of self-analysis of the Hindustani community.

The second book reviewed here is a Dutch version of the autobiography of Munshi Rahman Khan, a Pathan from the Hamirpur district in the United Provinces, as Uttar Pradesh was then called, of British India. He received a good education and had, before he signed a contract to go to Suriname in 1898, served as a school teacher, which justified his title of munshi. This background, exceptional amongst the first generation of Hindustanis in Suriname, partly explains his successful career as a foreman at several plantations, as a community leader, who was, moreover, knowledgeable in both the Hindu and the Muslim customs of the region he came from and in the traditional texts popular there, such as Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas, and he had some skill as a poet and writer.

Amongst the list of works that Munshi Rahman Khan left behind, the most important is his Jivan Prakash, the story of his life. This represents, as the preface to this volume rightly claims, a unique document and the only one in which an East Indian contract laborer in the Caribbean tells the story of his recruitment, journey, his life on the plantations, and, finally, his career as a free immigrant. It is not a diary (dagboek), though the editor, Sandew Hira, uses that word, even on the title page. The text, however, is certainly of great historical significance and is, in itself, a monument to all those who came to the Caribbean from British India and stayed on. Munshi Rahman Khan, moreover, writes with gusto, and it is a pleasure to follow him through the many conflicts and job changes he went through.

Autobiography is a genre that, compared to Europe, is thinly represented in India. The exceptions to this rule are, however, often of great quality. The famous Ananda Ranga Pillai of Madras is an early example. The diaries of Amar Singh of Jaipur, written two hundred years later and now becoming known to the public thanks to the work of Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph and others, represent a rare exercise in self-reflection. Munshi Rahman Khan's
work belongs in the category of these great authors, because he gives much more than his memoirs and a number of insights into the world of migrant labor with its attendant features of identity change (pp. 154-55, see Choenni and Adhin, p. 30), survival strategy, and upward mobility. It seems to me that an important aspect of his drive to write this story was to justify, in the first place to his five sons, his refusal to return to India, where his father desperately needed him, and his desire to convince his acquaintances that his efforts not simply to lead, but to “act out,” the life of a true Indian in Suriname had not been in vain. This psychological aspect of self-justification, I suggest, deserves further study and research.

The last part of the story deals with the increasing estrangement of Hindus and Muslims that, according to Munshi Rahman Khan, began with the arrival, in 1929, of an Arya Samaji missionary in Suriname and with the practice of conversion or reconversion that became prevalent soon after. It would be interesting to put the story of this Hindu-Muslim boycott, as the autobiography tells it, in a wider historical context, the more so as, according to the editor, it is not mentioned anywhere else (p. 16).

There is, in other words, still a task ahead before full justice is done to this very important text. The editor notices the intention of the International Institute of Social History (IISG) at Amsterdam to publish an English edition soon. Hopefully, this will be a more careful edition than the present one. Sandew Hira candidly admits (p. 4) that his knowledge of the languages and the script used by Munshi Rahman Khan — Hindi, Avadhi, and Urdu — is deficient and that the text as he presents it, is a Dutch adaption of an English translation that is itself somewhat flawed. The translators, apparently, were not aware of the meaning of quite a few simple Hindustani words most of which have an Indian rather than a Surinamese context. Examples are: *patwari* (village scribe), *kharif* (autumn harvest), *tahsil* (revenue collection, fiscal area), *mauza* (fiscal village), *kila* (fort), *dhoti* (not trousers, but loincloth), and *laddu* (not a cookie), and this is not an exhaustive list. I counted at least 130 little printing and spelling errors; many words and names are spelled in various ways; in my copy of the book, the last four pages are printed twice. The map at the beginning of the part dealing with the 1890s oddly represents post-independence India. Moreover, much more work is still to be done on annotation, though the more than 300 notes given are, for the most part, valuable, especially as far as they refer to the Surinamese background. Munshi Rahman Khan, however, survives all these imperfections and should be read.
Anthropologists have devoted less attention to war and violence than historians and many others in the social sciences. *Dark Shamans* seeks to partially redress this state of affairs by advocating that violence and killing may be viewed as cultural performance. To this end Whitehead examines *kanaimā* in the Guyana hinterlands bordering Venezuela and Brazil. Widespread within this region, *kanaimā* (or a cognate term) and closely related ideas are shared by a number of neighboring peoples – Patamuna, Makushi, Pemon, Akawaio, Lokono, Karinya, Warao, and Wapishana. Used in precise ways to describe specific forms of mutilation, killing, and the imbibing of liquid from the decaying corpse of the victim, the term may also be employed in more diffuse and metaphorical senses. *Kanaimā* may refer to malignant spirits, a particular form of apprenticeship to a killer protector, and a relationship between humans and natural forces. *Kanaimā* killing highlights ethnic boundaries and disputes within families and between affines. It may be implicated in political squabbles and used to target colonial and state authorities. Additionally, *kanaimā* has been popularized in different western media as a sort of supernatural Amerindian killer, often assuming animal shape, emanating from the demon landscape of the tropics. While indigenous folks fear it, avoid it, and sometimes deny its very existence, and many believers would see it extirpated, all recognize it as an authentic indigenous practice. As such, *kanaimā* may also be seen as a form of resistance to impositions of indigenous headmen and state authority alike.

Delighting in this profusion of appearances, Whitehead considers *kanaimā* to be a “cultural proclivity,” “an authentic and legitimate form of cultural expression,” and a shaper of identity (pp. 245-46). The book represents an attempt to describe native engagement with *kanaimā* and its contribution to the lifeways of indigenous Guyana. Understanding depends as well on an historical contextualization of cultural practices through time. The work, then, is in the anthropological tradition of unveiling the logic and meanings of exotic practices in order to show the order and sense behind them by means of a recalibration in terms of an unfamiliar cultural logic. In particular, Whitehead
seeks to show that *kanaimà* killing is a ritual act comprehensible in terms of shamanic beliefs that overlap and contrast with other shamanic forms and non-shamanic beliefs (Christianity). Two major issues are raised by this approach. The first entails the adequacy of the account as a description of *kanaimà*. Here we see that the very pervasiveness and multiplicity of usages threaten to undermine any specific analysis framed exclusively in terms of ritual practice. The second issue entails the adequacy and even the ethics of an interpretive approach to violence and victimhood as cultural performance.

The book opens with introductory material in which we learn how Whitehead himself was threatened by *kanaimà*, and of his difficulties in studying the theme. We learn rather less about the community setting of the research, most of which apparently occurred in the Paramakatoi community, whose population of nearly 1,000 places it in the high end of village size among the Patamuna. The research depended on the cooperation of different individuals, all of whom were differently situated as bystanders, potential victims, or killers who for their own reasons revealed what they knew and believed. One gets the impression that knowledge of *kanaimà* was quite unevenly distributed, and even when Whitehead felt that young braggarts knew less than they professed about the ritual intricacies, high-level experts would reveal rather less than they knew. Women apparently had a different take from men: “I repeatedly observed that women were told only about certain features of kanaimà, particularly its connection to warfare and the Kwayaus [warriors], but that its shamanic purposes were never so revealed” (p. 123). Perhaps this partly explains Whitehead’s claim that females found the prospect of *kanaimà* assault to have erotic appeal (e.g., p. 105).

Whitehead presents copious historical material to document the rise and changing forms of *kanaimà* (although not its origin), with particular attention to the spread of gun warfare and slave-raiders and explicit mention of *kanaimà* in the opening of the nineteenth century (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 attempts to debunk the idea that *kanaimà* is essentially a mechanism to exact revenge or retribution for social trespasses. This entails descriptions of other shamanic forms and their historical emergence and change in the following chapter. Chapter 5 considers the representation of *kanaimà* within the rise of the traditional/modern dichotomy in the context of interactions with development ideology and the state, including involvement in mining activity. In the end, however, efforts to close off other meanings of *kanaimà* by reducing it to discourse about a kind of shamanic practice are unconvincing. In some cases, *kanaimà* does appear to avenge wrongdoing; in others it seems to refer to undifferentiated evil or to the uncontrollability of young male delinquents. Shuttering down meanings of *kanaimà* to focus on shamanism ultimately can be linked to Whitehead’s attempt to analytically show the interpolations between the cultural poetics of *kanaimà* and warfare and diverse forms of violence more generally.
The book is written for disciplinary and area specialists. That might not be a great loss to the general reader, who will assuredly experience puzzlement at the conclusion that by understanding "violence as a cultural performance of ritual and symbolic categories, as much as an expression of social-structural contradictions and conflicts, one can finally move beyond the sterile opposition of structure to agency" (p. 243). In the end, the book promises understanding, but this understanding is geared to throw light on analytical method rather than human experience. In fact, the book shows a distressing lack of attention, theoretical and otherwise, to the pervasive ways that acts and threats of violence cast their leaden shadow over the routines of daily life. How do people change their residence arrangements, economic and social activities, and even ways of thinking under the oppressive threat of violence? Despite Whitehead's honorable intentions to shed light on victims as well as killers, Dark Shamans privileges killers as the agents of cultural performances. In the process of showing that violence is not senseless – indeed that it is meaningful – the book sacrifices an opportunity to show how alternatives to violence are also being enacted and just what their meanings might be for the rest of us.


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According to A.J. Simoes da Silva in this provocatively titled monograph, the reputation of Barbadian novelist and essayist George Lamming "remains on the whole intriguingly obscure" (p. 1). But to whom? It is undeniable of course that Lamming – author of six novels (one a canonized classic), a memoir, an edited collection, a volume of addresses, statements, and interviews, a short collection of essays, and more – has not received the sorts of acclaim that have lately come the way of such of his contemporaries as Derek Walcott, V.S. Naipaul, and Kamau Brathwaite. But "obscure"? This judgment depends plenty on how you define "reputation," on what counts as the authority of recognition. Perhaps it is more true to say that Lamming's reputation travels...
— at least in part — in different intellectual circuits. And this fact may have to
be not merely with the nature of his aspiration for recognition, but with his
understanding of his commitments as a publicly engaged writer and his sense
of the principal location of his audience. At any rate, it is certainly not hard
to find a significant measure of critical concern with his work in a number of
overlapping communities or readers: those postcolonial critics, for example,
who are particularly interested in the interrogation of language and history
in colonial and anticolonial discourse (Nadi Edwards, Helen Tiffin, Simon
Gikandi); those critics and historians engaged in the re-problematization of
Englishness and Empire in Britain (Bill Schwarz, Peter Hulme); and those
scholars concerned with re-mapping the contours of a Caribbean intellectual
tradition (some of my own preoccupations might be situated here).

Lamming’s reputation, then, is not “obscure,” though the nature of it
— and the sources and center of it — might well be worth investigation by
an acute scholar. Interestingly, however, da Silva’s study is not offered as a
reading of the meaning of Lamming’s reputation. Rather it is offered as what
he calls “a long-overdue re-evaluation of the novels” (p. 17). Long-over-
due? The Luxury of Nationalist Despair joins two other monographs devoted
exclusively to Lamming’s work: Sandra Pouchet Paquet’s seminal book, The
Novels of George Lamming (1982), and Supriya Nair’s more recent study,
Not many then, and not yesterday. But da Silva means to suggest more than
quantity and time. He means to distance himself from these and other crit-
ics of Lamming in whose work he finds a conventional and congratulatory
endorsement of Lamming’s own self-assessments.

One of the challenges faced by a critic of George Lamming, da Silva sug-
gests, is to evade his prescriptions for how his work should be understood.
Lamming is a strong and forceful writer with pronounced views about colo-
nialism and its aftermath; he is also a self-consciously theoretical and some-
times polemical writer. If his novels are not strictly speaking programmatic
books, they are certainly books with an undisguised agenda. And moreover,
in the large number of addresses and interviews he has given since the 1960s
he has almost obsessively cultivated a comprehensive picture of the project
— decolonizing the mind, in the famous phrase of one of his early admir-
ers, Ngugi wa Thiong’o — to which he has dedicated his literary-intellectual
energies. So it may not be entirely surprising that many critics — especial-
ly those who share his nationalist aspirations — would find it hard to read
against the grain of these self-understandings. Da Silva demurs. He does
not doubt that the novels are anticolonial allegories — fiction speaking back
to colonial power — but he insists that what these narrowly focused read-
ings have missed are the conflicts, ambiguities, silencings, and exclusions
that are at the center of Lamming’s narratives. These are what da Silva’s
book aims to explore. Or rather, expose. For in the end he finds Lamming’s decolonizing project a failure.

Framed by an introductory chapter discussing Lamming’s autobiographical meditation on writing and empire, *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960), da Silva’s book is organized into thematic chapters each discussing two of the novels. *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) and *Of Age and Innocence* (1958) are explored in the second chapter, which focuses on racial identity and anticolonial nationalism. In da Silva’s view, “race” is Lamming’s “primary source of inspiration” (p. 38), and the work as a whole (but these two novels in particular) are characterized—indeed, are marred and ultimately undermined—by his Afrocentric obsessions. *The Emigrants* (1954) and *Season of Adventure* (1960) are discussed in the third chapter, with a focus on the gendered representation of nationalism and the nation. Lamming’s narratives, da Silva argues, have a “masculinist tone” (p. 17); they marginalize the presence and voice of women. In both these novels, he says, “a transgressive sexuality becomes the medium through which a consideration of gender is eventually excluded from the national vision the novels construct” (p. 100). Finally, *Water with Berries* (1971) and *Natives of My Person* (1972) are discussed in the fourth chapter, which focuses on Lamming’s concern with reordering the history of the colonial past so as to enable a liberatory postcolonial future. But here again, Lamming’s vision is flawed inasmuch as the past is seen as “obsessively oppressive” (p. 155), ultimately cramping the agency of the colonized.

So while da Silva may faintly admire Lamming’s interrogations of the colonial order and his redemptive vision (or at least his desire for one) of a new relation between the former colonizer and the former colonized, he nevertheless finds in the end that Lamming’s work falls far short of realizing a truly postcolonial objective (whatever that might be). He writes:

> Insofar as the works remain focused on the colonial past of the Caribbean, they succumb to an incapacity to imagine a truly postcolonial future. Ambiguity, of a constraining nature, becomes the quality that impels the work. I want to propose, then, that the “luxury of despair” stands as both epigraph and epilogue to Lamming’s novels. Despite their recognition of the ongoing nature of the colonial experience in the mind of the colonized, they ultimately articulate a depressing sense of closure, an intellectualized denial of the vitality of Caribbean reality through their refusal to imagine solutions for the future. (p. 7)

This excoriating judgment is reiterated again and again throughout the book. Instead of projecting beyond the acrimonious relation between colonizer and colonized, and between white and black, Lamming can only look ahead into an abyss of disillusion and take refuge in a “luxury of nationalist despair.” He remains imprisoned inside his anticolonial resentments. Too great an unwillingness to give up a politics of blame leads Lamming again and again into dead ends, and as a consequence the possibilities for real postcolonial
resolution to the legacies of conflict colonialism bequeathed are obscured from him. Part of the problem for da Silva is that Lamming ignores the "reality" of Caribbean culture. Lamming’s preoccupation with “separation and fragmentation perpetuates a recriminatory mode of looking at the past which bypasses the highly syncretic nature of today’s Caribbean societies” (p. 198). The judgment is a curious one for many reasons, not the least being that it presupposes a whole social anthropology of Caribbean society and culture that da Silva nowhere supplies.

There is much that is illuminating in da Silva’s book. A substantial scholarship informs his very readable narrative. But on the whole I remain unconvinced by the critical approach he adopts. The mode of criticism here is the now fairly familiar one in which a reading aims to identify what the work (or body of work) leaves out, leaves unanswered, without a satisfactory reconstruction of the work’s own project. It is undeniable that Lamming’s fiction is constrained by a certain idiom (a certain raced idiom as well as a certain gendered idiom), and by a distinctive conception of purposes and horizon of vision. And doubtlessly, therefore, the fiction endorses a certain normative dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, of visibility and invisibility. But what were the historico-discursive conditions that shaped the problem-space of intelligibility of Lamming’s decolonizing project? Looking back at the colonial Lamming looking forward beyond colonialism, how can we reconstruct the intelligibility of the nationalist answers his work offers? How might we excavate the questions he felt compelled to answer, and why did the tropes, figures, metaphors, and subject-positions he mobilized find the conceptual warrant they did? Da Silva seems unconcerned about inquiring into these sorts of questions.

The proper task of criticism, it seems to me, is neither to endorse nor to condemn work by virtue of its context. Rather it is to map the difference between the problem-field of writing and the problem-field of reading. On this view it is certainly important that Lamming’s narratives position women or blacks or others in the specific ways they do. This is important, however, not because it demonstrates the success or failure of his postcolonial imagination, but because it helps us locate and clarify the determinations of his vision, and by so doing to raise the possibility of our envisioning differently.
The study and appreciation of Anglophone Irish and Caribbean poets have generally been framed within the paradigms of either national, Commonwealth or, more recently, postcolonial literary approaches. This has led in turn to a focus on influences and reactions, "writing back" to mainstream English poets and traditions. In Caribbean literary criticism for example, there is a recurring emphasis on the "kicking daffodils" trope, the dual acknowledgement and rejection of Wordsworth as a metonymic figure for English nature poetry whose images and metaphors were alien to the Caribbean world. Alternatively, as in the case of Heaney and Walcott, a concern with locating their poetry within a distinctively Irish or Caribbean national tradition has steered the critics toward comparisons with other poets from the same area and a concentration on distinctively Irish or Caribbean sources, voices, and inspiration.

Thus, Maria Cristina Fumagalli's study of Heaney and Walcott in relation to Dante offers significantly new perspectives. Of course Heaney's translations of Dante and allusions to his work have been acknowledged previously. Nor is this the first work to compare Walcott and Heaney, although none have done so in such depth and in such implicit and explicit detail. But the thorough exploration of Dante's significance to both poets is new and directs our attention to different terrain and fresh ways of understanding these poets. Perhaps most importantly, it is a means of insisting that we can see these poets (and by extension many other West Indian writers such as Wilson Harris, Lorna Goodison, and Earl Lovelace, to name just three) as both cosmopolitan and national, drawing on a response to the cosmopolitan resources of other cultures and languages to enrich their local cultures and traditions.

Fumagalli's analysis of Heaney's response to Dante is thorough and illuminating, but for the purposes of this review I will concentrate more on her discussion of Walcott, whose debt to Dante has been given much less attention in other critical works. This lack of attention is surprising, given the continuous references to Dante in Walcott's oeuvre. Among his earliest works are a play called Paolo and Francesca, and a long twelve-canto poem written in his teens, Epitaph for the Young. To some extent the allusions to Dante here are filtered through T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets, but the whole concept...
of the poem, the specific ways in which it draws on the metaphor of life as a journey, the references to Dante’s Ulysses (in Canto X), the search for a guide or father figure to lead him through his journey, demonstrate Walcott’s thorough acquaintance with Dante at this stage and foreshadow his continuing influence in later long narrative poems such as *Another Life* and *Omeros*, which also adapts Dante’s *terza rima*.

However, the Dante encountered in this early poem, and sometimes parodied, is a version “written on official paper,” as Heaney phrased it in reference to many of the translations he first knew (1985:16). It is only later that Walcott realizes the extraordinary linguistic feat accomplished by Dante, a feat which he seeks to emulate in those later poems, of “giving the vernacular its head” and allowing it both eloquence and authority.

In one of the best chapters in this book, Fumagalli demonstrates Dante’s influence in the shaping of Walcott’s autobiographical *Another Life*. Although the title is an almost direct translation of Dante’s title for his *Vita Nuova*, critics have mainly directed their comparisons to Wordsworth’s *Prelude*. Like Dante’s series of lyrics regarding his relationship with Beatrice, Walcott’s poem revolves around his relationship with Anna, and with artist friends. Both poets are concerned with a maturing understanding of interaction between art and life, and the reshaping of memory and the past through imagination. But is also in the *Vita Nuova* that Dante celebrates the vernacular as a fitting vehicle for poetry of high ambition. In a valuable interview with the author and published as an appendix to her book, Walcott affirms Dante’s gift to poets who wish to realize the potential of the vernacular thus: “the really astonishing thing in Dante ... is to have a tone that is not rhetorical ... In Dante the greatest parts are based on the colloquial, the immediate, the vernacular ... I don’t mean grammar, diction, language, I mean the immediacy of the voice” (p. 66). Fumagalli argues that this “immediacy of voice” applied to the “high” subject of the relationship between art and life is first fully achieved by Walcott in *Another Life*.

*Omeros* is given a long chapter which traces both the specific allusions to passages in the *Commedia*, and the deployment of language, structure, and verse forms which owe much to that great vernacular epic. Fumagalli also points out the significance of *Paradiso* to *Bounty*, which is indeed bountiful in its acknowledgment of a wide range of poetic influences, and includes a series of “Italian Eclogues,” replete with Dantean references, dedicated to Joseph Brodsky. These final chapters conclude an important and thoroughly scholarly study, which will be an invaluable resource for those who seek a fuller understanding of the influences, techniques, and aesthetics that inform the work of both Walcott and Heaney.
Tobias Döring’s *Caribbean-English Passages: Intertextuality in a Postcolonial Tradition* is a book with many merits, one of which must be its constant reminder that, as the Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1992:22) has succinctly put it, “the Caribbean is nothing but contact.” In addition, through its thorough study of the politics of genre, Döring’s book helps to dismantle the notion of a monolithic imperial/colonial discourse and re-focuses postcolonial discourse on Caribbean history of cultural and textual resistance. Döring, in fact, takes his readers on a “grand tour” of Caribbean and English literature and, thanks to a mixture of attentive close reading and rigorous theoretical thinking, he projects them beyond that “first reading” in which, as Antonio Benitez-Rojo (1996:2) points out using Roland Barthes as a springboard, “the reader inevitably reads himself.” As a matter of fact, what Döring does most effectively is the “kind of reading in which every text,” at times surprisingly but always enrichingly, “begins to reveal its own textuality” – to borrow Benitez-Rojo’s words one more time.

*Caribbean-English Passages* is divided into six chapters, each of which focuses on one particular genre: travel writing, nature poetry, adventure novels, autobiography, picture poetry, and the epic. The first chapter is aptly dedicated to travel writing “because this genre manifests the idea of passage most concretely” (p. 16) and provides an interrelated reading of V.S. Naipaul’s *The Middle Passage* (1962), J.A Froude’s *The English in the West Indies* (1887), Edgar Mittelholzer’s *With a Carib Eye* (1958), and Amryl Johnson’s *Sequins for a Ragged Hem* (1988). Chapter 2 turns to plantation writing and nature poetry: here the key text is James Grainger’s *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), the first West Indian georgic. As an art of place that attempts
to “reconcile the pressures of experience with the pressure of prevailing cultural norms” (p. 63), it is intriguingly offered as a significant precedent for postcolonial Caribbean writing such as Grace Nichols’s 1990 poem, “Sugar Cane” or David Dabydeen’s 1984 collection, Slave Song. Chapter 3 reads Wilson Harris’s novel, The Secret Ladder (1963), contrapuntally against Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness (1899) and, less predictably, Arthur Conan Doyle’s The Lost World (1912). Chapter 4 centers on V.S. Naipaul’s The Enigma of Arrival (1987) and David Dabydeen’s The Intended (1991) and their engagement with, respectively, English and Caribbean pre-texts. Further cogency (and this is a very cogent book despite the wide variety of texts that it analyzes) is added by the fact that both Caribbean texts are also preoccupied with Conrad’s fin-de-siècle novel. In Chapter 5, Dabydeen’s long poem Turner (1994) is studied alongside Turner’s painting Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying — Typhoon Coming on (1840) and John Ruskin’s famous review of it. In so doing, Döring demonstrates that postcolonial ekphrasis can be a very efficacious strategy for dismemberment of the colonial past. In Chapter 6, Derek Walcott’s Omeros (1990) is also read as an act of poetic ekphrasis and decanonization while (among other things) Döring tackles the issue of the appropriatedness of a Caribbean epic. Every chapter is accompanied by a thought-provoking illustration. For instance, Chapter 6 is paired with Nicolas Vleughels’s The Shield of Achilles (1715) and Chapter 1 is opened by “Waiting for the Races,” an illustration in Charles Kingsley’s travelogue At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies (1890). This engraving portrays three different races in Trinidad — Afro-Caribbeans, East Indians, and Chinese — dressed in typifying costumes and standing by the race-course railings. Döring discusses this Victorian representation of races in the context of Naipaul’s own re-reading of the image in his own travelogue.

An exclusive focus on “Caribbean-English passages” such as the one promoted by this book might feel a bit “claustrophobic” at times, but the sheer richness of Döring’s intertextual networking more than compensates for this. My only regret is that, in the “Introduction” to the volume, Döring engages in a fruitless polemic rebuttal of Silvio Torres-Saillant’s Caribbean Poetics: Toward an Aesthetic of West Indian Literature (1997). While Caribbean Poetics, a controversial but significant book, aims “to show that the literatures written in European languages in the Caribbean area constitute a regionally unified and coherent socioaesthetic corpus with its own identity” (Torres-Saillant 1997:xii), Döring sets out to make what he calls “the counterclaim” (my emphasis) and “to chart the intertextual lines that connect some Caribbean writing with English writing” (pp. 5, 6). It is unnecessary and unhelpful to oppose these two critical strategies, especially because one approach does not have to exclude and/or devalue the other (and I level this criticism against both Döring and Torres-Saillant, who also adopts a “prescriptive” and “exclusivist” tone in his own book). After all, Döring readily
admits that his “focus on English literary ancestries ... inevitably leaves out a good deal that clearly is of relevance” (p. 8) and Torres-Saillant (1997:278) states that Caribbean writers “enter into decisive conversations with a colonial legacy. Whether they correct or affirm, revise or deny, adapt or update, recycle or subvert, they are dealing directly or indirectly with colonial intertexts.”

Caribbean-English Passages is valuable and challenging, engaged and engaging. It is therefore unfortunate that Routledge is publishing it only in hardback, thus denying it a much wider circulation and, crucially, accessibility to students who would benefit from its astute insights as much as the “specialists” in the field to whom it is directed.

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This relatively brief monograph – four chapters, introduction, and conclusion in just over one hundred pages – is of the rare variety that elicits the reaction: “why didn’t I think of that?” Celia Britton has undertaken a thorough, closely argued review of the basic texts that have involved one or another version of psychoanalysis and/or depth psychology (Freud, Jung, Lacan especially) in elaborating a discourse on ethnicity in the French West Indies since the early 1940s. The result is as brilliant as it is stylistically dense.
Chapter 1, “French Surrealism and Ethnography,” covers the material that has been most studied, though not always well. Britton mines the pages of Tropiques, the magazine produced between 1941 and 1945 by teachers at the Lycée Schoelcher in Fort-de-France, Martinique, for the links between ethnographic surrealism and an unorthodox reading of Freud by André Breton and others. My own Modernism and Negritude and James Clifford’s The Predicament of Culture trod this path earlier. Britton builds on those books while teasing out important differences between the interpretations of Freud given by René Ménil, Aimé Césaire, and his wife Suzanne. Her results are both stimulating and unexpected.

The second chapter, “Politics and Psychosis: The Limits of Psychoanalysis,” focuses on Frantz Fanon’s Peau noire, masques blancs (1952). Considerable confusion exists among commentators on Fanon’s published doctoral thesis, which has been invoked to bolster quite contradictory positions in the past. Britton’s exegesis is particularly fine and deserves to be the point of departure for future studies of Fanon’s early work, which is shown here to manifest important unresolved contradictions of its own. Readers will be particularly grateful to Britton for clarifying Fanon’s strange claim that homosexuality does not exist in Martinique and for demonstrating his precise relationship to Lacan. On this last point confusion has reigned in recent years among literary theorists who have claimed that Fanon’s version of Freud corresponds to that of Lacan in the articles collected in Écrits (1966).

The third chapter, “Psychoanalysis and Social (Dis)Order,” focuses initially on Césaire’s Discours sur le colonialisme as an attack against Octave Mannoni’s Adlerian interpretation of the Malagasy’s need to be colonized in Psychologie de la colonisation (1949). Having clarified this messy attempt to justify colonialism through spurious social science, Britton discusses Glissant’s debate with Maud Mannoni in Le Discours antillais (1981). She carefully analyzes those of Glissant’s criticisms that she finds germane and points out those that she finds irrelevant because of Mannoni’s quite different purpose in her case study of a Martinican man’s identity crisis. The argument deserves the careful attention Britton lavishes on it. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of “the so-called matrifocal family in Afro-Caribbean and African-American society” (p. 69) that Fritz Gracchus produced in Les Lieux de la mère (1986). Like Maud Mannoni, Gracchus uses specifically Lacanian categories to analyze those aspects of diasporic family life that Western, neo-Freudian social science considers dysfunctional. This topos creates a bridge to the fourth and final chapter, “Oedipe noir?”

In this chapter, Race and the Unconscious... goes back to the 1924-25 Malinowski-Jones debate over the universality of the Oedipus complex. Acknowledging that the neo-Surrealists of the Tropiques group were unaware of this debate in the early 1940s, Britton then takes up the anti-Oedipus theory of J. Deleuze and F. Guattari (1972). Their conclusion that the univer-
saliency of the Oedipal situation is ultimately undecidable takes into account modifications that both Lacan and Lévi-Strauss brought to classical Freudian theory. Britton then returns to Fanon in this new context to give a luminous exegesis of his "unresolved Oedipus complex" (p. 86). A further illuminating discussion of Gracchus's attack on Fanon results in the conclusion that "Gracchus's position is thus not as clearly distinct from Fanon's as he implies it is..." (p. 90). In sum,

as we compare Fanon and Gracchus against the background of a convoluted and in some sense unresolvable discussion that started fifty years earlier, two clear conclusions nevertheless emerge. First, we have seen how the imbrication of racial issues with those of gender is inescapable, and does not always take a positive or even benign form. Secondly, the conceptual "undecidability" of the Oedipus complex is to some extent both a cause and an effect of its importance in the arena of racial politics. (p. 94)

There is no doubt whatever that Celia Britton has demonstrated "the constant return of Antillean intellectuals to Freudianism, despite its problems" (p. 105). The question that perplexed Caribbeanists will ask is "why?" The answer to that question will require a broader-based interrogation of the intellectual, as well as socioeconomic, dependence of the Caribbean DOMs on France itself since the mid-twentieth century. Richard D.E. Burton's French and West Indian (1994/1995) has gone some way toward providing the elements of that analysis.

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Place, Language, and Identity in Afro-Costa Rican Literature is a tremendously ambitious book, and one which all will agree is long overdue. Dorothy E. Mosby attempts to cover over one hundred years of the history of a people in some two hundred pages, but does it with relative success. For perhaps too long, blacks in Latin America have lived with invisibility in terms of their identity. But in the last four decades, Afro-Hispanic literature has emerged, and this vibrant, rich body of writing gives voice to the strong influence of this people on the dominant culture of a region. The book takes as its center the Central American nation of Costa Rica, which is mainly Hispanic, and interrogates representations of blackness by Anglophone immigrants and their descendants. At the start of the introduction, in a section entitled “Historical Foundations: Background on the Afro-West Indian Presence in Costa Rica,” Mosby presents an overview of the existence of an indigenous black population, as well as a population descended from Francophone immigrants. She describes texts by these writers as being in short supply, lost, or nonexistent.

The book is concisely written. In the introduction, Mosby indicates her intention to carry out a reading of Afro-Costa Rican literature through the use of postcolonial theory. This choice seems appropriate given that, as she writes, “Place, displacement, language and nation are important notions expressed in Afro-Hispanic and other ‘New World’ literatures because they link the subject-self to history, culture, and, ultimately, identity” (p. 25). She also presents a concise history of the presence of Anglophone-descent blacks in Costa Rica along with a review of the limited studies to date on Afro-Costa Rican literature. Finally, the introduction outlines the two central tensions in most Latin American Hispanic nations: whitening and naming. Costa Rica, Mosby concludes, is informed by an ethnically homogeneous Hispanic identity that denies any racial diversity.

Chapter 1, “Roots and Routes,” traces the foundations of black writing in Costa Rica. From the folkloric “Anancy Stories” to Calypso, she examines the influence of orality on the literature. Perhaps most interestingly, Mosby
moves from works such as the poetry of Alderman Johnson Roden and the short stories of Dorothy Joseph Montout, which are written in English, to an exploration of the newspapers of the day, also written in English, which provide vital information on the tradition of literacy among first- and second-generation Afro-Costa Rican writers.

Second-generation Afro-Costa Rican Eulalia Bernard’s poetry is given center stage in Chapter 2: “Negotiating Home: The Poetry of Eulalia Bernard.” The chapter begins with a short biography of Bernard, the daughter of Jamaican immigrants. Then, close readings of several of her poems inform most of the rest of this chapter, as much of her poetry is what Mosby admits is a (re)negotiation of black cultural identity for West Indian-descent Costa Ricans. Mosby concludes (rightly) that Bernard’s work is doubly creolized as she imagines a Jamaica long abandoned while remaining firmly rooted in the Costa Rican province of Limón where she grew up.

Chapter 3, “Quince Duncan and the Development of Afro-Costa Rican Identity,” focuses on the writing of Quince Duncan, one of Costa Rica’s most prolific black authors, depicting him as representative of a third generation of Afro-Costa Ricans who have greatly impacted the nation’s literary production. Through close analyses of Duncan’s three novels of identity, Hombres curtidos (1971), Los cuatro espejos (1973), and La paz del pueblo (1976), Mosby concludes that Duncan presents themes of place, displacement, and exile, all of which are extremely relevant to the (re)construction of cultural and national identity.

Chapter 4, appropriately entitled “To Be Young, Gifted and Black: Shirley Campbell and Delia McDonald,” begins at the post-Civil War years in Costa Rica. Mosby asserts that this fourth generation of blacks clearly and definitively affirms black identity. Both Campbell and McDonald revisit the works of outstanding black Caribbean writers such as Aimé Césaire and Nicolás Guillén and in that same vein present a strong Caribbean identity which has black ancestral roots but which has a firmly integrated (in this case) Costa Rican future. The West Indies remains an historical landmark, which marks the memory of Afro-Costa Ricans. But more than anything, members of this generation quite affirm their ethnicity, accept their history of displacement, and seek to map a secure future in Costa Rica, the patria—that is, the home, a sacred place, and one which is accepting of this integral part of its heritage. The book ends with a short bibliography which includes one-and-a-half pages of primary sources. Given Mosby’s initial commentary on the loss of much indigenous writing, as well as the erasure of Afro-Costa Ricans from the annals of national history, scholars of Afro-Hispanic literature will agree that it is tremendous to have this documented source readily available.

Afro-Costa Ricans still have much to do to affirm their “Costa-Ricanness,” Mosby concludes in “Becoming Costa Rican.” But if her intention in this
book is to ensure that the “navel strings” (creole for “umbilical cords”) of Afro-Costa Ricans remain firmly rooted in the community, to acknowledge their presence, and to reaffirm Afro-Costa Rican identity, this seminal study is a success.


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One of the most notable developments in the Trinidadian pre-Lenten Carnival in recent decades is the re-creation of the event in the cities of the Anglophone Caribbean diaspora, such as New York, London, Toronto, and Miami. At these transplanted festivals held during the warmer months of the year, one can join a masquerade band, listen to calypsonians and steel bands, and generally “lime” (hang out) with friends and relatives in a manner similar to Carnival practices in Trinidad itself. Though many scholars and other observers have written about diasporic Carnivals, Philip Scher’s book is one of the first full-length publications on the phenomenon. Scher suggests that “Carnival has become a central symbol in the formation of a Trinidadian *transnation*” (p. 1), with “transnation” defined as a population of migrants who imagine themselves as a collectivity with a distinct history and culture, in ongoing interaction with a home nation-state. In this study, the Trinidadian transnation is examined through a dual-site ethnography of Carnival in Trinidad and Brooklyn.

In the course of the book, Scher moves back and forth between Trinidad and Brooklyn to highlight the transnational circulation of specific Carnival practices and ideas about the event. He begins with a brief history of Carnival in Trinidad, with a focus on middle-class nationalist control and commodification of the festival through staged competitions during the twentieth century. He then examines Trinidadian migration to New York; the development of Carnival in Harlem in the 1920s and its relocation to Brooklyn in the 1960s; the contemporary production of costumes in the camp of Borokeete, USA (a well-known masquerade band); the relation of the costume-makers’ perceptions of Carnival to the “official” discourse on the event; and the role of Carnival as a display of Trinidadian or West Indian identity within the
arena of New York's ethnic politics. In the final part of his study, Scher investigates nationalist commodification of Carnival in contemporary Trinidad, with particular attention to two case studies: a failed international Carnival event that tried to lure tourists to Trinidad in September 1994, and a pattern, in recent years, of transnationals returning home to play traditional sailor masquerades that remind them of their youth.

Much of Scher's discussion revolves around three central arguments. First, he suggests that the Trinidadian state has objectified Carnival in a nationalist cultural discourse aimed both at unifying the diverse local population and at marketing the country at the international level. Second, for Trinidadians in New York, an objectified Carnival (re-packaged as a parade) has become the primary ethnic display event in exchange for official recognition and access to municipal goods and services. Scher describes this exchange as part of a "bureaucratic multiculturalism" in which the city's population is divided into distinct ethnic groups with identifiable cultural traits. Finally, he argues that the objectification and commodification of Carnival are interrelated with nostalgia for traditional forms, such as sailor masquerades, that are promoted as the "authentic" Trinidadian Carnival.

Although these are generally reasonable arguments, they rest on what seems to be a fairly thin ethnographic foundation. Carnival in this book occurs, for the most part, at a controlled theoretical distance. There is minimal description of the actual festival in either Trinidad or Brooklyn. One gains little sense of the creativity of the masquerades, the dynamics of performance, or the cacophony of the voices of Carnival practitioners. Scher occasionally quotes informants, but rarely at any length. It would have been helpful to hear more of the views of diverse government officials, cultural brokers, designers, and masqueraders in both locales. In the case of masqueraders, for example, what do people in camps other than Borokeete, USA have to say? How do returning transmigrant sailor masqueraders perceive their activity? What are the experiences of the large number of people who return to play the much more popular bikini-style masquerades? Why not complement comments by a group of young female masqueraders in Trinidad (discussed in a chapter on New York) with an interview with similar masqueraders in Brooklyn?

Along with a scarcity of descriptions and interviews, there are few photographs in the book, even though masquerade is a form of visual expression. Those photographs that do appear are poorly reproduced, insufficiently identified, and not interpreted. Three striking 1950s postcards of Trinidad Carnival scenes appear on the book's dust jacket; presumably they were selected in reference to Carnival nostalgia, but this is not discussed. In short, photographs seem to be an afterthought in this work, rather than a source of ethnographic information. An additional editorial shortcoming of the book is
that more than twenty author/year citations in the text have erroneous dates or are not included in the bibliography.

Nonetheless, this is a significant new study that will be of value not only to Carnival scholars but to other specialists in Caribbean popular culture, migration studies, and ethnic studies. Scher addresses a number of important issues related to transnational communities and identities, nationalist rhetoric and the commodification of cultural practices, multiculturalism and social control, and nostalgia and the construction of authenticity. Perhaps a next step in Carnival studies will be multisite ethnographies that encompass London and other cities, in an effort to develop a comparative understanding of the circulation of festive practitioners, forms, and meanings in the diaspora.


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Recent years have seen the publication of several monographs and edited volumes dealing with Latin American and, especially, Hispanic Caribbean ("Latin") musics. The essays in Musical Migrations consist mostly of expanded and in some cases updated versions of papers presented at a 1997 conference organized by the editors in Ann Arbor. Covering diverse aspects of Latin American musics, most of the articles engage in some fashion with the topics suggested in the title, which are also addressed more directly by the editors’ preface. In the spirit of full disclosure, I should mention that I was involved as series editor with this volume when it was under contract with another press. A dispute over content led the editors of this book to withdraw it from publication; they choose not to acknowledge in their volume the considerable time and energy invested in improving the manuscript by that press’s editors and outside reviewers.

The volume opens with an insightful article by Deborah Pacini-Hernández, which explores aspects of the presence, or absence, of Latin musical input in mainstream American pop music, and the uneasy and complex relation
between Latin music and the world beat phenomenon. This engaging essay, rich in both detail and interpretation, is a fitting opening to the volume. The next article, by Gema Guevara, focuses largely on Gloria Estefan’s popular 1993 CD *Mi Tierra*, arguing that it presents an unrealistically whitewashed and sanitized image of Cuban music culture. I might add that in this vein, the Miami Sound Machine’s video accompanying “The Rhythm’s Gonna Get You” (included in the first *Routes of Rhythm* documentary video) presents a fine example of latter-day blackface minstrelsy *a lo cubano*.

The aforementioned editorial problems primarily involved Marisol Berrios-Miranda’s article, “‘Con Sabor a Puerto Rico’: The Reception and Influence of Puerto Rican Salsa in Venezuela.” Only certain portions of the article deal with the subject suggested in the title. The rest is framed as a critique of a 1994 article of mine, in which, according to Berrios-Miranda, I assert that salsa is “purely Cuban music” and give “the impression that Puerto Rican musicians have copied [i.e. from Cuba] almost the entire body of music that they identify with and claim as their own” (p. 96). These allegations are crude, dishonest, and opportunistic distortions of my article, which explicitly stresses the uniquely indigenous Puerto Rican character of bomba, plena, and jibaro music, and the ways in which Puerto Rican musicians have creatively rearticulated, enriched, and effectively domesticated Cuban genres like the son. It was my objection to this misrepresentation, and the evident refusal of the editors and the author to address it, that led the editors to withdraw their volume from that press.

We are on more scholarly ground with the subsequent essay, in which James Winders discusses the transnational dimensions of French Caribbean popular music and its interactions with Paris and Africa. In the next essay, Jorge Giovanetti, writing at the early stage of the boom of *reggaeton* (Spanish-language dance-hall reggae), offers insights and information on the cultivation of rap and reggae in Puerto Rico. In “Mambo Kings to West African Textiles,” Paul Austerlitz attempts to draw parallels between Latin rhythms and African textile design patterns; the argument, although inherently speculative, is intriguing and thought-provoking.

The focus shifts southward and toward more literary topics in the next two essays. Bridget Morgan discusses attitudes toward Argentine gaucho music as reflected in José Hernández’s fictional *Martín Fierro* poems, written in the 1870s. Juan Zevallos-Aguilar uses the depictions of Quechua dances in the fiction of Peruvian scholar and novelist José María Arguedas to reflect shifting attitudes toward highland Indian culture in Peru of the 1960s. In the next essay, Shannon Dudley offers original perspectives on the history of Trinidadian steel-band music, especially the cultivation of and affinities with Western classical music. Candida Jáquez then presents a concise, if not exactly ground-breaking, survey of aspects of mariachi music and its cultivation in the United States. The subsequent article, by Anthony Macías,
offers a brief but richly nuanced portrayal of the interethnic exchanges and activities of Los Angeles Chicano musicians and audiences in the 1950s and 1960s. In a final short essay, Luis A. Ramos-García offers some perspectives on Peruvian rock, focusing on the relation between foreign trends, highland chicha, and the local Creole cultural mainstream.

As with most edited volumes, the contents of Musical Migrations are somewhat diverse in focus, theme, approach, and quality; collectively, they contain much that may be of interest to students of Latin American music, in its great diversity and continual self-reinvention.


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The recent deaths of singers Celia Cruz, also known as La Guarachera de Oriente, and Máximo Francisco Repilado Muñoz, better known as Compay Segundo in the Buena Vista Social Club film, point to the end of a cultural period in the history of Cuban music. Although together they represent the “commercial Golden Age” of Cuban music before the 1959 revolution, individually they represent antagonistic political views regarding the future of their Caribbean nation and their musical expressions. Until his death, Compay Segundo toured the world as a cultural ambassador of the Cuban government, while Celia Cruz joined the Miami-based Cuban exile movement becoming its spokeswoman in the popular music field. Therefore, the following question remains: apart from creating the musical genres songo and timba, what has the Cuban Revolution accomplished in terms of musical evolution?

This is precisely one of the strong points of this English edition of Maya Roy’s Cuban Music (translated from the French by Denise Asfar and Gabriel Asfar). Politically objective, devoid of racial and class prejudices, and written in clear and simple language, the book reviews the history of Cuban music from its sixteenth-century origins to the present, including Amerindian, African, and Spanish influences in the formation of a national Cuban music at the end of the nineteenth century. A brief look at its table of contents indicates that Roy employs a modern approach, beginning with the
social significance of music and following with brief descriptions of their musical characteristics and typical instrumentation. Her information and analysis is based on personal interviews with musicians and modern musicological and historical studies by Cuban scholars; Alejo Carpentier, Fernando Ortiz, Leonardo Acosta, María Teresa Linares are among those she cites most frequently. No wonder Juan Flores (professor at Hunter College in the City University of New York and author of many books and articles, including From Bomba to Hip-Hop [2000]) calls it, in the book’s preface, “the best survey of Cuban music available.”

The book is divided into nine chapters with a complete, up-to-date bibliography of primary sources and a selected discography of Cuban music. It also includes a handy glossary of terms.

Roy establishes her theoretical framework in the introduction. The study of Cuban music evolves from the study of the general history of the island, “a history marked by colonization, the almost complete eradication of its indigenous peoples and slavery.” The next eight chapters are dedicated to the description of the different musical genres, styles, and forms, their typical instrumentation, and their musical history, always rooted on the historical, economic, political, and cultural history of Cuba. These are: ritual music, rumba, punto y tonadas, danzon, three variants of The Song (trova, bolero, and “Feeling”), and the national music known internationally as son, which has spread to the whole Caribbean region. The important influence of French-Haitian music in the formation of national forms and the development of the famous rhythmic pattern that identified the Cuban national forms known by specialists as the quintillo cubano are also included. Chapter 8 is dedicated to a description of the history of music in Cuba since the 1959 revolution and the emergence of two new musical forms: songo and timba. It also contains an excellent description and an objective analysis of the present Cuban government’s policies regarding all aspects of musical phenomena (creation, production, and distribution) and its continuous support of popular and classical music research and education. The last chapter deals with the disjunction of two traditions in Cuban music: music before the Revolution, exemplified by the Buena Vista Social Club, and music after the Revolution, mainly songo and timba. Roy concludes in a conciliatory tone:

it is becoming clear that the call for reconciliation between Cubans on the island and those outside, which is clearly transmitted through the music, is in fact being heard. For music, no matter where it originates, has neither borders nor color, as long as it is good music and comes from the heart – and this, without question, is true of the vast majority of Cuban musical expressions. (p. 204)

We have to thank the Office of the French Ministry of Culture and Communications and the Latin American Bureau in England for sponsoring
the translation of this excellent book. I would also recommend a Spanish translation of the book for the benefit of Hispanophone scholars, students, and music lovers.

REFERENCE


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“I should mention at the outset, that this is not a linguistic presentation of Papiamentu. I do not intend to solve the mystery of Papiamentu’s origins, nor present the linguistic science of the language ... What I intend to do in this work is to present a historical account of this language which will continue to the present day” (p. 2). This is a worthwhile undertaking since for most creole languages we still lack systematic investigations of the sociocultural matrices in which they emerged and developed. To date we only have studies for a handful of creole languages – e.g., Le Page (1960) on Jamaican, Rens (1953) and Arends (1995) on Sranan, and Keesing (1988) on Melanesian Pidgin English. Studies that explore the extralinguistic history of individual creoles are, however, of great value. They provide important clues about the linguistic inputs to the formation of individual creoles, the languages that influenced them throughout their history, and their relative impact, respectively. Moreover, they give insights into the processes of change, for example internally motivated and contact-induced change, that played a role in their emergence and development. Finally, the results from a significant number of such studies are vital for conclusively establishing the nature of creolization or creole formation, its alleged uniqueness, and its relationship to other processes of change.
Unfortunately, Fouse’s study does not bear on any of these aspects. In fact, the book does not provide a systematic account of the extralinguistic history of Papiamentu nor does it critically assess previous studies. It is essentially an accumulation of facts that more or less relate to Papiamentu and its speakers. The study is divided into four parts entitled “Language,” “Slavery,” “Development,” and “Present and Future.”

The first part discusses the origin of the term *pidgin* and briefly mentions its relationship to the term *creole* – an evolved pidgin. The first chapter presents in a highly simplistic manner the conditions in which creoles allegedly emerged and two somewhat outdated theories of creole formation, and ends with a brief and unsystematic account of the field of creole studies and the social status of creoles. In the second chapter, Fouse mentions a few things about tense and aspect in Papiamentu and the plural marker, and lists terms for numbers, the days of the week, and the months of the year. The chapter ends with a brief and little-informative discussion of the origin of Papiamentu’s vocabulary.

Part Two includes five chapters. Chapter 3 provides a brief history of slavery and of the slaving activities of the Portuguese and the Spanish. Chapter 4 discusses how the Spanish discovered Curacao, Bonaire, and Aruba. Chapter 5 looks at the emergence of the Dutch state and its activities in the Caribbean, South America, and West Africa. Chapter 6 discusses the development of slavery on Curacao, Bonaire, and Aruba, and briefly presents the population groups that came to those islands (e.g., Sephardic Jews), those that newly emerged on them, particularly on Curacao (e.g., Mestizos), and their relative numerical impact. The last part discusses the formation of surnames among the former slaves after the abolition of slavery, the Dutch disinterest in teaching their language to the free and freed slaves, and the dominance of Papiamentu among the Antillean-born Europeans. Chapter 7 explores the slave revolts that took place on the three islands.

Part Three deals with the development of Papiamentu. Chapter 8 uncritically recapitulates what other people have advanced about the origin and formation of Papiamentu and its relationship to other Spanish and Portuguese-lexified creoles. Chapter 9 discusses the origin, development, and acculturation of the Sephardic community on the three islands. Chapter 10 deals with the role of the Catholic Church and several prominent clergy in promoting Papiamentu. Chapter 11 discusses the relative role of Dutch and Papiamentu in the Antillean communities. Fouse argues that despite efforts to increase the use of Dutch since the turn of the twentieth century, Papiamentu is still the main language of the population. Chapter 12 briefly discusses the oral tradition of the islands, their possible West African roots, and efforts to preserve it (in writing). Chapter 13, “The Written Word,” presents a classification of writings in Papiamentu, and enumerates all the prominent writers from the Dutch Antilles and their achievements. Chapter 14 reviews the
debate surrounding the standardization of Papiamentu and explains the term “language planning.”

Part Four deals with Papiamentu today in the Netherlands and in the Caribbean. Fouse argues that while the language is under threat in the Netherlands despite efforts to help preserve it, it is gaining in importance in the Antilles.

Overall, the study does not add anything to our knowledge about the history of Papiamentu. It is hardly worthy of serious attention.

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Creole Formation as Language Contact: The Case of the Suriname Creoles. Bettina Migge. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003. xii + 151 pp. (Cloth US$ 85.00)

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For all the effort that went into it, this book is a sign of a field in eclipse. Migge presents an account of the genesis of what is usually known as Ndyuka Creole in Suriname (which she terms Eastern Maroon Creole [EMC], referring to Ndyuka and three close dialects). She proposes EMC as a compro-
mise between Gbe varieties of the West African coast and English, in chapters addressing sociohistory and contributions from the languages in contact.

With sincere regret, an honest assessment is that this book is hopelessly incomplete as a work of academic scholarship. Over the past ten years a body of work has appeared arguing that the Suriname creoles have too many highly idiosyncratic parallels to other English-based creoles of the Caribbean for it to be plausible that they emerged in Suriname itself. Rather, all evidence suggests that an "Ur-creole" was born in the Caribbean or possibly on the West African coast.

As it happens, I myself authored most of this work. However, my objection here is not that Migge does not concur with my arguments. The problem is that she does not seriously address them at all. After a single sentence stating that the grammatical features I adduce "are not sufficiently close to rule out separate developments in each or in several of the varieties," (p. 3) she never again even broaches my own work or that of Ian Hancock and Philip Baker in this vein.

I write this not out of a petty sense of having been slighted; I would have the same complaint if the neglected work had been written by another scholar. The issue is that my account of the relationship between other creoles and those of Suriname has been approved by peer referees in several journals as well as a book (McWhorter 2000), and has elicited no systematic rebuttals after a decade. As such, basic standards of scholarly argument require that Migge give a sustained attempt to refute my argument, such as a careful account as to why the features I refer to are not idiosyncratic (which, I might submit, would be very difficult). Without this, the monograph falls short of the fundamental goal of scholarly inquiry, which is to sift through competing hypotheses in a quest for new knowledge. If the scholar feels that a competing account is mistaken, she is responsible for explaining precisely why. No Algonquianist or psycholinguist taken seriously addresses their topic without close engagement with pertinent work by others.

But even within the confines of its own argument, this book relies on ad hoc arguments to a degree that would not pass muster in fields currently more robust than creole studies. Confronted with behavioral discrepancies between certain copular morphemes in EMC and Gbe, Migge's substratist paradigm leads her into a tortuous, unfalsifiable explanation, which also ignores an alternate explanation appealing to cross-linguistic parallels and historical documentation that I have presented in many publications. She guesses that EMC retains a case distinction in third person singular pronouns (a, en) because the creole's creators happened to incorporate these items at the same time, after which neither item was in a position to edge out the other one. But this is based on no systematic conception of language contact, and hardly explains why the same people could not have heard both I and me at the same time and retained them. Surely a more explanatory account, such
as the special frequency of the third person in spoken language, might be germane here.

In another unconstrained argument, Migge supposes that EMC lacks English copular morphemes because these are often contracted in speech. The point seems reasonable at first glance, but a hypothesis like this must be tested with a broader view of creoles. Copular morphemes are much more salient in French (est and sont, for example, are not contracted), and yet French creoles regularly omit them (or in the case of est, vastly abbreviate their occurrence in the grammar). This case is one of many in the book that suggest a general trend toward grammatical simplification in creole genesis. Yet Migge classifies EMC as an example of English undergoing mere interference from Gbe, along the lines of the way Thomason and Kaufman (1988) classify languages like Romanian under influence from Slavic.

But Thomason and Kaufman classify deep creoles as a different kind of contact altogether, marked by a sharp interruption in transmission. Migge gives no reason for her revision of their taxonomy. However, one surmises that currents in the field asserting that creoles are unbroken descendants of their lexifiers and in no way simpler than them has played some part in her classification. Treating EMC as the result of the same contact process that produced Ethio-Semitic under Cushitic influence is more politically correct in today’s creole studies climate. But as Migge herself shows in addressing the low degree of allomorphy in EMC pronouns, it is plain to any analyst that simplification played a vastly larger role in plantation Suriname than in Romania or Ethiopia. Migge leaves unaddressed why this difference nevertheless allows treating all three situations as akin, which weakens the monograph as a meaningful contribution to the general investigation of language contact.

For a work on language change and contact, the book makes oddly sparse reference to cross-linguistic data for parallels. Migge does not refer to cases such as Romanian or Amharic herself, and largely restricts her addresses of diachronic principles to brief examples from textbooks such as Hopper and Traugott (1993) and Harris and Campbell (1995).

The book began as a Master’s thesis, a stage at which we do not expect full command of data and argumentational rigor. However, one would expect that in turning the thesis into a book, Migge would have revised it to thoroughly address the pertinent literature that has appeared over the years and sharpen its arguments in response to feedback. That has not happened here.

Over the almost twenty years of the Creole Language Library series, of which this book is the latest entry, there has been a palpable decrease in urgency, suggesting that more than a few creolists have actually come to subscribe to the proposition that there is no reason to study creoles as a type of language. The general sense one gets from this book is that no one concerned, including the people who vetted the manuscript for publication, had a genuine curiosity about the subject.
REFERENCES


