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This is fascinating, well-researched, and properly historicized ethnography. Forte undertakes the complex and subtle task of elucidating the dynamics of an idea, “Carib,” and the ways it is invoked, debated, contested, and expressed in the context of the modern community of Arima, Trinidad. As any Caribbean scholar knows, the notion of “Carib” is central, not only to past history or, indeed, regional etymologies of place, but also for the way in which it evokes the whole story of colonial encounter, conquest, and postcoloniality throughout the region. Truly this is a concept that comes not merely freighted with meaning but with a whole baggage-train in tow. Against this background Forte admirably responds to the need to present more than functionalist-style description of contemporary performances of identity, and the politics that surround it, by offering a thoughtful account of the historical antecedents of contemporary meanings and the ways in which colonial and nationalist politics have created this context.

The nature of indigenous persistence in Trinidad is demographically and historically problematic, as is the case for all “indigenous” groups throughout the Antilles. This is because the absence of certain standard markers of indigeneity stand in apparent contradiction to the insistent presence of claims to Caribness and an inheritance of certain kinds of cultural traditions. As a result, the disappearance of indigenous populations has been repeatedly declared, from the sixteenth century through to the present day, yet the insis-
tence of local voices on their inherent and indomitable indigeneity continues to challenge the much better publicized declarations of politicians, archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians alike.

In the original schematic of colonial ethnology, the cannibalistic and rebellious Carib stood in counterpoint to that other chimera of ethnological categorization, the Arawak, who appear as tractable, pliant, and also conveniently absent. For these reasons any invocation of the notion of the Carib is already a complex statement of identity, historical rootedness, and a particular kind of political and social orientation. The truth or credibility of such an invocation cannot be reduced to a positivistic catalogue of historical or archaeological facts, but must be interpreted in light of the long and vicious history of colonial and neocolonial politics in the Caribbean. In such an intellectual context a study such as Forte’s should not be understood as offering a definitive analysis of these issues, but rather as a situated account of how such issues continue to play out in the context of contemporary Trinidad.

Forte thus carefully maps the origins and rhetorics of the idea of “Carib” and shows how this is politically and culturally deployed by the people of Arima and its environs. The strength of this analytical strategy is enhanced by a keen sense of historical change, particularly as Forte follows it from nineteenth-century colonial antiquarianism through to the globalized and networked presence of Carib identity today. Perhaps what is most striking in this historical presentation is the way in which the forms of media and categories of investigation and verification may change but the content of the idea of “Carib” itself has remained relatively limited in scope and necessarily paired with its counterpoint, the Arawak (or, latterly, “Taino”).

Forte begins with an account of the colonial era in Trinidad, noting the various forces at work in producing Carib identity, and then moves to consider the way in which that identity became spatially and intellectually emplaced within Trinidad, particularly at the Arima mission which has subsequently become known as “the home of the Caribs.” This is followed by an extended analysis of how the “Carib” have been written in the various textual sources in tandem with the way in which the idea of indigeneity itself has also emerged. This sets the scene for a close examination of the politics of indigeneity and “Caribness” in Trinidad and especially of ways in which the Trinidadian nationhood in part anchors itself in these twin ideas, despite the marginal place that communities such as Arima hold within the modern state of Trinidad. Crucial to this process, as analyzed by Forte, is the role of the “cultural broker,” preeminently the Santa Rosa Carib Community organization, which has both spearheaded efforts of cultural revival and acted as a clearinghouse for those seeking to “visit” and “know more about” the Caribs in Trinidad. This presentation is complemented by a more conventional ethnographic account of contemporary Carib festivals and their projection onto the national stage of Trinidad, as well as an examination of the ways in which
global connections with other indigenous revivallist movements and the use of internet websites have allowed an even wider projection of the idea of “Carib” survival in Trinidad.

Despite the interest of these materials it would have been relevant to include some clearer assessment of other “Carib” cultural movements, such as those in Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Belize, Dominica, and Venezuela, especially given the large populations that such movements represent. Likewise, the invocation of the category “indigeneity” certainly should have included reference to Alcida Ramos’s book on this notion as it has been deployed in Brazil. Nonetheless this is an excellent volume that clearly shows the limits of an overly exoticized anthropology interested only in supposedly pristine natives or isolated forest dwellers and which brings to the fore the modernity of tradition in the Caribbean.


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This book is well written and well researched, and adds substantially to the corpus of criticism on French Caribbean literature. Ambitious in content and scope, it seeks to situate French Caribbean literature, in terms of theme and technique, within the broader framework of twentieth-century French thought. To this end, Nesbitt reads a wide range of French Caribbean authors, from canonical figures like Aimé Césaire through those of more recent vintage, such as Maryse Conde and Daniel Maximin, to the Anglophone Haitian-American writer Edwige Danticat. At the same time, he reassesses the stature of such historical figures as the Guadeloupean anti-Napoleonic resistance leader Louis Delgrès. While the Caribbean link to metropolitan discourses is largely demonstrated here, it can at times appear that the primary role in establishing a French Caribbean discursive framework was played by French metropolitan writers.
Nesbitt’s approach inscribes the regional texts in their historical contexts, showing how they “underscore the antinomical status of Antillean existence” as part of a literature that “calls for a transformation of the subjective and objective dependency it portrays” (pp. 46-47). Yet in leading off his discussion of the French Caribbean historical experience with analyses of such thinkers as Hegel, Marx, Lukacs, Jean Hyppolite, and Alexandre Kojève, Nesbitt in fact implicitly claims that these authors provided the key discursive tools that French post/colonial writers later appropriated to dismantle the citadel of colonialism. For example, Césaire’s *Cahier* is described as a canonical work of resistance which “consistently places its own stated intentions in contact with the forces that would eliminate human freedom,” but which also reflects “the poetic discourses of Rimbaud and Lautréamont that inform it” (p. 81). Turning to *La tragédie du roi Christophe*, Nesbitt points to the key role played by Césaire’s incorporation of aspects of Hegelian philosophy at a critical juncture, and stresses his “mixture of such heretofore-distinct discourses: that of European historical and philosophical discourses of the revolutionary period with the mythical figures of the black Atlantic” (pp. 137-38). And in his evaluation of *Présence Africaine*, Nesbitt posits Alioune Diop’s contribution to the journal as being patently steeped in the engagement of Sartre’s existentialist philosophy, diluting the Africanist component implicitly integral to Diop’s thought and writing.

Turning his attention to Maximin’s *L’Isolé soleil*, Nesbitt accords pride of place to the role of jazz in the text, since its grounding in the Black experience renders it “a counter-model of subjective experience forged in the black vernacular” (p. 154). Through an extended discussion of artistic parallels between Coleman Hawkins and Maximin, he seeks to suture the latter’s discursive framework and its conjoining of “historical processes of both mnemonic recovery and imaginative transformation” (p. 153) to musical techniques of improvisation and aesthetic play. Yet this worthy goal encounters its limits when he tries to recount “the novel’s principal project of articulating a Caribbean historical experience” (p. 155), for this discussion of the novel’s genesis and structure appears to sideline the centrality of key Caribbean historical figures and events to the elaboration of the plot. Perhaps more importantly, any analysis of the astonishing capacity for linguistic (re)invention that is the primary characteristic of Maximin’s groundbreaking reimagining of the Caribbean historical condition here borders on the inadequate. This duality of perspective continues in his chapter on Edouard Glissant, where Nesbitt points both to Glissant’s “call for the construction of an independent national consciousness and politics” (p. 173) and to his “explicit reappropriation and reconstruction of dialectical negation, Hegel’s primary contribution to Western thought” (p. 175). In sum, though, this reading does ultimately valorize Glissant’s oeuvre as a project of social transformation (p. 185) aimed at unearthing and exposing the “suffering and lost possibility” that are integral
to the departmental experience (p. 183). Nesbitt concludes his Caribbean survey with a chapter on Condé and Danticat, framing the former’s intertextual excavations of memory as “written under the sign of Proust” (p. 196) even as they plumb “the theme of Antillean alienation and reification” (p. 197). At the same time, Condé’s mastery of irony and caricature is also said to make her “a Caribbean Flaubert” (p. 195). Danticat’s The Farming of Bones “creates a field of interaction between history ... and a subjective, poetic voice” (p. 210), one that seeks to recover the subjective possibilities erased through violence.

In setting out to read the “multiplicity of Antillean experience” (p. 196), Nesbitt provides new and much-needed perspectives on both canonical and contemporary examples of Caribbean writing. In analytical terms, his command of theory and the depth of his archival research are beyond question. Yet at the same time, it seems that the pride of place accorded to the metropolitan perspective shortchanges the conjunction of Caribbeanness, identity, and revolt that has long framed writing from the region. By implicitly locating this writing as the product of, or a response to, a European mindset instantiated by Hegel, Marx, Bourdieu, Foucault, and Sartre, the innovativeness and spirit of resistance of a Condé or a Césaire, or indeed an articulation of a more Caribbean-centered appropriation of metropolitan discourses remains somewhat hard to find. What is at issue, ultimately, are the ways in which Caribbean authors draw on intraregional and extraregional patterns of thought and experience to generate techniques and thematics of identity adequate to the complex challenges of Caribbean representation. And while this book effectively locates Caribbean writing within a larger, more canonical French framework, as an assessment of “the legacy of modernity in the French Caribbean” (p. xvii), the claim of transformational force instantiated by these complex entanglements of canon and colonialism might have benefited from further separation from the metropole.
In *Family and Identity in Contemporary Cuban and Puerto Rican Drama*, Camilla Stevens offers a close reading of Puerto Rican and Cuban plays from two periods: the 1950s-1960s and the 1980s-1990s. Her intent is to present an allegorical interpretation of the family as nation throughout the historical, cultural, and political processes that have affected the two islands differently. In describing the theoretical framework for the analysis of the plays chosen, she writes, “the domestic plays I analyze allegorically perform a political desire to (re)tell a national identity story. The private family story refers implicitly to another story, a public discourse on collective identity” (p. 6). The issues she takes up represent many of the themes that Puerto Rican and Cuban scholars have used in discussing their theories of identity, racial relationships, and class boundaries, as well as their subsequent role in nation-building or cultural nationalism in the absence of Nation, as is the case in Puerto Rico. The novelty of Stevens’s project lies in the importance she grants to theater in providing the meanings of the trope of the family for nation-building, including divergent critical voices in the analysis of Puerto Rican and Cuban realities.

Stevens argues that the capacity of theater for generating and preserving cultural memory holds significant potential for the study of identity in dramas: “Just as a ghost constitutes an apparition, a materialization of something unseen, staging the image of the family and the spaces it inhabits concretizes and makes present discourses that might otherwise seem abstract or distant” (pp. 216-17). The form of the book is presented creatively, framed as a theatrical piece. The first chapter, “Curtain-Raiser: A Family Affair: Theater and Nation in Cuba and Puerto Rico,” serves as an introduction to the theoretical discourses Stevens will draw on. “Act I: 1950s and 1960s” includes “Scene 1: Four Failed Puerto Rican Family Romances,” which houses the works of the theatrical production of the 1950s, and “Scene 2: Tearing Down the House: The End of an Epoch in Cuba” dealing with the breakdown of the prerevolutionary family to make way for the future. Act II is dedicated to the theater of the 1980s and 1990s with Scene 1 aptly titled, “Reimagining National
Community: Performance and Nostalgia in Recent Puerto Rican Drama,” and Scene 2 “Ties that Bind: Staging the New Family in Revolutionary Cuba.” These “scenes” suggest that theater has taken on a role as protagonist in revolutionary Cuba, while in Puerto Rico it is struggling to assert its relationship to “subjectivities” rather than to one collective imaginary (p. 120). This latter period benefits from the discussion of the role of realism and experimentalism in theater in the Cuban and the Puerto Rican context. In the concluding chapter, “Exit: From the House to the Stage: Haunted Family Scenarios in Cuban and Puerto Rican Drama,” Stevens finishes her theatrical journey, asserting that the family trope continues to repeat itself in Puerto Rican and Cuban theater because the particular circumstances of each continue to present a fertile scenario for scenes of self-determination and discussions of identity.

There is commendable work in the individual analyses of writings from the 1950s by Francisco Arrivi, René Márques, and Myrna Casas from Puerto Rico, and Abelardo Estorino, José Triana Virgilio Piñera, and Rolando Ferrer from Cuba. The 1980s-1990s selection for Cuba – work by authors such as Roberto Orihuela and Estorino – is, likewise, well chosen and the discussion of the role of theater in revolutionary society is well done. In the 1990s in Cuba, Stevens depicts the disillusionment and breakdown of the nueva familia cubana through the work of Miguel Cuartas Rodríguez and Alberto Pedro Torriente. Meanwhile, her selection of Puerto Ricans for this time period – Luis Rafael Sánchez, Myrna Casas, Roberto Ramos Perea, and Antonio García del Toro – who serve for her particular project, leaves out important voices and parallel theatrical activity that would have helped to contextualize the ongoing discussion of the family drama as the trope of the Nation.

One important omission in this book concerning Puerto Rico is Lowell Fiet, whose critical writing appears in the weekly newspaper Claridad and in many journals and reviews in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. He coincidentally also published in 2004 his rendition of Puerto Rican theater, El teatro puertorriqueño reimaginado: Notas críticas sobre la creación dramática y el performance (“Puerto Rican Theatre Re-Imagined: Critical Notes on Dramatic Creation and Performance,” Ediciones Callejón, 2004). In this study he points out that when reading certain texts about Puerto Rican theater, one often wonders where “these scholars” (meaning those writing from a distance) get their information, since sometimes they do not accurately portray what a play meant when it was performed (p. 275), nor what the reception has been or who is really being followed by the audience. This is important especially when considering the role of theater in the collective imagination. It is also a reminder that lesser-known theatrical productions need to be published and documented more aggressively in our islands, so that scholars living outside of the Caribbean may have a fuller picture of how theater is

1. A review of Fiet’s book will be published in NWIG 80 (3&4).
actually perceived and passed into collective memory.

The points of contact between the books by Fiet and Stevens deserve more dialogue, as do the issues that must be reflected upon when using theater to its maximum expressive capacities on the stage. Camilla Stevens’s single focus on drama in the ongoing discussion of identity and nation-building in the Hispanic Caribbean is most welcome. Through both its strengths as a scholarly text and its omissions, it underscores the need for studies of reception, criticism dissemination, and translation of theatrical works across the Caribbean.


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Jonathan Goldberg is one of the most distinguished critics of English Renaissance literature and culture. A founding figure of American New Historicism, his contributions embrace ground-breaking editorial work, classic literary criticism such as James I and the Politics of Literature, and the more recent Sodometries. His writings have transformed our understanding of the relations between literary creation and historical context, and brought a welcome theoretical rigor to the field. Like many of his cultural materialist counterparts in the United Kingdom, such as Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, Goldberg has become increasingly interested in how contemporary theoretical debates around issues of gender and sexuality map onto early modern representations of same-sex desire.

Tempest in the Caribbean is one further consequence of Goldberg’s attempt to read the early modern through the lens of late modern representations of race, gender, and social status. Taking as his focus Shakespeare’s The Tempest, he examines how a diverse range of twentieth-century “anti-colonial” (p. ix) texts by Aimé Césaire, Roberto Fernández Retamar, George Lamming, Michelle Cliff, and Jamaica Kincaid offer ways of challenging what he sees as the patriarchal and heterosexist assumptions that have come to define the play. The result is a slim but theoretically dense book that takes
three broad directions. The first is to critique the homophobia of Fernández Retamar’s classic essay, “Caliban,” first published in 1971, through a close reading of Lamming’s works, and in particular Water with Berries, where Goldberg senses the possibility of imagining “the generation of Caliban outside of normative modes of social/sexual reproduction” (p. 37).

In the book’s central chapter, “Caliban’s ‘Woman,’” Goldberg foregrounds two striking textual cruxes in the play—the Folio’s reference to Caliban’s mother Sycorax as “he,” and the transposition of “wife” for “wise.” He contends that such problems “suggest how complex a mapping of sex and gender will necessarily be in the volatile context of the play’s writing and rewritings” (p. 62), following the ways in which the work of Sylvia Wynter and Michelle Cliff “provide sites of possibility written across diasporic existence ... the antidote to the lethal binarisms that pit groups against each other, clinging to older paradigms of exclusive identity” (p. 105). Not surprisingly, such statements develop in the book’s short final chapter into a full-blown critique of western humanism, rationality, and education. Taking his cue from Miranda’s attack on Caliban and his “vile race” (p. 119), Goldberg uses Spivak’s Critique of Colonial Reason to launch an attack on Locke, Kant, and Hegel. Returning to Lamming, he argues like the good deconstructionist he is “that the gift of language, meant as a tool of enslavement, has instead allowed Caliban a being that was thought impossible” (p. 136) within western Enlightenment accounts of ontology. However, to ensure that the return to the canonical texts (Shakespeare, Kant, Hegel) is still seen as valid, Goldberg concludes that “old sites of denigration can serve as resources for new social imaginings, new social actors, new ways of thinking. A desirable future may be possible if we can recognize and respect alterities and can refrain from imposing false unanimity” (p. 147).

The problem with such conclusions is that they have been made over the last twenty years by historically minded critics working outwards from poststructuralist theory. Goldberg’s commendable attempt to cross disciplinary boundaries also threatens to fall between two stools. He is not sufficiently versed in postcolonial theory and Caribbean studies (praise for Spivak and condemnation of Gilroy aside) to be convincing in his close readings of particular texts, while on the other hand his rich but allusive asides into Renaissance studies will not satisfy those working within the field. There are unnecessarily fierce attacks on certain figures, including Rob Nixon, whose key work in the 1980s transformed analysis of the play’s colonial reception, and Paul Gilroy’s Against Race, “an ill-named project” according to Goldberg, which “claims (dangerously, I believe) to be against race” (p. 142). At such moments the book veers around, apparently unsure of its approach. Is it a slice of reception theory of a particular Shakespeare play, a theoretical text on queer theory and postcolonialism, or another critique of western Enlightenment thinking? Of course for Goldberg it is all of these
things. However, in less than 150 pages of prose, this is not possible. By the end of the book, it is not even clear who Goldberg is trying to address within the academy. Shakespeare scholars can find more successful accounts of the play’s reception within postcolonial contexts, while postcolonial and Caribbean students and academics can certainly find a plethora of texts addressing the patriarchal and heterosexist bias of the European literary tradition. Tempest in the Caribbean feels like Goldberg desperately in search of a subject suitable for his talents.


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There is no other English-language book as comprehensive in chronicling the history of Cuban cinema as Michael Chanan’s. Originally published as The Cuban Image in 1985, it examined Cuban cinema to 1979. Revised and republished under its new title in 2004, it includes three new chapters describing contemporary Cuban cinema through 2000.

The book charts Cuban cinema from its rocky beginnings as a small industry in the Hollywood studio vein, to later films adopting a European aesthetic, to the twenty-first century. Six chapters are devoted to demonstrating how central the development of a revolutionary cinema was within Cuban culture during 1959 and through the euphoria of the late 1960s. The ICAIC (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry) was established a mere three months after the revolutionary government’s founding and played a key role in creating, exhibiting, and distributing cinema throughout the country and the world. Chanan’s book is rich with detail and is solidly grounded in an effort to situate the production of films in a sociohistorical context. For example, he maps the narratives of classic 1960s films in the chapter “Four Films,” which examines what are arguably the most famous works of Cuban revolutionary cinema, including “the most-written about” film Lucia (1969, dir. Humberto Solás) and Memorias del subdesarrollo (“Memories of Underdevelopment,” 1968, dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea). A major strength of this work is the level of
attention given to ICAIC’s political battles, debates, and creative processes over different time periods. The production processes of various films, along with their popular reception, are also included. Chanan performed extensive archival research and conducted in-depth interviews with film critics, directors, historians, and producers. His level of access was extremely valuable in uncovering the political nuances of ICAIC’s inner workings.

What is less nuanced is the way Chanen dismisses Cuban cinema made before the revolutionary period (during the studio era of 1930-50). Citing the work of Enrique Colina and Daniel Díaz Torres from the 1970s, he dismisses prerevolutionary melodrama as the “expression of reductive one-dimensional ethics” (pp. 78-81). His critical treatment of the “old” Cuban cinema is reductive in that it labels a whole oeuvre as the product of false consciousness and fails to take into account new scholarship that has been written on the subject (e.g., by scholars such as Ana M. López and Julianne Burton-Carvajal) since the first edition of his book was published. Chanen may not agree with these newer approaches to conceptualizing melodrama, but he could have acknowledged them. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the first feature films of the 1960s, and the ways in which Italian neorealism and the French New Wave influenced the new experiments. In interviews with Chanen in 1980, Sergio Giral said that in retrospect he considered his La jaula (“The cage,” 1964) to be “too influenced by Godard,” and Humberto Solás and Oscar Valdes, who co-directed Minerva traduce el mar (“Minerva interprets the sea,” 1962), said they looked back on that film as “a naive experiment” (pp. 164-65). These anecdotes make compelling reading because these early films flesh out the evolution of Cuban cinema but are not often described in the canon of classic works.

A book on this subject could not be complete without mention of Julio García Espinosa’s treatise “For an Imperfect Cinema” (1969) which dominated the discourse on Cuban cinema throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Chanen describes the importance of this essay by linking it to a larger pan-Latin American cinema movement characterized by a gritty style and militant sense of urgency. This was a cinema that did not want to foster a glossy aesthetic and “lull the audience into passive consumption” (p. 305). It was cinema with a purpose, characterized by film director Sara Gómez as “inevitably partial ... the result of a definite attitude in the face of problems that confront us” (p. 306).

Chanen deftly recounts the major debates surrounding the role of art and the artist within a revolutionary socialist state, discusses Castro’s oft-cited 1961 speech entitled “Words to the Intellectuals,” and compares differing accounts of the series of speeches given at the National Library. The final speech in that series culminated in the famous statement that “within the Revolution, everything, outside it, nothing” (p. 140), signaling that if artists were clearly adherents of the revolutionary project, they could be critical (in dialectical fashion) of how society was developing, but that those working
outside the system should not create art to potentially undermine the revolutionary project. This debate is central to discussions of films such as T.G. Alea’s penultimate film, *Fresa y chocolate* (“Strawberry and Chocolate,” 1993) (pp. 463-74), and the biggest debate on this topic – the subsequent banning of *Alicia en el pueblo de Maravillas* (“Alice in Wondertown,” 1991, dir. Daniel Díaz Torres) – is well rendered in the final chapter.

Filmmaking in the face of Cuba’s “Special Period” is detailed in the final chapter. In addition to issues of co-production, Chanan touches on newer themes found in more recent films, such as what critic Désirée Diaz calls “‘The Ulysses Syndrome’: the trope of the journey, found in these films in a myriad of forms ... migration, departure, return, internal exile, the impossible promise” (p. 22). Discourse on Cuban nationalism has expanded to include the diasporic (read: exile) community. This invokes what Ana López calls “Greater Cuba,” that is, how the exile community is in dialogue (or lack thereof) with artists on the island.

Despite a few minor shortcomings, *Cuban Cinema* provides an indispensable aid for teaching and researching the history and cultural politics of Cuban cinema.


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How far have CARICOM (Caribbean Community) countries come and how much further do they have to go to improve the status of women and to achieve gender equality in the region? *Gender Equality* comes eight years after the fourth UN-sponsored Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. A document known as the “Platform for Action” (PFA), which details the policy recommendations developed at that conference and ratified by CARICOM countries, is the basis of this examination. *Gender Equality* continues the local conversation between activists from women’s movements...
and agencies representing governments and regions such as the CARICOM secretariat and assesses successes and uncontested problems in the 1990s.

The United Nations declared 1975-1985 the “Decade for Women,” proposed a list of policy priorities specifically for women and girls in their member states, and held three conferences designed to address women’s issues and gender inequality – Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, and Nairobi in 1985. Ten years later a follow-up conference was held in Beijing. Caribbean women became active participants and researchers on the international scene and continue to lead the political struggle at home for gender equity and the inclusion of women’s rights on individual national agendas. Distinguished Caribbean women served in the position of secretary general for two of the UN conferences: Lucille Mathurin Mair (Jamaica) in 1980 and Dame Nita Barrow (Barbados) in 1985.

Continuing this tradition of international engagement, all authors in *Gender Equality* are well-known activists/scholars/academics in the area of women’s issues and rights. Among this group are those who also prepared pre-conference documents for the CARICOM secretariat and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) for Beijing, and crafted materials for the next phase of assessments, known as the “Beijing + 5 Review” meetings. Co-editors Gemma Tang Nain and Barbara Bailey, and the authors of the rest of the essays (Linnette Vassell, Gaietry Pargass and Roberta Clarke, Andaiye, Denise Noel-DeBique, Sonja Harris, and Eudine Barriteau) function as a collective with certain themes echoing throughout this very intense text.

The essays look at specific Caribbean government responses to the needs of women. Through data analyses and in-depth discussions of political, social, and economic concerns, the authors contextualize these national affairs in terms of the fiscal constraints resulting from structural adjustment programs, the collapse of primary export markets, and the ongoing process of globalization that often eliminates the domestic share of goods and services produced. Integrated into every chapter are policy recommendations for governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and regional agencies to consider as mechanisms for transforming the quality of life for women and those who depend on them. Each chapter focuses on a particular issue or set of themes addressed in the Beijing PfA, such as political power and decision-making, violence against women, economic empowerment, health, education, and institutional advancement for women. Further, although some chapters attend to a specific Caribbean country, the general feeling is that all CARICOM nations face similar distresses. On the other hand, there are some explicitly positive outcomes, such as women’s political empowerment in Belize, that are not replicated elsewhere.

*Gender Equality* tracks the progress made by using quantitative indicators supported by qualitative research that supports and undergirds the “several nuances of gender differentiation” (p. xv). The introduction by Gemma Tang
Nain is indicative of the overall contents of the text. Linnette Vassell’s discussion of redefining power and power relationships argues that these issues cannot be considered without taking account of the context of globalization and “the effects on states, social movements and individual women and men in family and community” (p. 2). This insightful chapter is a comparative discussion regarding the barriers to women’s leadership. Here, the Belize “Women’s Agenda” is showcased as a positive example of how women have been empowered in the region.

Gaietry Pargass and Roberta Clarke examine the ways in which states and non-states respond to domestic violence. The recommendations include governments taking responsibility for the eradication of violence against women and being held accountable for failures to do so.

Andaiye, a Guyanese activist, writes about women’s poverty in the CARICOM community, linking it with power and making four critical points that have not changed – that the sexual division whereby women and girls continue to provide “caring” labor continues, that the gap between men and women is not narrowing, that the gender of the household head is not, by itself, a significant determinant of poverty, and that the new export sectors pit female labor against that of men while not increasing the access that poor women have to secure employment.

Barbara Bailey’s research shows that education has not proved to be the vehicle for Caribbean women’s economic, political, and personal empowerment. Despite overall high achievement and participation at the secondary and tertiary levels, the majority of women continue to be positioned in the lowest sectors of the capital market, earn lower wages than men, suffer higher rates of unemployment, experience greater levels of poverty, are under-represented in decision-making positions, and lack real personal autonomy (p. 136).

Ironically, Denise Noel-DeBique states, “it is with the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the Caribbean that the issue of gender began to feature more prominently in the health sector” (p. 166). She argues that maternal mortality and morbidity among young women must be considered matters of social justice, and health systems must be responsive to the rights of women to live free from violence.

Perhaps one of the most disheartening signs of the lack of progress is the chapter by Sonja Harris, who points out that reviewing institutional mechanisms requires an assessment not only of the strengths and weaknesses of existing structures, but of the mechanisms used to create a transformational process. Changing the name of a bureau does not constitute social transformation. Further, the national machineries do not seem to have the capacity to respond to new issues brought by the process of globalization, and that carries consequences for women in the region.

Eudine Barriteau concludes that “the contradictory conditions in the Caribbean mirror developments for women in other regions of the world” (p.
While there is a widespread belief that women in the Caribbean have “made it,” the essays in *Gender Equality* underscore how fragile and porous any gains have been (p. 203). Future research must target the ideologies that support the status quo. *Gender Equality* provides the analyses, interpretation, and data for the next step in gendered research in the Caribbean.


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The essays in *Dominican Migration* are concerned with the very nature of transnationalism. Each chapter reflects the usefulness of defining transnationalism either “narrowly,” i.e. reflecting “highly institutionalized activities and constant population flows between countries,” or “broadly,” demonstrating “a low level of institutionalization and sporadic physical displacement between two countries” (p. 32). Both perspectives prove valuable in the study of Dominican migrants.

The first three chapters delve into the impact of migration on Dominican political involvement. In Chapter 1, Ernesto Sagás and Sintia E. Molina outline the civil unrest and economic upheaval that followed the assassination of dictator Rafael Trujillo in 1961. The migration wave that followed rid the Dominican Republic of political opponents and provided the United States with much-needed cheap labor (p. 14). Additional surges followed in the 1980s and 1990s. Chapter 2, by Jorge Duany, begins with a richly annotated review of the discourse on “transnationalism” and explains that “each group of migrants develops a distinctive brand of transnationalism, based on its own historical legacy, cultural practices, settlement patterns, mode of incorporation into the host society, state policies of sending and receiving countries, and other factors” (p. 33). For Duany, the framework of transnationalism promotes closer examinations of “traditional discourses on statehood, nationality, citizenship, ethnicity, race, class, gender, and other master narratives in the social sciences” (p. 47). In Chapter 3, Ernesto Sagás
reminds us that Caribbean politics, beginning with the struggles of political exiles for independence and democracy, have always been transnational (p. 54). Examining the participation of Dominican transmigrants in the political system of their native country, Sagás traces their evolution from dominicanos ausentes (absentee Dominicans) to dual citizens who exercise full membership in their homeland.

A central theme of Chapters 4, 5, and 6 is the importance of secondary cities in analyses of transnational migration. José Itzigsohn’s essay on Dominicans in Providence, Rhode Island, details three ways the population maintains ties to the homeland: economic (remittances, import/export of goods), political (participation in Dominican campaigns, support of Dominican candidates in U.S. politics), and sociocultural (organizational participation, sending money for hometown projects, sports clubs). Carol Hoffman-Guzmán finds that middle-class Dominicans in South Florida are less likely to engage in “typical” transnational behavior, presenting an interesting twist on this issue. She argues however for a “localized transnationalism” to describe migrants “increasingly tied to local places and people, while still retaining strong connections with their homeland, both symbolically and through active communication and interchange, thanks to today’s advanced technology” (p. 99). These transnational migrants have not relinquished their cultural identity in the wake of prosperity, but have found ways to utilize their relative positions of privilege to make choices about cultural retention (p. 125). The recent phenomenon of Dominican migration to Spain is the subject of Chapter 6. Domingo Lilón (with Juleyka J. Lantigua) notes that this migration is distinct because it consists mostly of Dominican women with little formal education, coming from small towns in the southwestern region of the Dominican Republic. Despite low-paying rigorous domestic jobs, “the cultural, social, and even racial alienation of Dominicans in Spain promotes the maintenance and development of narrow transnational cultural practices, and a constant flow of remittances and communications with relatives back in the Dominican Republic” (p. 151).

Chapters 7 and 8 focus on women and the liberating potential of transnationalism. Karin Weyland’s essay on the transformative power of women’s labor in Washington Heights examines the experiences of Dominican women as they negotiate between cultures and struggle under the burdens of gender discrimination and exploitative capitalist systems (p. 155). Nevertheless, these women recognize and embrace their increased independence and power derived from transnational positions that allow them to support families back home (p. 158). Nancy López’s essay on second-generation Dominicans raised in New York City considers the distinct experiences of young men and women and their views on education. López argues that “changing gender roles are being fashioned and reshaped in a transnational space” (p. 178) and
that women, reflecting on the experiences of their mothers, increasingly view education as a means to sidestep burdens placed on them as females.

The final three chapters analyze Dominican transnational experiences through literary criticism and ethnomusicology. Janira Bonilla tackles issues of assimilation and identity formation represented in Julia Alvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* and Junot Díaz’s *Drown*. Both texts recount the transmigrant’s disillusionment with life in America as the authors “question the construction of race, class, and gender both on the island and in the United States” (p. 201). Díaz looks unflinchingly at the daily struggles of economic exiles, while Alvarez’s “girls” bemoan the fact that their upper-class origins and European lineage have little value in their new home. In her essay, Sintia E. Molina argues that Dominican and Dominican-American writers are “in the process of constructing their historical memory and permanently inscribing it in New York City through literature” (p. 241). These works express the often harsh realities of life in America as perceived and experienced by their authors. In Chapter 11, Thomas van Buren and Leonardo Iván Domínguez provide a rich overview of Dominican musical life in New York City from the 1920s onward and explain the significance of popular religion, folklore, and contemporary musical fusions as transnational expressions. These chapters contribute to the “multidisciplinarity” of this volume by deviating from the sociological perspectives of earlier essays.

*Dominican Migration* poses salient questions about how and why Dominicans migrate while examining the multiple impacts these population flows have on sending and receiving societies. As a multidisciplinary study, it pushes the discourse of transnationalism beyond socioeconomic analysis. Ultimately, this book strengthens transnationalism as a conceptual framework through which we can better understand Dominican diasporic experiences and those of transmigrant communities at large.

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News is not only transmitted through choice of topic. The layout, use of graphics, type and length of articles, and ordering of information within the article, as well as the particular sources cited, all communicate significant information to the reader. However, when specific linguistic practices or superstructures of news-making are being analyzed, it is important to note the twin processes of selection and combination that precede writing. Before a word hits the page, journalists and editors not only select what readers get to read, but also by combining the information that they do include in a certain manner, they influence how it is to be interpreted. Therefore, what gets left out of the story, that is, information considered either irrelevant to the narrative or not important enough to print, may also provide interesting insights into how the story is being told or “constructed” by a news outlet (Henry & Tator 2002).

When reporters and columnists want to favor a particular point of view in an article or news story, they can do so by quoting a source that reflects this viewpoint while legitimately claiming that they are merely reporting a factual account of what has been said. The use of official police or other authoritative sources rather than leaders and members of the targeted community as legitimate is a common practice used to marginalize these communities. Along with pointing out the functions of sources and quotations in news analysis, it is important to identify exactly who it is that is acting as the source of information in the news.

In Images of West Indian Immigrants in Mass Media, Christine Du Bois examines the role of the media in constructing the “bad boy” image of West Indian immigrants living in the Chesapeake Bay region during the 1980s and 1990s. She also examines the preoccupation that West Indians have with “reputation” and “respectability” and explores how this influences the communities’ response to certain negative portrayals of West Indians in the mass media. By analyzing newspaper, magazine, television, and cinematic treatments of Afro-Caribbean peoples, Du Bois is able to show how the media consistently finds what it is looking for, rather than uncovering what is there to be understood about West Indian people.
The book is divided into seven well-written and researched chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 outline the research methods and examine the preoccupation that West Indians have with “respectability.” Chapter 3 highlights the stereotypes that are reproduced consistently in the stories that are covered in the news. Chapter 4 sketches some of the ways Chesapeake area advertisements have portrayed West Indians. Chapter 5 analyzes West Indian characters in television entertainment with particular emphasis on Hollywood films. Chapter 6 explores the variety of efforts that Chesapeake area West Indians have made to improve their ethnic reputations. Finally, Chapter 7 examines the dilemmas of reputation for West Indians.

Du Bois conducted the research for this book between 1992 and 1994 among immigrants from the Anglophone Caribbean, including Guyana, who lived in the Chesapeake Bay region. Using content analysis, participant observation, and in-depth interviews, she examines the way in which a small segment of violent criminals who come from the Caribbean are portrayed as if they represented the entire community. Her sample included fifty-four people of West Indian origin, mostly middle- and lower-middle-class and evenly divided along gender lines. Ten countries were represented, though a majority of the interviewees were from Trinidad and Jamaica. Du Bois also interviewed non-West Indians, including several law enforcement officers, social activists, teachers, reporters, employers of West Indians, and workers in the justice system. She supplemented her research by engaging in a wide variety of social activities, including a trip “home” to Jamaica with some informants.

Du Bois puts forth six reasons for a media bias in the United States against Jamaicans. She notes that (a) the intense market competition pushes some reporters and news editors towards sensationalism; (b) there is a prejudice in the production of images which stretches back to the negative stereotypes that are associated with Blackness; (c) pack journalism encourages reporters to cover a story in a certain way; (d) journalists and law enforcement officers have become partners in the production of images of the criminal; (e) reporters tend to appreciate sources who can do all the summarizing for them about a story; and (f) West Indian criminals strive to enhance their reputations by engaging in activities that leave no question about their hypermasculinity which, ironically, plays into stereotypes that cast them as “uncivilized” thugs.

Critical discourse analysis of language and text as presented in this book offers readers a good tool to deconstruct ideologies of the mass media and other elite groups, and to help identify and define social, economic, and historical power relations between dominant and subordinate groups. The book is particularly important at this juncture because it takes an ethnographic and quasi-quantitative research approach to the intersection of several broad trends of the last century: global immigration, the spread of the mass media, and the stubborn vicious problems of ethnic and ideological hatreds.

This highly readable book makes an important contribution to Caribbean
and migration studies, particularly with respect to the image of the “outsider” in North America. It nicely documents the experiences of many Caribbean people living in the transnational diaspora and would be appropriate for undergraduate or graduate courses on Caribbean or migration studies, race and ethnic relations, or critical mass media. Undergraduate students in particular will find Du Bois’s writing style accessible and easy to replicate using resources like Lexis-Nexis, a database freely available in virtually every university library. The book will be an eye-opener for any undergraduate in the United States who likes to believe that the ugliness of systemic and institutional discrimination is something that happens only in other parts of the world.

With increasing migrations around the world, the proliferation of the global mass media sources, and growing fear of “dark” migrants among “host” populations, minority populations worldwide will continue to be vulnerable to media misrepresentations of them. The forms the problems take will depend on who owns, creates, and regulates media products, which differ from country to country, as well as on the ways media consumers use, interpret, and react to media products, which differs among cultures. This makes Du Bois’s new book a valuable addition to the study of assimilation and acculturation in the international diaspora.

REFERENCE


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This book is a welcome addition to the literature on voter turnout, particularly in Puerto Rico where empirical studies have been few and far between. It
addresses the question of why, given the similarities between formal political institutions in the United States and Puerto Rico, elections in Puerto Rico tend to have a much higher voter turnout. This question is interesting given that many of the formal institutions governing elections in Puerto Rico would seem to point to lower levels of turnout. In addition, as Cámara Fuertes points out, Puerto Rico also has many of the demographic characteristics that have traditionally correlated with low voter turnout in the United States: a high percentage of young voters, low levels of education, and low income levels.

The book begins by looking at Puerto Rican voting behavior from a comparative perspective. Although Puerto Rico is initially compared with European and Latin American countries, the main reference for comparison throughout the book is the United States. This strategy is useful and makes for a quasi-experimental research design that Cámara Fuertes uses quite effectively to pinpoint the variables with the most explanatory power in the Puerto Rican case. He argues that we need to look at three factors: mobilization, political parties, and culture.

In Puerto Rico, unlike the United States, political parties direct their mobilization efforts toward all sectors of the population, regardless of socio-economic class and age. And while most political party mobilization in the United States is targeted toward the older population, the opposite is true in Puerto Rico. The implication of this is obvious. In both cases, the young have lower participation rates than older citizens. However, in Puerto Rico the difference is much smaller than in the United States. Studies have shown that one of the main factors to influence the likelihood of voting is contact, that is, those who are personally contacted have much higher turnout rates than those who are not. Indeed, one possible explanation that has been advanced in the literature for the low turnout rates of Hispanics is the fact that political parties and other politically active groups tend to contact them considerably less than they do White, middle-class voters. Cámara Fuertes reports that while 32 percent of those sampled in Puerto Rico reported being contacted by political parties, only 24 percent of those in the United States did.

Clearly, Puerto Rican political parties are more effective at mobilizing voters than U.S. parties are. Cámara Fuertes traces the reason for this to the differing ideologies of the two party systems. While American political parties identify themselves along a left-right continuum, those in Puerto Rico are very similar in their orientations, having both accepted a similar welfare-state ideology which appeals mainly to the lower and middle classes (p. 103). Because this ideology aims at reducing economic inequalities and, therefore, threatens the wealth of the upper class, political parties have necessarily had to mobilize the lower classes. As Cámara Fuertes notes, the distribution of government funds is especially important to those with lower incomes and, thus, “through the distribution of such help they are mobilized into the political process” (p. 107).
The book’s argument regarding the third variable, culture, is somewhat less convincing. Cámara Fuertes writes that “the Island’s political culture is more alive and more conducive to electoral mobilization, while in the United States it appears to be more sober” (p. 115). He does not present much evidence to support this view, however, except for a few anecdotes from campaign workers. In addition, this explanation suffers from the weakness that besets many cultural explanations: is the “culture of the vote” the cause or the effect of high voter turnout? In other words, the high propensity to vote might not be due to culture at all but rather to factors such as the need for political parties to mobilize all sectors of the population. In addition, if high voter turnout is a cultural characteristic of Puerto Ricans, would they not take this with them when they migrate to the U.S. mainland? However, what we find is that compared to Cuban and Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans living in the United States have much lower voter turnout rates, even though they do not face the registration barriers that other groups have to cope with, such as proof of citizenship.

The implications of this study go beyond the particular case of Puerto Rico. From the findings it is evident that although institutions and the voters’ demographic characteristics may influence voter turnout, other factors are more important. The evidence from Puerto Rico suggests quite convincingly that the effects of demographic variables traditionally associated with lower voter turnout (lower age and socioeconomic class) can be overcome by increasing the efforts of political parties to mobilize these sectors of the population. It also suggests that the increased participation of lower-income voters encourages political parties to continue to advocate redistribution policies.

This book represents a valuable contribution to the study of voter turnout in general and will encourage an interesting debate on the subject. Because the argument is presented in a clear and concise manner, it should appeal to those who want to use it in undergraduate as well as graduate courses.

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The 1807 statute abolishing the transatlantic slave trade reflected, perhaps for the first time in parliamentary history, the concerns of a general public committed to an ethic of disinterested benevolence. Philip Gould’s study of early antislavery literature recovers the sentiment that fueled the early abolitionists’ passion. Like several earlier studies of antislavery (most importantly those of David Brion Davis), Barbaric Traffic confronts the commercial and capitalistic interests inherent in the abolitionist crusade. Unlike earlier slave trade scholars, however, Gould illuminates the sentimental aspects of those interests. He describes how early abolitionists pre-empted their opponents’ accusations that antislavery was anticommunal by articulating how commerce could both reverse and advance human progress. He documents how antislavery writers judged commerce according to the cultural categories of civility. This enabled abolitionists to reconcile disapproval for slave trading with support for other commercial activities by stressing the primitive savagery of the slave trade to disassociate it from other civilizing forms of commerce. Gould develops this theme by showing how the brutal excesses of the trade in Africans provided evidence, for antislavery writers, of the consequences of unregulated capitalism. In this way, he outlines the protean meaning of free trade in the eighteenth century because the slave trade provided an example of a commerce that could not be free until it was regulated. According to Gould then, abolitionism began as a jeremiad against unregulated commerce.

Barbaric Traffic also describes some of the cultural determinants of racial and national identities in the Atlantic world at the turn of the nineteenth century. Gould’s expert analysis of well- and lesser-known antislavery poems (including those by Thomas Morris, Bryan Edwards, Ann Yearsley, James Montgomery, William Roscoe, and Hannah More) emphasizes the ideological elasticity of race and its relationship to an emerging culture of manners. Later in the book, Gould points to the captivity narratives of Americans held in North Africa during the same period to discuss some of the ethnic determinants of the national imaginings of the new United States. He also examines the early autobiographical literature of the Black Atlantic to highlight the inadequacy of
racial categories for this period. The book’s final chapter compares antislavery literature with contemporaneous discussions of disease to provide another example of the eighteenth-century North Atlantic mind trying to support a liberal capitalist ideology while appreciating the market’s pernicious potential.

As an assessment of the cultural topoi of early antislavery, Barbaric Traffic focuses less than other studies of abolitionism on the larger questions surrounding the causes of the ending of the transatlantic slave trade. This leads to some misplaced emphases within the narrative. For example, Gould overstates the secularizing impact of the “commercial jeremiad” on the evolution of abolitionist thought and undervalues the critical part played by religious revivalism in the mid-eighteenth century as a model for personal decision and commitment. As a challenging work of cultural and literary criticism, his book says far more about the late-eighteenth-century Anglophone Atlantic world of letters than it does about the slave trade, and he should be commended for his geographical and conceptual breadth. While his discussion brings fresh interpretations to a vast array of antislavery literature (including work by Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Clarkson, Joseph Priestly, John Newton, Noah Webster, Olaudah Equiano, and Malachy Postlethwayt), his discussion seems, in its presentation, overly subservient to the texts. He often quotes heavily, fails to order the extracts according to his argument, and includes long excerpts that repeat parts of the thesis introduced in previous chapters. As a result, Barbaric Traffic sometimes reads too much like an anthology of early antislavery literature. Gould also assumes rather too much about his readers by habitually surrounding contentious terms (such as justice, liberty, freedom, and many others) with quotation marks as a substitute for fully explaining their charged meaning. Gould records his texts’ historical context carefully enough for his work to be genuinely interdisciplinary. It is ironic, however, that he employs such a wide variety of the sophisticated tools of literary criticism on texts with far more historical significance than literary value. As a result, Barbaric Traffic will disappoint and sometimes frustrate historians poorly versed in, or resistant to, cultural studies.

Nevertheless, Gould’s contention that early antislavery writers attributed the brutality of the slave trade to its lack of regulation suggests the need for a re-examination of the early history of the British slave trade and the reasons why it developed with comparatively little state management from 1712. Unlike other accounts of early antislavery, Gould’s exposition outlines far more than the rhetorical strategies of the authors. Barbaric Traffic adds to our understanding of late-eighteenth-century attitudes to commerce, civility, and race. Because historians have known for some time that antislavery thought legitimized emerging liberal capitalism (a literature which this book summarizes beautifully), the principal value of Gould’s account lies in the nuanced appreciation he brings to the role of race and commerce in discussions of the slave trade. He argues convincingly that the mutually constitu-
tive relations of sentiment and capitalism forged racial and cultural boundar-
ies. In the process, he reinvigorates early antislavery literature as a subject
for discussion, not as a route to understanding the causative role it played in
ending slavery but rather as a crucible in which nineteenth-century attitudes
to race, manners, and commerce and their interrelationships were cast. This
contribution will delight historians and literary critics alike.

*Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution.* LAURENT
US$ 29.95)

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In *Avengers of the New World*, Laurent Dubois has crafted a nuanced yet
highly readable narrative of the Haitian revolution. Although largely a syn-
thesis of the secondary literature written in the last twenty years, the book
is strongly influenced by the classic work of Beaubrun Ardouin, Gabriel
Debien, and C.L.R. James. Published in the bicentennial year of Haiti’s inde-
dependence from France, *Avengers* locates the Haitian revolution as a seminal
moment in the “Age of Revolutions” as well as in world history. The Haitian
Revolution – the only successful slave revolt in the world – not only chal-
lenged the stability and logic of slave societies throughout the Americas,
but also revealed and then expanded the limits of republican universalism.
For, as Dubois notes, “if we live in a world in which democracy is meant to
exclude no one, it is in no small part because of the actions of those slaves in
Saint-Domingue who insisted that human rights were theirs too” (p. 3).

The chapters are arranged chronologically, the first three addressing pre-
revolutionary colonial tensions. Chapter 1 treats the colony’s early history,
including European settlement, the extermination of the indigenous Tainos,
the rapid intensification of the slave plantation system, and the evolution of
White Creole animosity toward distant metropolitan authorities. Chapter 2
focuses on Saint Domingue’s enslaved population: their steadily increasing
levels of importation; distinctions that Whites made between slaves of dif-
f erent African origins and locally born slaves; slaves’ tasks on plantations;
and forms of slave resistance. Chapter 3 traces the growth of racist discourse and practice in the colony throughout the eighteenth century. With the onset of the French Revolution, free men of color in the colony struggled – sometimes violently – with colonial Whites over who deserved citizenship. Many Whites feared that, after enfranchising some free men of color in 1791, the National Assembly would abolish slavery altogether.

As Dubois demonstrates, however, slaves in the north did not wait for such a decree. The fourth chapter details the August 1791 slave revolt, examining the slaves’ organization, motivations, and tactics. Rebels consecrated the revolt beforehand by perhaps two Vodou ceremonies, and once the revolt began, Kongoese-born veterans of civil wars brought valuable fighting experience. They often claimed allegiance to the king of France as their protector while invoking the language of republicanism. The revolution was indeed a “uniquely transcultural movement” (p. 5).

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 take up the early years of the revolution, from the spread of revolt in the north in 1791 to the French Republic’s emancipation declaration in 1794. As the insurgency spread, and as the French Revolution grew more radical, French commissioners offered freedom and citizenship to slaves who would join the French forces in fighting the Republic’s new enemies, Spain and England. Still, one rebel leader, Toussaint Louverture, appears to have waited to join the French until the National Convention formally abolished slavery in February 1794.

Chapters 8-11 detail Louverture’s subsequent rise to power from a French general to the colony’s self-proclaimed “Governor for Life.” As Dubois explains, Louverture balanced the need to rebuild the plantation system with a desire to preserve freedom, finally militarizing plantation labor and enshrining widely resented labor obligations in a new constitution for the colony. Sadly, while “committed to defending liberty at all costs, Louverture had turned himself into a dictator” (p. 250).

Finally, Chapters 12 and 13 relate Napoleon’s failed attempt to regain control over the colony and reimpose slavery. After Louverture’s capture, insurgent armies led by Dessalines rallied against Napoleon’s troops in what they rightly understood as a war of independence to preserve freedom. Once victorious, Dessalines and his officers chose to rename the former colony “Haiti,” a name attributed by the Tainos. Dubois argues that the new name marked more than a break from the past. Rather, Dessalines’s use of this and other indigenous imagery indicated the monumental significance of the revolution as an event that “avenged” the new world: “Haiti was to be the negation not only of French colonialism, but of the whole history of European empire in the Americas” (p. 299).

Though he focuses on the most famous revolutionary figures, Dubois also highlights some lesser-known individuals of the period. The voices and stories of these people are peppered throughout the book, forming compel-
ling threads that enhance the larger political and military narrative and bring to life the everyday struggles of colonial inhabitants. Thus, in Chapter 2, we learn about the complex relationships among slaves, hired plantation managers, and plantation owners from letters written by the enslaved slave driver Philipeau. In letters to his absentee master, Philipeau boldly yet unsuccessfully complained about the manager’s mistreatment of slaves and poor business decisions. Madame de Mauger, Philipeau’s owner, dismissed his concerns (pp. 36-39). However, in Chapter 6 we learn that slaves on Mauger’s multiple plantations, emboldened by the spreading revolt, ousted and replaced their abusive managers (pp. 132-34). As this anecdote illustrates, the revolution had altered the balance of power, allowing slaves to respond collectively to their mistreatment by taking control of the plantations. Still, the Mauger slaves continued to work the land; like slaves elsewhere in the colony, rather than destroy the plantations, “they began to make them their own” (p. 134). By 1802, Philipeau had left the plantation with his family to work his own land, which he had purchased sometime after emancipation (pp. 278-79).

Dubois’s inclusion of stories like Philipeau’s both humanizes the account and vividly reminds readers of the varied forms of resistance undertaken by slaves, some of whom only gradually dared to challenge the slave system. 

_Avengers of the New World_ is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the revolutionary Atlantic World. Readers new to the Haitian Revolution will especially benefit from Dubois’s lucid explanation of an enormously complex period.


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Sibylle Fischer’s _Modernity Disavowed_ adds to a recent and long overdue trend that places Saint-Domingue at the center of the Age of Atlantic Revolutions. It helps to correct the denigrating views of the Haitian Revolution that have characterized narratives – at least outside of Haiti – for so many years. But
this work stands out because of the author’s approach: in a field dominated by historians, Fischer turns to literary criticism. Consequently, she brings novel theoretical and methodological tools to bear on interpretations of this seminal event and its aftermath, and the outcome is a provocative study that calls into question fundamental assumptions about this period.

Fischer contends that the Haitian Revolution is crucial for understanding the limitations of key concepts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, namely modernity and its political manifestation, the nation-state. She traces how, in reaction to the foundation of the first free and racially equal republic, radical antislavery ideology was deliberately excised from visions of what constituted a modern nation. Whereas the Haitian Revolution politicized the issue of racial subordination, other countries and colonies – in Europe and the Americas – consigned slavery to the realm of moral and social action. In this way, the radicalism of Haiti was defused, and its ideals were erased from “canonical” modernity (p. 33). The act had repercussions throughout the Atlantic world, as this strain of modernity concealed the promise of radical antislavery ideology for other nations and colonies.

The process of de-politicizing Haiti is the “disavowal” of modernity, and the term works in two senses in Fischer’s analysis. In the first, “disavowal” means simply denial, while the second has psychoanalytic specificity, referring to the refusal to acknowledge something traumatic. Although Fischer admits that not every case requires the psychoanalytic interpretation of “disavowal,” she employs the notion of the Haitian Revolution as trauma – not to locate its victims (which for her seems an analytical dead end), but rather to grasp the politics behind coping with the Revolution’s shocking implications. She argues that “disavowal” is a tactic used in certain circumstances, and she seeks to uncover the who, what, and why of each instance when it comes into play.

In her inquiry Fischer focuses on three geographical sites: Cuba, Santo Domingo/the Dominican Republic, and finally Haiti itself. The broad scope reflects the transnational character of radical antislavery or, as she puts it, the fact that “heterogeneity is a congenital condition of modernity, and that the alleged purity of European modernity is an a posteriori theorization or perhaps even part of a strategy that aims to establish European primacy” (p. 22). So in order to discover what was sacrificed to the Eurocentric version of modernity, Fischer must contest its standards at every opportunity.

This impulse applies to sources and subjects as well. Finding moments of disavowal, given the nature of the archives, is no easy task, and Fischer draws on a variety of evidence, ranging from the traditional works of her discipline, such as poems, novels, and plays, to more unusual texts, including trial records, constitutions, songs, and wall paintings. Through close readings of these sources, she pinpoints the occasions when radical antislavery surfaced (albeit obliquely) and was rebuffed. Among elites in Cuba and Santo Domingo/the Dominican Republic, Haiti represented what had to be shunned.
in these colonies’ bids for nationhood. The results were Creole nationalisms that adopted metropolitan criteria more often than those of their nearby Caribbean neighbor. As Fischer shows, even Haiti struggled with radical antislavery as it tried to put its principles into practice. The transition was plagued by powers hostile to the Haitian experiment, yet internal pressures also pushed Haiti to shy away from the transnational aspect of antislavery. In fact, Haiti’s leaders could not escape the nation-state model when they created their government.

With these examples Fischer wants to challenge the notion that the form and content of modernity – as codified in the early nineteenth century and persisting through the twentieth – has the capacity to resolve the problems (for instance, racial inequality) that still plague us today. This is a powerful message that deserves to be heard and discussed. However, at times, her prose obfuscates the point rather than elucidates it. The work assumes that readers know a great deal about Haiti, its revolution, and the era generally, and this supposition is perhaps best reflected in the organization of the book. Although the Haitian texts come chronologically first, sometimes several decades before those from Cuba and Santo Domingo/the Dominican Republic, they are considered in the book’s final section. Fischer states somewhat opaquey that the sequence “was a matter neither of choice nor of coincidence” and contends that the “customary procedure” of following a more structural narrative would compromise her argument (p. 273). But ultimately, the rarefied organization makes it difficult for the average, informed reader to follow her line of reasoning. As a result, she creates the potential for promulgating the very silences she tries to reveal. Modernity Disavowed, even as it seeks to bridge gaps among academic fields and audiences, could end up speaking only to specialists and reinforcing the insularity of the ivory tower and the atomization of its disciplines – which, one could argue, are products of the modernity that Fischer wants to overturn.
The title of this book provokes immediate head-scratching. How can so vast a theme, stretching over such a huge chronology (from early exploration to modern postcolonial days), and ebbing back and forth through such massive political change, be brought together into a meaningful whole? Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this volume is that the editors manage to pull it off.

The original five volumes of the new Oxford series attracted some strong publicity, and some hostile reviews. Given the vast subject matter, and given the large number of historians involved, it was bound to be uneven. And, because the focus was the British Empire, some critics came well-armed with an array of anti-imperial criticisms. Today, seven years after the first volume was published, it seems hard to see what all the fuss was about. The series has settled down to become a standard set of essays which offer range, originality, and in places provocative rethinking of major historical issues. I regularly use three of the five volumes, and never come away from them less than satisfied. I had my own initial doubts: given the remarkable outpouring of scholarship on all fronts, do we, today, need reference books in the old mold? But my doubts have been removed because this enterprise is not in the old mold.

It was also clear that the bountiful material in the five volumes could be presented in any number of ways, and that some of the earlier essays pointed toward bigger themes which could not be handled in the initial format. The fact that the early volumes have spawned further, intellectually compelling volumes is a sign of the success of the original enterprise. Of the thirteen essays here, five appeared in the original volumes, though they have been revised. But this book, and the original volumes they emerged from, also reflect a transformation in the publisher. The dowdy old spinster that once was the O.U.P. has clearly decided to smarten up her appearance and catch the eye. In this splendid volume she does more than that. The Black Experience is a volume which will be of primary importance for a wide range of historians, and not simply those interested in the historical experience of people of African descent. This is a volume that speaks to some of the major historical forces of the past three centuries. Inevitably, given the subject, its range is vast and the essays might not have
cohered easily. But in the lead editor, Philip Morgan, the publisher found a historian whose intellectual grasp and clear editorial steer is able to provide the critical intellectual and historical foundations to the whole. The editors’ introduction is a model of clarity and precision, making sense of the mass of detail that follows and arguing for the coherence of the collection. It was clearly not an easy task, but they have carried it off with persuasive aplomb.

On the whole, the subjects on offer speak for themselves – slavery, free labor, the Caribbean, cultural impacts between Africans and outsiders. Others are less obvious and sometimes more interesting for that. Frederick Cooper’s exploration of African workers in the “imperial design” is a powerful and revealing essay of great sweep and thoughtfulness. Appiah’s chapter, which is hard to place, is at once less substantial and more thought-provoking than most others in the volume. It is a curiosity of the collection that the essays that seem less empirical, more theoretical, and in some cases speculative belong to more recent years. Scholarship on the twentieth century, oddly, relies less on detailed empirical research than does scholarship on the earlier periods. Yet this also raises another great attraction of the collection. The essays vary greatly in their very nature, from the demographic to the cultural, from the literary to the economic. This is surely how it should be when trying to create a rounded study of the complex and changing relationships between Africa and the British, between empire and the postcolonial world.

Not everyone will be happy with what they find here – or with what they fail to find here. Yet it is hard to see how, given the constraints of space and authors’ interests, a better volume could have emerged. Each chapter has something new to say on important issues, and though they may be uneven, one from another, they manage to cohere into an important and intellectually satisfying whole. Morgan and Hawkins have managed a demanding task with great editorial skill. The end result is an important volume which embraces the best of historical originality and intellectual vigor.
This book is a historical account of the odyssey of Jamaican men who enlisted for military service in British regiments during World War I. Though largely historical in its approach, it provides useful sociological insights into the nature of racism and discrimination experienced by these men. It also explores the colonial efforts to undermine a sense of Black manhood and to devalue military valor, which has long served to affirm certain aspects of masculinity. In addition, it assesses the angst associated with the above challenges and tracks how such frustrations were managed.

The book opens with an account of a wage dispute that led to rioting at Frome’s sugar estate in 1938. Smith immediately connects this incident to the involvement of a member of the British West Indies Regiment, St. William Grant. The point here was to ascertain how the experiences of men such as Grant radicalized them, how they handled their discontent throughout the Empire and how such frustrations heightened nationalist sentiments. In spite of the reservations of the Colonial and War Offices regarding the recruitment of Black soldiers, it was the allegiance of these Jamaican volunteers to the notion of Empire that eventually led to the establishment of the British West Indies Regiment (BWIR) in 1915. Death and sacrifice in defense of the Crown and Empire pervaded the military and masculine imaginary of these colonial subjects.

In a very problematic formulation Smith argues that this affinity to values and ideals of Empire might have served to mitigate the quotidian experiences of racism and discrimination experienced by these volunteers (p. 40). Black soldiers were discriminated against in terms of housing, promotion, medical treatment, and wages. It would have been more fruitful if Smith, rather than accepting this position at face value, had interrogated some of its underlying causes. Perhaps then he might have better appreciated how such blind loyalty reflected the contradictions associated with a thorough internalization of global White supremacy. Smith could have provided more expatiation of the colonized mind here. Such an exposition becomes more critical in light of his reference to the resolution of the declaration of fealty to King and Empire by Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (p. 43).
According to Smith, “Many white military men believed black soldiers lacked sufficient self-discipline and rationality to be an effective force on the modern battlefield” (p. 61). Added to this attitude of contempt was the tendency to infantilize Black soldiers. In the end, Black Jamaican men were given the limited options of volunteering and being subjected to official obstruction and discrimination, or being regarded as cowardly and less worthy to be called men (p. 74). These volunteers were often deployed as labor battalions. Despite these challenges, the BWIR became an important part of the war effort on the Western Front and later in Italy, in the process eliciting the pride and admiration of Jamaicans who envisioned themselves as making their mark globally. Indeed, when these BWIR soldiers were deployed on the front line “they performed as well as other units in the British army” (p. 89).

Though Smith is not always maximally attentive to the complexity of male subjectivity in the text, he reserves his best insights in this regard for Chapter 5, “‘Their Splendid Physical Proportions’: The Black Soldier in the White Imagination.” He notes for instance that Blackness signified unrestrained expressions of sexuality and emotions, while Whiteness represented emotional and sexual repression, qualities presumably more appropriate to warfare and military discipline (p. 101). Upon the arrival of the West Indian contingents, attention soon focused on their physical form, which tended to objectify them. Not surprisingly, there were expressions of concern about the sexual desires of Black men for White women, which were expressed in terms of threats to imperial order and calls for segregation of the races to deal with unrestrained Black sexuality and what was described as the “Black peril,” that is, the weakness of Black men for White women (p. 114). In this regard, White women were chastised for “ignoring the boundaries of Empire” (p. 114). In this context of hostility, volunteers were at times detained in France after being falsely diagnosed as lunatics.

In addition to their experiences, these BWIR soldiers were politicized by the discourse of pan-Africanism articulated by Claude McKay and later more powerfully by Marcus Garvey. They remained convinced that their military service deserved more than a “return to irregular employment” (p. 152). Finally, Smith notes that for veterans who remained in Jamaica, “land acquisition, a symbol of black independence since slavery, became the central demand” (p. 154).

*Jamaican Volunteers in the First World War* is a useful contribution to the literature on Caribbean men who volunteered to serve in the British regiments and who experienced humiliating racism. Though Smith’s work deals exclusively with the travails of Jamaican men, he does not fully engage, conceptually, the phenomenon of masculinity. There is an undertheorization of gender, and more specifically of masculinity, in this book. In addition, the relationship between military service and the counterdiscourse on decolonization in Jamaica remains largely underdeveloped. These points notwithstanding, Smith’s work is a compact and useful contribution to a subject that has long been neglected in the academic literature of the Caribbean.

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This outstanding book by Muriel McAvoy recounts the business dealings of Manuel Rionda, one of the most significant entrepreneurs in the Cuban sugar industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is based principally on her exhaustive study of the personal papers and business records of Manuel Rionda, on deposit at the University of Florida library in Gainesville. The collection, donated by the descendants of Higinio Fanjul (Rionda’s nephew), is an extremely rich source of materials for historians with an interest in the sugar industry and Cuba.

Rionda, born in Spain in 1854, followed his brothers to Cuba, but ended up spending most of his time on Wall Street. He founded Czarnikow-Rionda, the leading New York sugar brokerage of the early twentieth century, which marketed the output of many Cuban sugar mills to refiners in the United States and around the world. His brothers died relatively young, and Manuel became the senior member of an extended family, and deeply concerned with placing his nephews in prominent positions in the sugar industry in New York and Cuba. With family members, he built sugar mills and organized the Cuban Trading Company in Havana, which did a sizeable import business.

A striking aspect of the family history, which McAvoy skillfully portrays, is its transnational character. In many ways the family and its enterprises provided bridges between capitalists in the United States and Cuba – as sugar brokers, as suppliers of machinery and equipment, and particularly before 1910 by financing the sugar crop of their mill-owner clients. As the scale of sugar production expanded, the corporate form spread to more Cuban mills, and foreign banks became increasingly important participants in Cuba’s sugar industry. Through Rionda’s story, McAvoy demonstrates the opportunities and difficulties that this development meant for Cuban sugar-mill owners. The bankers found useful partners in Rionda and his clan because of their industry, expertise, and political connections in Cuba. Rionda, in turn, was able to realize his dream through the foundation of a “mega” sugar company in 1915, the Cuba Cane Sugar Corporation, which owned over ten mills and accounted for a sizeable portion of the island’s production. Rionda
was the first president of Cuba Cane, and remained a significant stockholder even after resigning the office. Readers are treated to Rionda’s version of the boardroom intrigue and corporate infighting surrounding Cuba Cane.

As much anguish as the bankers might have caused him, it probably paled in comparison with the actions of the Cuban and U.S. governments. Rionda played a prominent role in Cuban-U.S. sugar relations during World War I and its immediate aftermath, culminating in the collapse of 1921. Then, from 1926 to 1928 the Cuban government restricted production and allocated quotas to individual sugar mills, in the hope that by restricting output Cuba would help to support the price of sugar. This policy was continued under the International Sugar Agreement of 1931. The U.S. adoption of a higher sugar tariff in 1930, followed by the Jones-Costigan sugar quota system in 1934, were regulatory measures with momentous consequences for Rionda’s business and the Cuban economy more broadly. Through the correspondence of Rionda, McAvoy is able to illustrate the intersection between business and politics in both countries.

The depression put Rionda’s businesses through the proverbial wringer. He and his clan emerged prosperous, although not in the dominant position they had held earlier. Manuel Rionda breathed the rare air of high politics and high society in New York and Havana. McAvoy’s excellent work provides a fascinating portrait of a dynamic entrepreneur whose experiences illuminate the evolving international sugar industry and Cuban-U.S. economic relations before the Revolution.


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That Cuba should have become a preferred tourist destination of the early twenty-first century is not, I believe, because it’s the largest of the Caribbean islands, nor because of the exhuberance of its nature, or its genuinely hospitable people, lethal cocktails, famous cigars, its food, or its eclectic architecture. The dilemmas facing Cuba and the debates, both domestic and international, imbued with a boldness of contemporary thinking, have awakened in
people of different cultures and all ages a romanticism imbued with nostalgia for the known and unknown. Stereotypically, this was the musical phenomenon of Buena Vista Social Club, which served to heighten the island’s attraction, its human and musical mix. Few today would doubt that Cuba’s music and dance have played a vital part, and, as a book on the subject, *Cuba and Its Music: From the First Drums to the Mambo* is vital too.

*Cuba and Its Music* is an ambitious project whose repercussions in a different genre might be on a par with those of Buena Vista. Grounded in frequent trips to the island and an extensive bibliography, this book by Ned Sublette is a first for an English-reading public: a didactic and accessible steer through part of Cuba’s turbulent history and its music, whose parameters embrace cultural anthropology, sociology, politics, and history, as well as musicology and music.

Not that long ago I met up with an old friend, Rembert Egües, a Cuban pianist and composer living in Paris, son of Richard Egües, the famous flute player, composer, arranger, and founder of the memorable Aragón Orchestra. I said I was reading a book that was like a history of Cuban music written for non-Cuban readers. Rembert was at the time showing me some of his compositions and, not familiar with the book, his rejoinder was that the history of Cuban music was yet to be written. He challenged me to answer how many knew about the work of “Peruchín,” one of the greatest Cuban pianists of all time. What Rembert was trying to say was that justice hadn’t been done to Pedro “Peruchín” Justiz – whom, not by chance, Sublette mentions several times in his book.

While not purporting to be *the* book on the history of Cuban music, this is, at the very least, the most serious in its approach. Ned Sublette, himself musicologist and musician, has delved deep and unearthed the great Cuban musicians forgotten by most Cubans as well as non-Cubans – or those on the verge of being forgotten, like “Peruchín.”

The torrent of chronological detail, scores, anecdotes, and often little-known, succulent gossip doesn’t detract from its being easy to read. Not many authors achieve what Ned Sublette has in writing this book. While his first visit to the island was not until the early 1990s, he has known how to blend academic documentation and oral research with respect and authenticity. To paraphrase novelist Gabriel García Márquez, it might be said that Cuba’s musical history is not how it was lived by the musicians and their fans but how it has been remembered and told. As Cuban musicologist Helio Orovio confirmed to me in the gardens of the National Union of Artists and Writers in Havana, sipping a glass of rum on the rocks, “Ned is a serious researcher.” This, coming from Orovio, not given to dispense praise, was high recognition.

I had three uncles, my mother Marta’s brothers, who were self-taught musicians – only one still alive today. The elder was Ramón Sarduy, who was a master of improvisation on the guitar and loved *boleros*. Then there
was Miguel, who was inseparable from his patched-up guitar and played as well as sang every kind of music. They called him Categua. The youngest was great on the tumba (conga drum), long before it was allowed into the academy, and known as Tito Tumba in our hometown Santa Clara and surrounding towns of what was then Las Villas province.

When I was an adolescent and bent on study, Tito and Miguel did all they could to teach me to play the tumba or sing those 1950s boleros that working-class bohemians, sober or drunk, sang with their souls. I did learn some of the really kitsch lines to come out of phonographs of those times, like the song Y en las Tinieblas (And in the Darkness) by Alfredo Gil, made popular in the late 1950s by José Tejedor and the inseparable Luis Oviedo: “you left me in the darkness of the night ... and you left me losing my way.”

But when it came to dancing, from an early age I was out on the dance floor at parties wherever I could. How could I forget the famous matinee dances of the Las Villas societies for people of color of those days? I danced to Beny More (I write it Cuban-style with one “n”). The most memorable was back in 1951 at the dance hall in Caibarién, on a hill overlooking the pretty coastal town. I danced to Aragón at Santa Clara’s Bella Unión Society – my parents were members, which gave me rights as their son. That was the club for Blacks, while mulattos had their club El Gran Maceo, named after Cuba’s famous nineteenth-century Liberation Army general. I danced at the societies in Quemado de Güines, Ranchuelo, Esperanza, Placetas, Remedios ....

And so, after meticulously enjoying all 600 pages of Cuba and its Music, subtitled From the First Drums to the Mambo, I recommend this book with immense pleasure. Ned Sublette knows what he is saying and how to say it, to the beat of the drum, ratifying the African in Cuban music, on and off the island. I, for one, await that second volume Ned confessed is in the making, perhaps to be subtitled “from cha-cha-cha to timba,” or hip-hop a lo cubano, as performed by the group Orishas.
Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture.

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In the postnationalist anthology Puerto Rican Jam (1997), Frances Negrón-Muntaner asked why the majority of Puerto Ricans have historically favored a closer relationship with the United States in spite of fundamental injustices in the arrangement. Neither free nor equal in the U.S. political system, the island remains in perpetual limbo, a “shameful” situation for diehard nationalists and statehood-ers alike. Moreover, against the backdrop of the Iraq war, the island grapples anew with what it means to be “culturally autonomous” but vulnerable to U.S. military conscription without voting representation in the U.S. Congress.

In Boricua Pop, Negrón-Muntaner does not so much answer the question as interrogate the lack of a broad consensus toward national independence, a position that she provocatively states as “queer” (p. 13) – out of the norm, a political oddity that does not conform to the norms of national status, cultural identity, or the linear narratives of progress from colony to nation-state. Her premise is that any study of Puerto Rican popular culture must address the idiosyncrasies of this political context. Colonialism, as large-scale social domination, is bound to be fundamentally humiliating and shameful for its subjects. She boldly asserts, however, that Puerto Ricans have largely wallowed in this shame in myriad ways, not all of them for material ends, much to the dismay of nationalist leaders who exhort the public to “wake up!”... despierta boricua! She describes a form of Stockholm Syndrome on a massive scale – a case of the captive (coded feminine) falling in love with the captor (coded masculine). In this view, the name of Puerto Rico itself is written upon a legacy of shameful colonial behavior, imposed on the pre-conquest homeland that Taino-Arawaks called Borikén.

Part I presents key narratives that shape public perceptions of island identity, including the 1961 film West Side Story, and the 1983 Seva hoax – a short story about the lone survivor of a Yankee massacre of a town of Boricua rebels that was taken as fact by many readers of the Claridad weekly newspaper where it first appeared – which was fueled by the shame nationalists confront over the lack of military struggle against U.S. imperialism.
following the 1898 Guánica invasion. Latin Leftists came to see Puerto Rico as a queerly docile colonial “mistress” while Cuba became vigorously and stubbornly independent, leading developing nations in health care, medicine, adult education, athletics, and anti-imperial bellicosity.

Part II shows Puerto Ricans going beyond actively feeding U.S. national and foreign policy aims and subtly spearheading the Latinization of American culture, directly under the stuffy nose of Anglo hegemony. This influence on American culture is pervasive, but also largely invisible, often because of American bipolar racial categories that tend to erase Puerto Rican ethno-nationality, as in the cases of Jean-Michel Basquiat and Harold Santiago Danhakl (aka “Holly Woodlawn” of the Warhol film Trash). This erasure helps American popstars like Madonna appropriate, with impunity, aspects of Puerto Rican aesthetics and cultural creativity, such as “vogue” dancing. Negrón-Muntaner, however, lets Madonna off the hook and glosses over how Puerto Ricans, such as the late Angel Segarra, aka “Angie Xtravaganza,” from the film Paris is Burning (Cunningham 1998), developed “vogue” from la figura, the ensemble of percussive gestures that constitute Afro-Puerto Rican bomba dancing.

In Part III, Negrón-Muntaner draws out contrasts between Boricua pop icons and real-life events that result in shame, humiliation, and exploitation for countless Puerto Ricans. She exposes how Boricua experience has been reduced to a litany of synecdoches: the forked tongue of Ferré, the curly locks of Puerto Rican Barbie, the sashay of J. Lo’s butt, and the wiggle of Ricky’s hips. All of it, “queer as folk,” she argues, producing highly visible, desirable, and consumable icons.

The book’s few shortcomings, besides the “vogue” oversight, include its heavy emphasis on the shame trope and its neglect of abundant scholarship on the ethnology of honor/shame dialectics (e.g., Péristiany 1966, Bourdieu 1977). It also does not substantiate the assertion about Boricuas’ perverse desire for colonial torment and thus downplays the effect of cold war tactics on suppressing the independence movement. Negrón-Muntaner, moreover, ignores issues of cultural creativity and decolonization altogether, apparently assuming a laissez-faire world of mindless consumers.

Nevertheless, Boricua Pop makes a quantum leap over previous studies of Puerto Rican identity. By starting, however tentatively, with an ethnology of shame informed by queer theory Negrón-Muntaner can explore the oddities of this crypto-colonial relationship without blinking. She disagrees (p. 26) with Quintero-Rivera’s position that Puerto Ricans have “nothing to be ashamed of,” arguing instead that under current conditions, colonial shame is endemic, immune to consciousness-raising, neither reducible to the individual, nor to an “inferiority complex” that can be psychologized and cured through progressive therapy. Shame is a byproduct of “conflict within asymmetrical power relations, not privatized pathologies” (p. xiii). Without the “shame of being
Puerto Rican, there would be no boricua identity, at least not as we know it” (p. xiii). Her salty description of the queerness of Puerto Rican ethnonational identity involves a heightened awareness of the sexualized, erotic dimensions of asymmetrical power relations, including violence – the paradox of people perpetuating the terms and conditions of their abuse and settling for less than what is possible. Flag-waving displays of pride are common to patriots across the political spectrum, but the flipside condition of collective self-doubt, the “ay, bendito” expression of mutual self-pity, is equally common. She also parts with Juan Flores and his barrio-centric response to colonial shame, showing less interest in down-home authenticity than in the doubleness of commodification from the standpoint of racialized minorities, in which questions of visibility and worthiness of consumption are burning issues, implying visceral “spit or swallow” value judgments about whether a person or a product of one’s labor may be tasteful and/or assimilable.

Having worked in the Puerto Rican community for most of the past twenty years, and performed (shaking a bon-bon and a tambourine) on stage with Ricky Martin, I can vouch for Negrón-Muntaner’s claims about the underlying pride/shame dialectic, as well as the abundance of odd pleasures to be found in the practices of Boricua pop. Overall, she has written a groundbreaking piece of work on the persistence of colonialism – irreverent, tragi-comical, and bittersweet. Though a delightful read, the book’s reliance on lit-crit jargon may make it too dense for most undergraduates. Highly motivated students and fellow researchers interested in the intersections between popular culture, queer theory, colonialism, and Caribbean mass media will find it most rewarding.

REFERENCES


In 1990 Gordon Rohlehr published *Calypso & Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad*, a wide-ranging exploration of the literary and social dimensions of calypso from the nineteenth century to 1962. Since then, calypso researchers have been questioning him about a sequel to this definitive work. In the preface to his new book, Rohlehr notes that the essays contained are “the beginnings of an answer to that question” (p. i). Though the essays have appeared in other publications, readers will find this book to be a very convenient collection and will be treated to the erudition and wit that are characteristic of Rohlehr’s several decades of writing on the wealth of verbal expression in the Caribbean.

In the book’s title essay, Rohlehr notes that by “scuffling” he means both the economic struggle of Caribbean peoples and the insular conflicts that have challenged attempts at regional political and cultural integration. This chapter gives particular attention to the perspectives of calypsonians and other writers on the promise and collapse of the Federation of the West Indies of 1958-1962. But scuffling runs through all the chapters in the sense of class, ethnic, gender, and artistic contestations in Trinidad, which calypsonians have, in various ways, chronicled, intensified, and criticized. Among the many topics discussed in the book are the administrations and cultural politics of Dr. Eric Williams, chief/prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago from 1956 to 1981; the role of calypsonians as prophets in a society believed to be in the process of deterioration; calypsonians’ constant demand for freedom of speech against all forms of suppression; constructions of masculinity, diverse dynamics of male-female interaction, and an escalation in violence against women; and the ongoing re-creation of calypso music over the past several decades in response to changing perceptions of social identities and commercial markets. A final essay is a meditation on Kitchener, the consummate calypso master who died in 2000, after more than sixty years of public performance.

Together, the essays highlight a number of themes in the development of calypso since Trinidad’s independence. Clearly, this has been a period of tremendous musical creativity. Rohlehr notes that calypso has always been an eclectic form that, in earlier years, easily borrowed from Latin American genres, jazz, vaudeville, and other traditions. Such hybridity became more pronounced in the 1970s with the development of soca. Though Lord Shorty’s
innovations with East Indian music and soul were crucial in this regard, Rohlehr emphasizes that soca was “diverse, multi-layered and many-ancestord” (p. 415). Shadow, Calypso Rose, Blue Boy, Penguin, and others also played key roles. Since the 1980s, chutney soca has become an important style, one that has reflected shifting African-Indian relations in Trinidad.

Another major trend has been the increasing number of female calypsonians, which, in turn, has sparked new debates about gender issues in calypso. Calypso Rose, for example, began performing in the 1960s and, by the 1970s, was a prominent figure who countered the chauvinism of the likes of Sparrow with assertions of female concerns and desires. During the 1970s, Singing Francine, Calypso Princess, and other female artists also established independent voices. In one essay, Rohlehr focuses on Singing Sandra’s “The Equalizer,” written for her in 1998 by Christophe Grant. In the context of a growing number of rapes and murders of women during the 1990s, the song offered violent reprisals as a solution. Rohlehr suggests that a sense of social chaos and a lack of confidence in the law have contributed to harsher forms of rhetoric and humor in calypso.

Widespread perceptions of social decline and catastrophe are, in fact, another salient theme in calypso in recent decades. Following the rise of Williams and the People’s National Movement in 1956, many calypsos by Sparrow and other calypsonians articulated public optimism about an independent Trinidad. Since the emergence of Chalkdust in the late 1960s, however, calypsonians as a whole have become increasingly skeptical about the nation’s political system. Rohlehr argues that they often serve as prophets who exhort the community and offer visions of hope. He asserts that David Rudder has become calypso’s “most articulate and intuitive prophet,” an artist who combines “transcendent optimism and pessimistic realism” (p. 358) in compositions such as “Another Day in Paradise” (1995).

Several major strengths of Rohlehr’s calypso scholarship are evident in these essays. First is his detailed knowledge of seemingly thousands of calypsos. He frequently demonstrates that calypsonians offer a wide range of opinion on any topic and that even a single singer’s oeuvre often includes various perspectives. Rather than rush to generalizations, Rohlehr always examines a variety of examples and counterexamples. Also notable is his deep understanding of diverse forms of verbal and musical expression. He often comments on calypso’s ongoing connections with oral traditions, such as kalinda songs, Orisha music, Spiritual Baptist hymns, and Carnival Jab Jab rhythms. At the same time, he discusses the poetics of calypsonians in relation to the work of such writers as Louise Bennett, Martin Carter, and Derek Walcott. A final strength of Rohlehr’s approach is his insightful analysis of the social and political contexts of specific calypsos. He carefully explains the relevant issues and players, and maintains a keen sense of the moral vision of calypsonians in their commitment to creating a more just society.
In the course of his career, Rohlehr has consistently written for and engaged a broad audience. Just as parts of *Calypso & Society* originally appeared in the journal *Tapia* and in radio programs during the 1970s, several articles in *A Scuffling of Islands* were first published in the *Trinidad and Tobago Review*. This latest collection of Rohlehr’s thoughts on calypso will be of great interest to scholars, students, and anyone who cares about art and politics in the Caribbean.

**REFERENCE**


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This compact handbook is good for students who want to begin the arcane journey into Trinidadian Carnival music. I intend to use it the next time I teach “Music of the Caribbean.” It is packed with useful features: a CD with eighteen selections (some of which are brief excerpts) keyed to the text with rhythmic and/or melodic notations, illustrative lyrical transcriptions, photographs of performers and record album covers, and end matter (glossary, index, and an annotated list of resources for “reading,” “viewing,” or “listening,” most of which are readily available in print, on CD or DVD, or over the internet). The book is not extensively footnoted (probably the policy for the “Global Music Series,” which includes many similar studies of contemporary world music). This is appropriate for an introductory text but it makes it difficult to trace specific sources of information.

The author is a panman and professor of ethnomusicology and so the volume, while containing a sketch of the history of Carnival, is weighted
toward the current scene, especially the sound of the steel orchestra. Dudley relies partly on the vast Carnival scholarship to frame his study, but the real strength of this work is his continuing field experiences and his musical sensibility. For Dudley the words, the masquerades, the parties, and the parading all point toward the massive sound of the modern Carnival. The Carnival music that interests him most is calypso (e.g., lyrically oriented songs for contemplation performed in “tents” or arenas), “pan” (which is both the singular name of an instrument and the name for a group of such instruments, the steelband), and soca (party or “soul calypso”).

His approach is to understand Carnival music in terms of tradition, social identity, and performance context and function. Traditions are not static, but constantly changing. Social identities in Trinidad are affirmed and reinvented during Carnival performance. Carnival performance is understood by documenting the setting of the performance and its purpose. In Chapter 1, “Carnival and Society,” Dudley puts Trinidad’s Carnival in time and place. Chapter 2, “The Man of Words,” traces the development of reflective calypso (calypso in the “tents” for listening) and profiles five contemporary singers: the Mighty Sparrow (“Slinger Francisco,” usually considered the greatest calypsonian of all time), the Mighty Chalkdust (Hollis Liverpool, heir to Atilla the Hun and the greatest calypsonian-intellectual), Lord Kitchener (Alwyn Roberts, now deceased, the most “musical” calypsonian ever and author of many tunes favored for steelband performance), David Rudder (one of the few singers who makes a year-round income singing), and Singing Sandra (Sandra Des Vignes, who, along with Denise Plummer and Calypso Rose, is one of the most important female calypsos in this male-dominated field). Chapter 3, “The Tent and the Road,” begins by making the contrast between calypso appropriate for the tents and the music that is played to move the masquerade bands through the streets, concentrating on the latter. Chapter 4, “The National Instrument,” focuses on the history and musicality of pan, and Chapter 5, “Steelband Repertoire,” illustrates the contexts in which pan is key. The final chapter, “Bacchanal Time,” briefly reviews contemporary Carnival musical styles (soca, rapso, ragga soca, and chutney soca) and offers a conclusion.

Shannon Dudley clearly grasps an essential point of calypso and Carnival in this fine little book, and that is that through tradition the people of Trinidad— at least Carnival devotees— are continuously asserting and reformulating their individual and social identities by singing, playing, and acting out masquerades. I see certain folkways constantly asserting and reasserting themselves through time and through different media in Carnival over the years and over the decades. The dynamic of Caribbean culture is always there: the concerns of race and ethnicity, class, gender, and the issues of the day. As Ruth Benedict might have put it had she lived in today’s hi-tech world, Carnival is culture, played out on a giant screen, the making of the people’s blockbuster cinematographic extravaganza, a whole greater than the sum of its parts.
Before ending, there are two minor corrections I’d like to put on record. It is clear that Dudley used (on p. 24) a rendering of the lyrics to “Iron Duke in the Land” made by Dick Spotswood and me. Since then John Cowley (1996:194-95) has updated the lyrics with a better transcription:

At my appearance upon the scene
Julian come down with blazing sword
And see him shouting the order
Calling, screaming to all agony
And see his magnetizing mantle
See its glinting, gleaming, and swaying
Jumping this way, bawling, “Clear de way, Whiterose joli”
Djab rere-o.

It was a modern manifestation
Of that elder civilization
That in the Carnival celebration
Of the Social organization
Which causes the minds and extension
Of all the population
I Julian singing a Social recording
With White Rose Union
Sans humanité

This correction is important. Julian Whiterose, one of the greatest chant-wells (a singer who leads a masquerade band) of his day, understood that his legacy would be assured by making a record. On this record (recorded in Trinidad in 1914), he is telling us about his role in developing what turned out to be the origin of the modern masquerade band movement in the 1890s (especially pointed out in a verse not transcribed in Dudley). We need to do our best in transcribing these lyrics. The errors, like so many other errors one makes these days, become immortalized on the internet, and wherever calypso freaks google the information, they come up with the wrong transcription. You cannot completely get rid of cockroaches and you cannot entirely wipe out misinformation in a digital age. The truth is obliterated by the sheer volume of a replicated error. This is my small attempt to feed the corrected version into the digital whirlpool.

My second correction is also important, especially for historically minded scholars. On page 23 Dudley identifies the two foreign record companies active in Trinidad as Decca and Sony. (The era is not identified, but it was in the late 1930s.) Decca did record in Trinidad then (and they recorded calypsos in New York a few years earlier), but Sony did not. It would have been strange for Sony to own an American company in a British colony

when Japan and the United States would soon be at war. RCA Victor, using its Bluebird label, recorded in Trinidad. Decades later Sony bought a more recent incarnation of RCA Victor. No doubt Dudley knows this, but the students who read this book should be taught a sense of history as they learn about Carnival music in Trinidad.

These criticisms are small considering the overall merit of this book.

**REFERENCE**


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*La ronde des derniers maîtres de bèlè* is an oral history of some of the elders (“les anciens”) of traditional Martinican music, especially the music of the north-east of the island, in the communities of Bezaudin and Pérou near the town of Sainte-Marie. There is still an important role in today’s world for oral history, particularly in a place like Martinique, where modernity arrived fast and carried away so much in its wake, and where traditional music has been heavily stigmatized. At the same time, most of the elders interviewed come across as crotchety old cusses, full of nostalgia for a bygone world. Nostalgia is a familiar theme in Martinique and is likely to appeal to the local intellectuals who read this book.

About half of the book presents the words of drummer Félix Casérus, now in his seventies, a member of a large family that has, like several others, given Martinique many singers, dancers, and percussionists over the past half-century. Monsieur Félix is a masterful musician indeed. He could, if he desired, tell us a great deal about his art. But time and time again, he
refuses – because we moderns are disrespectful, because he is sad. In fact there is a growing segment of young Martinicans who are interested in exploring their musical traditions, and who have created several grassroots organizations (associations) devoted to learning, maintaining, and spreading these arts. M. Félix dismisses most of these because they are changing the music. He opens up to this book’s author in part only because Terrine is related to one of Bezaudin’s great departed drummers, Galfêtè.

Not to pick on M. Félix. His sentiments are widespread among the rural elders with whom I have worked. Some of their suspicions are warranted. Terrine’s book recounts a few well-known incidents in which city folk have exploited country musicians. For example, rural artists reacted to the first commercial recording of their music, in 1958, by accusing the young people who made it of stealing their work. A chapter late in this book gives the man behind that recording project, Franck Hubert, the chance to tell his side of the story. (Terrine is obviously sympathetic with both sides.) Nonetheless, my feeling is that the elders’ suspiciousness and, in particular, their frequent reference to artistic “secrets” that they alone know and could share (but won’t), is due less to such incidents than to cultural capital. Most of them have not been to school, they have seen their art disrespected most of their lives, they have struggled to maintain it, sometimes they have been able to make a little money from it, and in their old age they are unwilling to see others (especially people outside their families) take custody of it. Superior aesthetic knowledge is the about the only thing they can lay claim to, and if they can cloak that knowledge in an aura of mystery, so much the better.1 When M. Félix gets around to giving artistic criticism, as he does periodically throughout the book, the mystery vanishes and he is direct, lucid, and detailed.

Do not read this book for full descriptions of the Martinican musical traditions bèlè, danmyè, kalenda, or lalin klè. You will find some information on these, but nothing comprehensive. Occasionally there are minor errors in the elders’ accounts that a more ethnomusicologically minded editor might have corrected. Terrine’s purpose is rather to paint verbal portraits of some very interesting people. In addition to Félix Casérus and Franck Hubert, we hear from Vincent Chevignac, a koumandè or dance caller (a role that has since disappeared); Jean “Mico” Terrine, son of Galfêtè; Vava Grivalliers (now deceased), a superb dancer; Marie-Victoire Persani, another great dancer (how nice to find one woman, at least, represented in this book!); and D’Artagnan Laport père et fils, drummakers. This is by no means a complete picture of the world of Martinican musical tradition, but it is a start. Far too little writing on that world is generally available.

1. For a fuller account of relationships between rural elders and urban music revivalists, see Gerstn 1998.
The recent history of Martinique’s musical traditions – the complex phenomenon of revitalization that has emerged over the past quarter-century – deserves a more complete, well-rounded hearing than this book gives it. Overall I am more impressed by how well elders and revivalists have worked together than by any tensions between them. But a mood of decline and loss in the face of modernity is a familiar theme in Martinique. This mood may well be the aspect of *Les derniers maîtres* that most resonates with local readers, whose response to the book could be as interesting as the book itself. I hope that this is not the case. Martinican traditional music deserves to be known (not least to Martinicans). But it deserves to be known in its fullness, as a living art, not only as something passing away with its eldest practitioners.

**Reference**


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*Race in Mind* is a succinct, clearly written critique of European and American authors who have argued, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for the inequality of races based on biological, evolutionary, and genetic principles. Alland begins his analysis of scientific racism in the United States with a series of excerpts from advertisements for slave auctions and a medical school solicitation to purchase slaves for use as specimens. Referring to these advertisements, he asserts that “one can well understand the development of the abolitionist movement” (p. 3). However, he cautions against assuming
that most abolitionists viewed Whites and Blacks as intellectually equal. He quotes a British biologist, reacting to abolition in the United States, who endorsed “the ultimate superiority of the whites” so that “whatever the position of stable equilibrium into which the laws of social gravitation may bring the negro, all responsibility for the result will henceforward lie between nature and him. The white man may wash his hands of it, and the Caucasian conscience be void of reproach for evermore” (p. 3). Alland links scientific racism to the justification of White privilege through a proclaimed belief in social mobility via merit that seeks to make all social inequity a matter of “nature.” He shows how attempts by scholars to demonstrate a genetic explanation for disparity between social groups employ the authority of science and their position as scholars to influence social and educational policies, viewing class status as a product of “social selection” (which is compared to natural selection) (p. 81). Alland often quotes contemporary praise and criticism within academic and popular publications, thus demonstrating the circulation of racist ideas among “a society in which too many are too ready to accept any biological argument concerning race and IQ providing that they fall into the superior group” (p. 136).

The introductory chapter is followed by an overview of theoretical premises behind studies of evolution and human variation as well as key terminology. Alland builds on this background in the third chapter by explaining why “race” is “a flawed category” for understanding human biological variation while continually stressing the importance of race as a sociological reality. He refers to Chapters 2 and 3 throughout the remainder of the book when demonstrating inappropriate applications of terms and concepts. Chapters 4 through 9 critique theories and data that have been employed to support arguments for a racial hierarchy. Chapter 4 shows how the theories published by Carlton Coon in the 1960s cannot be understood apart from his political and ideological perspective. “Coon stands as an example of a man whose interpretations of the then-available evidence for human evolution were driven by ... the notion that blacks are inferior to whites in intelligence [which] colored his interpretations of both fossil and living hominid forms and led him to speculations that were far from justified by the data” (p. 57).

Along with a brief history of the problematic development of intelligence testing, the “IQ argument” as developed by Arthur Jensen and Cyril Burt is more fully explored and dismantled in Chapter 5. Alland traces genealogies of ideas as he demonstrates problems within each study and the misapplication of flawed data in Jensen’s (and subsequent authors’) analyses. Robert Ardrey (a playwright and the only non-academic discussed) and Konrad Lorenz (the “father of ethology”) are the focus of Chapter 6, “Biological Determinism and Racism.” Both are well known outside academia, as Alland points out, and three of Ardrey’s publications were bestsellers. Lorenz and Ardrey, he writes, “attempt to explain differences among human cultural
groups on the basis of genetics” (p. 106) which are used to establish “notions of inferiority and the consequent necessity for racial purity” (p. 105). Chapter 7 discusses the theories of William Shockley (a physicist), Leonard Jeffries (a political scientist), and Michael Levin (a philosopher), with the first criticism being that these individuals are “amateurs, professors all.” Shockley “was a true believer in the IQ superiority of whites over blacks (and of Asians over whites)” (p. 121) – a viewpoint endorsed by Levin as well. In contrast, Jeffries argued for the superiority of Blacks in IQ, culture, and emotion (p. 122). The respective views of Levin and Jeffries are critiqued for content, but Alland also demonstrates how racism influenced public opinion on their views and the controversy surrounding Jeffries’s removal from his position as head of the Black Studies Department at City College, City University of New York. For Alland, all three men abused their positions to promote flawed and ill-informed arguments. Chapter 8 examines Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, concluding that their “key error” is “a replay of Jensen’s systematic misuse of heritability as a concept” (p. 149) and showing how they purposefully present their data in a manner that misleads readers in order to bolster their political position against social programs including affirmative action. Chapter 9 examines the studies of two psychologists, J.P. Rushton and H.J. Eysenck, the key tenets of sociobiology, and the countering arguments of cultural determinism. Alland extols the unique ability of a four-field anthropological approach as “the only social science capable of dealing in a professional way with racist arguments that reflect pseudoscientific reasoning and ‘research’” (p. 171). The book’s epilogue offers a series of discussions on racism encountered by Alland during fieldwork within and outside the United States.

Blackness Without Ethnicity incorporates Livio Sansone’s fieldwork over ten years in Brazil, primarily during the 1990s, to adroitly argue for a more complex analysis of the interactions between globalization, local race relations, and conceptions of race and ethnicity. Sansone contextualizes his work within the Black Atlantic, focusing on communities in the states of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. The book is organized in an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion.

Sansone offers a multifaceted analysis of race and ethnicity as dynamic and locally specific processes, proposing an alternative to “U.S.-centric” perspectives. He contrasts his work to that of scholars who regard “Afro-Latins ... as worse off than in more racially polarized societies, in particular the United States” and presume “that at some point race relations in the region will – or should – ‘evolve’ toward some of the traits of the North American situation” (p. 9). For Sansone, “the Brazilian situation sheds new light on the creation of racialized identities in modern cities,” providing “a truly universal picture of the construction of blackness and its alter ego whiteness in different contexts and regions” (p. 17).
While socioeconomic statistics and descriptions of color and race terms are often cited in publications on Brazil, Sansone’s contribution lies in his attention to class as contextualizing change in color terminologies and their meanings within historical and sociopolitical perspectives that include local, national, and international discourse. His second, third, and fourth chapters examine the “use and abuse” of Africa which has “resulted from the interplay and struggle between white intellectuals and black leadership, popular and elite culture, conformity and protest, and political ideas developed in the West and their reinterpretation in Latin America” (p. 59). Sansone explores the globalization process through the changing use and meaning of commodities and symbols that are viewed by Afro-Brazilians as inspired by Africa but are produced largely in English-speaking countries such as the United States, Britain, and Jamaica (p. 98). He argues that Brazilians draw from and contribute to a growing source of symbols, interpreted and expressed within specific local contexts, reflecting local race relations.

Sansone claims that a “new black identity” in Bahia “is based on ... color consciousness, black pride, the management of original presentation of the black body – rather than on identification with and participation in the more traditional aspects of black culture” such as candomblé (p. 99). However, his informants viewed “the practice of black culture as an escape ... a way to elude racism rather than as a way to fight it in organized ranks” (p. 100). The Bahian example “shows a new usage of black symbols [that] need not be associated automatically with an increase in ethnic polarization” (p. 108). Funk music in Rio and Salvador is discussed as an example of how globalizing forces “end up being instrumental in the creation of local varieties of black youth culture” (p. 140). The fifth chapter compares youth in Salvador, Brazil with Surinamese Creoles in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Recognizing that “what is black in one context or country may be brown or even white in another,” Sansone defines “black youth” in these two cities as “people who, in some specific context, see themselves and are seen by outsiders as being of African or partly African descent” (p. 141). He provides examples of contrast and similarity in techniques employed by youth in Amsterdam and Salvador to attain social mobility despite the limitations of racism, continuing to focus on global interaction and local specificity. The concluding chapter argues for self-determination and the legitimacy of alternative models for social justice in the Black Atlantic rather than mobilization around ethnic identity as in the United States.

Sansone’s work is important in demonstrating the constant exchange occurring throughout the Black Atlantic and the hierarchical and disproportionate contribution made by the United States to this discourse. Alland and Sansone both call for greater attention to cultural context and historical perspective in studies of race. Their work encourages further analysis into the mechanisms by which, and the extent to which, racist academic publications inform perceptions of race and racism as well as varying models for social justice in the African diaspora.

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As a clearly written historical case study of the interaction of religion, politics, and economics in a society in continuous contact with a variety of outside influences, this intriguing volume has much of value for professional anthropologists, historians, and missiologists, as well as sociologists and psychologists of religion. Yet the results of its solid ethnographic and historical research are also of interest for readers of NWIG who, like us, may not be adept in any of those fields; it is with such readers in mind that this review has been written. In its brief compass we have chosen to sample the book’s main themes more than to recount its main hypotheses.

Like other “Bush Negro” or “Maroon” societies of Suriname (whose histories are sketched in an opening essay by Dirk Van der Elst, pp. 1-15), the Ndyuka society described in this book reflects both the African roots of its founding runaway slaves and subsequent historical development in the Suriname context. Even its pantheon includes deities from both the Suriname rainforest and Africa, and associations between specific deities and particular matrilineages, a feature not uncommon in West African religious systems.

Religious, economic, and political features of their changing environment over the past three centuries have continuously shaped and reshaped details of these domains of Ndyuka life. This evolution has been documented by the authors in part through archival work but especially through their personal empathetic involvement with many individual Ndyuka over a period of more than forty years. Through all the changes, some themes have persisted, though waxing and waning considerably in prominence: religious power as potentially manipulative political and economic power; practice and fear of witchcraft, and attempts to control it, arising from an atmosphere of chiefly economic envy; and openness to the adoption and adaptation of outside influences for economic gain or for deliverance from the power of one’s real and potential enemies, both human and superhuman.

Modern naturalistic readers will find it more difficult to identify with the extent of the interaction of human and supernatural forces characteristic of Ndyuka history than will modern supernaturalists or postmodern
pluralists. But for the Ndyuka, as for members of the other Maroon societies of Suriname, a range of beings from avenging spirits and demons to local and supreme gods provide a framework for making sense of the fortunes of life and for maintaining some degree of well-being in the face of competition from one’s neighbors (including military advantage, as illustrated during the civil war of the 1980s and 1990s). At the same time, the Ndyuka also pragmatically acknowledge the efficacy of human efforts (including manipulation of supernatural powers) in the struggle to survive and prosper: “Although the belief in spirit mediums and witches is just as strong now as it was a century ago, and although the protection of supernatural agencies is just as avidly sought, that does not keep Maroons from struggling for full economic participation and political rights” (p. 277).

Imagine yourself growing up in a society where resources are by definition assumed to be limited: there is only so much money, so much food, so much political power and influence. If someone has more of these than you do, it must be that they have deprived you of your due, very likely with the aid of spiritual forces. What can you do? Enlist the help of such forces yourself, both for protection and to retaliate, causing loss to others so that you can gain. Small wonder that in times of increasing visible economic inequality among the Ndyuka, as during their late nineteenth-century monopoly of river transportation for gold and rubber exploiters, development of religious institutions to deal with witchcraft became especially prominent. But not only then: in the early 1960s, when economic inequalities were less obvious, one out of every three deaths was still attributed to the deceased having engaged in witchcraft.

Manipulation of politico-religious power is illustrated clearly by the process for determining that someone has died because of being a witch. This decision has been the prerogative of Ndyuka religious leaders, through their control of oracle consultations to find out the cause of death, including interpretation of the oracle’s responses. Since the possessions of a person declared to be a witch are then distributed according to the same leaders’ interpretation of the oracle’s wishes, with many possessions going to themselves, this institution has had obvious potential for serious abuse. Periodically such excesses – both the economic impoverishment and the pervasive atmosphere of mutual suspicion encouraged by a high percentage of one’s fellows being posthumously identified as witches – have led to iconoclastic reform movements in which a prophet arises to challenge the authority of the cult dominant at the time. Often begun with apparent benevolent intentions, these movements frequently developed into a mere shift of power and a displacement of its abuse from one regime to another, as the prophet-deliverer gained more and more power and then succumbed to the temptations to abuse it in various ways. Further, when the antiwitchcraft institutions were thoroughly weakened without other control mechanisms put in their place, the atmo-
sphere of fear was replaced by a malaise arising from too few constraints on antisocial behavior – “as Da Asawooko [an important source of the authors’ understanding of Ndyuka sociopolitical history] expressed it: ‘We are like dogs without a master, and those sleep on empty bellies’” (p. 276).

In developing specific topics through time, the presentation is not strictly chronological, yet this complexity reinforces the pervasiveness of supernatural concerns in Ndyuka life. The resulting impression readers are given of this highly religious society is further enhanced by the well-chosen photographs, maps, glossary of Ndyuka terms, and a bibliography of some two hundred items.