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André Breton, en route to exile in North America in 1941, entitled his account of his stay in Martinique Martinique charmeuse de serpents. The complexity of Breton’s relation to a tropical elsewhere as well as the visual representation of the Caribbean is filtered through the painting by Le Douanier Rousseau that gives the book its title. Rousseau never visited Martinique or the Caribbean for that matter but for Breton such a journey was not necessary. Since it was “naturally” surrealist, the Martiniquan heartland was a spiritual home for those in search of the nonrational. Thirty years later, we are told in this long overdue study of the “Caribbean dimension” of Romare Bearden’s paintings and collages, that the painter visited Martinique in 1971 and produced the first of a series of paintings on Martinique. The painting “Byzantine Dimension” was inspired by the rainforest of northern Martinique and depicted “the magic woman in nature,” a jet-black nude with a serpent hanging from her hand. Bearden’s snake charmer recalls, on the face of it, the earlier primitivist fantasies of Breton and Rousseau. Martinique as a privileged site for the atavistic and nonrational illustrates the problematic nature of the Surrealists’ romanticizing of the luxuriant Tropics. Merely three years after Breton’s passage through the Caribbean, Alejo Carpentier claimed in his prologue to The Kingdom of this World (1974), that Martinique’s rainforest had simply overwhelmed the Surrealists, in particular the painter André Masson, and that it took a genuine New World painter, Wifredo Lam, to “show us the magic of tropical vegetation” (Carpentier 1874:10).

Sally and Richard Price’s beautifully illustrated account of Bearden’s Caribbean works raises the question of the extent to which Bearden genuinely captures the “magic” of the Caribbean. Was he just another variation on
Breton, resorting to stereotypes of irrationality and atavism to represent the Caribbean? Was he a Masson or a Lam? Or neither. In this regard, the most important subtext in this study of Bearden is his relationship with the poet and sometime painter Derek Walcott. Because of the “American difficulty with accepting the Caribbean as a site of serious culture” there is “a void in the art world’s vision of Bearden” (p. 16) and Walcott is key to understanding the impact of the Caribbean on the African American painter. Walcott not only used one of Bearden’s collages for the cover of his 1979 collection of poems The Star-Apple Kingdom but also collaborated in 1983 with Bearden on a book of paintings and poetry entitled The Caribbean Poetry of Derek Walcott and the Art of Romare Bearden. Walcott gives us insight into Bearden’s Caribbeanness by stressing the painter’s humility. Unlike the Surrealists, he did not attempt to appropriate the Caribbean as the realm of a universal primitivism. The Prices concur with Walcott by observing that Bearden “did not bring the same identitarian toolkit to the Caribbean, where – however much he came to appreciate the rhythms of local life – he always considered himself a visitor, there to learn” (pp. 103, 108).

More importantly, however, Walcott suggests that the strength of Bearden’s Caribbean work lay in his interest in capturing the fleeting moment, the transient. As he observes, “When he came to the Caribbean he wasn’t interested in doing Caribbean history. He was more taken by the immediacy of the light” (p. 108). A statement such as this from Walcott immediately evokes the poet’s book of poems Tiepolo’s Hound (2000) in which a remarkably similar line can be found, this time in relation to the French impressionist Camille Pissaro, who was born in St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands: “the paint is all that counts, no guilt, no pardon, / no history” (Walcott 2000:58). So for Walcott, both Pissaro and Bearden are exemplary New World artists who have “learnt to look/ at the instant” (Walcott 2000:55). This is a central idea in Walcott’s own poetics in which the Caribbean is the site of an Adamic rebirth and a restorative amnesia as he consistently encourages the Caribbean artist to turn away from the petrifying force of the medusa of history. Bearden would be then like Pissaro who took a Caribbean preoccupation with the fragmented, the incomplete into French Impressionism. The “splintered sunlight” on the Caribbean islands “blazed at the back of (Pissaro’s) mind” (Walcott 2000:48) and makes the Impressionist movement, in Walcott’s view, profoundly indebted to the Caribbean.

The Prices’ book both provides an introduction to Bearden’s “little-known Caribbean paintings” and argues that “an understanding of Bearden’s Caribbean experience permits a critical reassessment of all the art he produced during the final fifteen years of his life, whether in St Martin or New York” (p. 16). In the same way that Walcott moves the Caribbean to the center of European Impressionism, a case is made for the centrality of the Caribbean to Bearden’s imaginary. After the 1971 visit to Martinique Bearden’s “non-
Caribbean” work became increasingly influenced by his Caribbean experience and “many of his Caribbean style works were being produced in his studio in Long Island City” (p. 92). A number of art critics – Lowery Sims, Hilton Kramer, Calvin Tomkins among others – point to a new lushness, and vibrant, glowing colors that became dominant in Bearden’s palette.

As an “engaged visitor,” Bearden was particularly drawn to Martinique, which had “a special place in (his) imaginaire” (p. 99) but he never painted Haiti, which fascinated him. He maintained “a respectful distance” refusing to generalize the “magic” of the Caribbean as Carpentier himself would, making Haiti into the lynchpin of his theory of marvelous realism in the New World. Besides landscapes, sunsets, and market scenes, Bearden also concentrated on two Caribbean rituals: obeah and carnival. In the 1980s his watercolors on “Rituals of the Obeah” are, we are told, “his most personal works,” not “ethnographic documents” but “expressions of feelings … out of the depths of his consciousness” (p. 125). For Bearden the “insider outsider” they seem to project the drama of his own relationship to the Caribbean – transgression, risk, and the other’s opacity. Similarly, the carnival series, most of which was done in 1987, is as much about color and festivity as it is about the intimate drama of death since Bearden was ill with bone cancer at the time. Ultimately, we are indebted to Sally and Richard Price for arguing in this lavishly illustrated book that it is the light of the Caribbean that allowed Bearden to see his own world anew.

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São Salvador de Bahia has long enjoyed exemplary status as a staging ground for hypotheses concerning the apparent ethnological precision with which the Afro-Brazilian religious formations known as Candomblé seemed traceable to a single African antecedent. Ever since the Brazilian forensic scientist Raymundo Nina Rodrigues’s pioneering *L’Animisme fétichiste des Nègres de Bahia* (1900), the “African Past” of Candomblé has been sought among a congeries of ethnic groups in what today is southwestern Nigeria that, after nearly a century of warfare against each other, became collectively known as “the Yoruba” – first to the Anglophone missionary world of the late nineteenth century, and only shortly thereafter to themselves as well. Much has been made of the simple *lateness* of massive slave exports from the war-torn Bight of Benin to northeastern Brazil. Yet as J. Lorand Matory argues in this brilliant (if at times exasperating) book, explanations of transatlantic cultural similarities from mere demographic calculus (increasingly common as they once more seem to be, e.g., in the context of the UNESCO-sponsored Slave Route Project) in fact obscure complicated histories. As Matory shows, such histories go well beyond the unidirectional models of westward cultural transfer and “arborescent” cultural differentiation that continue to dominate studies of the African diaspora. What is more, once taken seriously, their study forces us to rethink some of the key assumptions on which African-Americanist research has been based.

Matory thus rightly insists that “African agency and African culture have been important in the making of African diaspora culture.” Yet what, he asks, if we considered the possibility that “the African diaspora has at times played a critical role in the making of its own allegedly African ‘base line’ as well” (p. 39)? Would this not force us to abandon the objectivist conceit of an ethnologically discrete “African past” against which “African American presents” might be assessed (whether in regard to “retentions,” “change,” and/or “creativity”)? And might this not bring into view a larger Atlantic field encompassing as well as interlinking what we have previously mistakenly construed as separable “units of analysis”? Matory begins to tackle such questions in the
context of a set of forcefully argued and extensively documented case studies on the careers of two truly Atlantic constellations of cultural forms and patterns of collective identification – those known today as Nagô/Queto and Jeje in Brazil, and as Yoruba and Fon in Africa. In both instances, it becomes clear that a conspicuous and amply documented traffic, back and forth between Africa and Brazil, not only of people and goods, but ideas, plays havoc with notions that would predicate the historical relations between African “homelands” and their “diasporas” on understandings of Afro-Atlantic cultural processes as the initial transmission and subsequent erosion, in New World “real time,” of “aboriginally African” cultural forms. Instead, Matory shows how the very idea of “African origins” (and the associated valuations placed on “purity” in the “faithful” reproduction of “things African”) that was being propagated, since the late nineteenth century, by a set of cosmopolitan entrepreneurial travelers – sometimes African-born, but more often than not “at home” in Brazil – not only impacted a set of discourses crucial to the reproduction of “African derived” (and sometimes not-so-African-derived) practices in Brazil. Just as importantly, these travelers and the local connections they forged on both sides of the Atlantic were also instrumental in shaping lastingly influential representations of their supposed “African cultures of origin,” thereby likewise helping to transform the realities such discourses purported to reflect.

In so arguing, Matory makes a strong and convincing case for a rigorous historicization of “Africanity” (and “Yorubaness” in particular). Rather than treat such terms as unproblematic designators of empirically given qualities whose presence or absence in a given social formation, set of practices, or complex of ideas could be assessed in a context-independent fashion, Matory urges us to focus on the cultural work that attributions of “Africanity” perform in specific social and political arenas – including those within which academic formations of discourse on such matters take shape and exert their authorizing functions. In delineating such scenarios of “dialogic” cultural production, Matory aims not merely to contribute to Afro-Brazilian studies, or redirect the epistemological thrust of African Americanist anthropology. He also targets a much larger social science literature, chiding exponents of the current vogue of “transnational” scholarship for their unwitting complicity in the same conceptual disappearing act that makes the forms of consociation characteristic of Matory’s Afro-Atlantic look so unusual and theoretically challenging. Indeed, as Matory suggests, much of our present fascination with “transnational” social processes would seem to derive from the ironic fact that anthropology may have bought into some of the most tenacious nationalist fictions of the nineteenth century (during which it, after all, consolidated its disciplinary identity as a science of the imperial Western nation state’s political alter: the similarly spatially fixed, but distinctly non-coeval “tribe”). As in the case of imperial administrators’ endless frustrations with (and colonial anthropologists’ no less pronounced fascination with) so-
called “stateless societies,” the translocal “imagined communities” Matory’s research brings to light may well derive a good deal of their seeming “exceptionality” from a prior naturalization, in much social theory, of the territorial nation state as the implicit model for (or telos of) human sociality.

The collective identities forged by enslaved Africans and their descendants in the New World were, thus, no mere “re-assertions” of former African modes of collective identification (a fact clearly borne out in Matory’s pains-taking reconstruction of the transatlantic vagaries of a “Djedji/Jeje” identity over the course of a long twentieth century). Such Atlantic patterns of identification were contingent on highly specific contextual structures of opportunity and constraints, as well as upon the willful and often wily strategizing of people aiming to gain from propagating the means of imagining certain types of community rather than others. Here Matory might have provided a fuller discussion of the historical ironies of Afro-Brazilian “nation-ness” in light of pre-nationalistic understandings of the concept of “nation” (which was not, after all, bound to notions of territoriality, let alone sovereignty). At one point he writes that the current usage of the term *nação* in the Brazilian Candomblé comes close to the English term “denomination” – and this, precisely, may be the point: in all likelihood, the African *naçoes* of colonial Brazil were communities integrated less by ideas about shared primordial origins, than by forms of present-oriented, contextually based, “elective affinity.” So, obviously, are those of the modern Candomblé – which, after all, transcend even the boundaries of race. And while Matory makes clear that such affinities revolve around eminently practical (rather than transcendent) concerns, his prose at times effects unnecessary slippage between a local religious register on the one hand in which the term *nação* functions as a designator of certain canons of ritual practice and the language of modern ethnonationalism on the other – which, needless to say, distorts both the historical and contemporary realities Black Atlantic Religion aims to address.

More puzzling is Matory’s antagonism toward a Brazilian literature that has, since the 1980s, aimed to deconstruct locally enshrined images of “African purity” by reference to a coalition of interests between enterprising Candomblé priests and anthropologists and other public intellectuals championing a Bahian regionalist agenda. Matory’s work undoubtedly adds a new dimension to this critique of earlier anthropological reifications. Yet it is hard to see how Matory’s allegation that scholars such as Beatriz Dantas Gois or Peter Fry denied “agency” to Black entrepreneurs and priests might do more for his general argument than set up a bunch of intellectual straw men. Given that Matory himself makes an argument about “life imitating scholarship” in discussing the contemporary articulations between the discourses of strategizing Candomblé practitioners and those of public intellectuals purporting to inscribe their practices into political allegories masking as social science (p. 221 ff.), why should similar forms of mutual manipulation and complic-
ity not have obtained in the 1930s? Whatever Matory’s disagreements with these Brazilian scholars might be, his own data are too rich and convincing to need bolstering by such *ad hominem* arguments.

Perhaps the least successful part of this brilliant and truly path-breaking book is Matory’s attempt to unhinge long-standing, and indeed highly troubling representations of the Candomblé priesthood as a domain of women and male “passive homosexuals.” Matory is certainly right in charging that Ruth Landes’s *City of Women* (1947) established an empirically questionable imagery of the Candomblé as a proto-feminist utopia and introduced a dubious psychological functionalist argument concerning the alleged preponderance of “abnormal men” among the male priesthood. True also that the reasons for why Landes’s views left a near-indeleble mark on the scholarship on the Candomblé (and, indeed, on popular perceptions of its priesthood) ought to be sought in a convergence between international scholarship and local structures of interest (both among White elites bent on domesticating the Candomblé, and on the part of powerful priestesses). Still, Landes was a mere exponent of a powerful ideological formation within Anglophone anthropology at the time. Few of the second generation of Boas’s students (and, indeed, some British scholars such as I.M. Lewis as well) seemed immune to reductive interpretations of spirit possession as a compensatory device for individuals socially disempowered or marginalized on account of their gender or sexual orientation. In light of this rather prolific literature (which not infrequently recurred to African American possession cults for “cases in point”), Matory’s assertion that the *adé* (male “[passive] homosexual” possession priest) became an “open secret” in Brazil seems surprising. More problematic, however, is Matory’s explanation for why notions about the homosexual orientation of male possession priests gained such purchase in Brazil. What Matory suggests is that an essentially “Yoruba” logic metaphorically associating possession with sexual penetration and a pattern of “female” sartorials among Yoruba priests of Šango was “reinterpreted” in terms of Brazilian understandings of sexual practices and identities (i.e. literalized). While not inherently implausible, such an argument, however, would seem to resuscitate the very (Herskovitsian) comparative scheme Matory has just demolished (e.g., on p. 209), and so comes close to re-essentializing the concept of a “Yoruba-past” that he so carefully deconstructed before. The problem here is not whether male possession priests really tend toward certain sexual orientations. Nor is it whether Matory’s “Yoruba metaphors” of penetration, horsemanship, and husbandliness really structure local conceptions and discourses about the relation between possession spirits and their human mediums. It is that we appear to have returned to the same kind of “unit-to-unit” comparativism Matory convincingly dissuades us from in other parts of the book.

But this is a minor flaw in a truly remarkable book. *Black Atlantic Religion* is a spectacular empirical achievement, and ought to be regarded as one of
the most sophisticated arguments to date against the kind of epistemologically naïve “verificationism” that has long dominated African Americanist anthropology, and that is rapidly regaining ground among historians these days. Matory makes a forceful case for rethinking the spatio-temporal coordinates within which we situate our inquiries into “local” cultures – or those seemingly new “translocal” forms of sociality which, after all, emerged on the slave-holding littoral of the Americas close to five centuries before their modern “transnational” equivalents became even remotely thinkable for us all.

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Over the years the often closely intertwined histories of the religious experiences of Jamaicans – experiences rather than, perhaps, the singular experience implied by the title of Dianne Stewart’s study – have received their fair share of scholarly attention. In every respect, however, in this most innovative of works, Stewart has succeeded in breaking down the traditional single-disciplinary conceptual and methodological approaches and imperatives that have for so long characterized work in this field. Put quite simply, by drawing upon both the techniques and the evidence employed by theologians, social anthropologists, and folklorists, as well as by historians, she has totally transformed our understanding of the origins and evolution of the African-derived theologies and more practical religious experiences not only of Jamaica but, potentially, of the African diaspora throughout the Caribbean and Americas.
Scholars, but more especially historians, have long been concerned with delineating the West and Central African origins and components of the religious beliefs and practices that enslaved people struggled to carve out for themselves in the evolving slave societies of the Caribbean and American mainland, and not least with attempts to establish distinctions between “survivals” and “similarities.” Often allied with this has been a concern to trace the encounters between these “survivals,” “similarities,” and various forms of Christianity. In the case of Jamaica, of course, this meant Protestantism, and by the early nineteenth century it meant evangelical Protestantism. Stewart concerns herself with these encounters, and the threat posed by Christianity to traditional beliefs and practices, but her principal interest is in African-derived religions rather than a more Eurocentric discussion of the origins and evolution of syncretic Black Christianities.

Using a variety of European-generated records – both quantitative and qualitative – she begins her path-breaking work with an entirely convincing account of what she describes as the six essentially syncretic “foundational characteristics of continental African religions” (p. 24) that took shape and deep root in Jamaica during the years of the transatlantic slave trade. In the densely argued chapters that follow she focuses on these six characteristics – “a communotheistic understanding of the Divinity; ... ancestral veneration; possession trance and mediumship; food offerings and animal sacrifice; divination and herbalism; and an entrenched belief in neutral mystical power” (p. 24) – and teases out the often complicated manner in which they continue to the present day, not only in Jamaica but also elsewhere in the African diaspora. Of particular interest, and novelty, is her fieldwork – notably the interviews – aimed at demonstrating the persistence of various “traditional” African beliefs, assumptions, and practices.

Given the emphasis on “agency” and “empowerment” that has characterized much of the recent scholarship on slavery in the Caribbean and the Americas, the stress that Stewart places on the resilience of enslaved Africans, their determination to define and to maintain their own religious beliefs and practices, often against the most appalling odds, comes as no great surprise. But this is the most complete, sophisticated, and compelling analysis thus far of how, and with what longer-term consequences, that determination manifested itself in the Jamaican context. Particularly significant is Stewart’s nuanced discussion of the roles retained by African women in Jamaica as what might be described as both guardians and definers of “traditional” religious cultures. In many ways this makes her study a work on the history of gender as well as on the history of religion. To her enormous credit, she has not ghettoized these women into a separate “women’s chapter,” but left them in the crucial roles that they played within the gendered worlds that were so familiar to them. However, and bearing in mind that Stewart’s prime concern is with African-derived religions rather than with the origins and development.
of Afro-Jamaican Christianity, it is perhaps worth noting that in Jamaica, as well as in the American South, there is evidence to suggest that when it came to the adoption of Christianity women also assumed a role as cultural innovators. The rationale that underpinned women’s radically different religious decision-making processes still remains something of a mystery.

The resilience and sheer determination of people of different African ancestries in Jamaica to preserve as much as they possibly could of the “foundational characteristics” of their religious beliefs and practices is a central theme of Stewart’s fine book. The other, and closely allied with it, is the manner in which, from the beginnings of enslavement, those same “characteristics” have been belittled, demeaned, and demonized by successive generations of Europeans and Euro-Jamaicans. As she rightly, and angrily, points out, the African-derived and African-centered religions of Jamaica (and for that matter the other slave and formerly slave societies of the Caribbean and Americas) have seldom, if ever, been treated as serious theologies. In what is yet another pioneering contribution, she subjects these theologies to a systematic, rigorous analysis, and one that will remain the definitive statement for the foreseeable future.

Intellectually ambitious and conceptually and methodologically sophisticated, this is a work of monumental importance, one that completely redefines and reorders our understanding of the religious histories and experiences of Jamaica and successive generations of Jamaicans. It will undoubtedly exert a profound influence on the scholarship in this field for years to come.


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African diaspora studies have advanced significantly in recent years, not only because of a rapidly expanding empirical base but also because of the greater sophistication of the ways in which diaspora is imagined and framed. The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World is a long-anticipated volume
reflecting both these developments. In their introduction, Falola and Childs observe that the generation of databases such as *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade* CD-ROM (1999) and the more targeted *Afro-Louisiana History and Genealogy Database* (2000), along with the mammoth Nigerian Hinterland Slave Routes Project led by Paul Lovejoy, have provided data necessary for tracing certain diasporic streams within the Atlantic slave trade. Recent work has updated the Herskovitsian thesis of culture zones to more carefully investigate the regional West Central African diaspora in the Americas based on the premise of broadly shared sociocultural constructs (e.g., Heywood 2002, Warner-Lewis 2003). It has been far more challenging to identify the dispersal and subsequent evolution of individual ethnonational diasporas, though some work on the Yoruba has focused on specific networks within the larger diaspora (e.g., Mann & Bay 2001). Few scholars have the expertise to adequately address the homeland and the many destination sites, but the Yoruba have captured the imagination of scholars on all the shores of the Atlantic. The Yoruba also represent a particularly rich case study for several other reasons explored in this volume, including their demographic concentration in such destinations as Cuba and Bahia (Brazil) and detailed documentation garnered from illegal traders trafficking in Yoruba captives. In addition, the timing of their arrival relatively late in the cultural formation of the Americas makes it easier to trace identifiable “Yoruba” practices, an effort at the heart of several chapters.

Although this is a multi-authored collection, the editors bring a cohesive vision to the project in their introduction. They posit the work as a reconciliation between the Mintz and Price creolization model (1992), emphasizing how identities and cultures were re-imagined, and an Atlantic model that takes Africa more substantively into account as constitutive of diaspora lives. In large measure, the essays bridge those approaches. The book also accomplishes another necessary synthesis between the essential work of quantification and nuanced qualitative analysis.

The authors show admirable restraint in trying to define a primordial Yoruba culture, a significant conceptual intervention for diaspora scholars. “Homeland” has many representations in the diaspora, quite frequently idealized as a fixed historic-cultural moment. However, the very fact of diasporization in itself signals a community in great flux. As the essays demonstrate, “homeland” evolves as a result of events and imaginings both in the diaspora and its area(s) of origin. How does one define “Yoruba”? The essays problematize overly simplistic answers; for example, they detail the underappreciated importance of Islam in the formation of Yoruba identity.

A recurrent theme addressed by many of the authors is why the Yoruba, who were late arrivals and a relatively small percentage of the total number of Africans landed in the Americas, left such a disproportionately powerful cultural legacy. Chapters on Bahia, Cuba, and Haiti explore the popu-
lar explanation of dense demographic concentrations arriving within a short period of time. What truly fleshes out the discussion is the inclusion of chapters on smaller Yoruba populations in such places as Costa Rica, Trinidad, and the Bahamas. As this is taken up by most of the essays, one gets a fuller understanding of how particular Yoruba social, cultural, and economic institutions, along with their tradition of cosmopolitanism, were well suited to serve New World challenges not only for Yoruba people, but also for many others attempting to cope with those same conditions. These institutions frequently served as pathways for individuals to “become” Yoruba.

Organized in four sections, the volume begins by considering the complex calculations of total numbers of Yoruba-speakers uprooted from their homelands, illuminating the multiplicities of identities that only later would fall under a shared ethnonym. The second section maps the dispersal of Yoruba, and the third probes particular cultural hallmarks of the Yoruba presence and subsequent legacy. The final section examines fascinating, but understudied, dynamics of diaspora. It traces the complexities of “return” to irrevocably transformed homelands concurrent with transformations within the diaspora populations themselves. Here we see Yoruba in historically Yoruba towns under colonial rule as well as in other African destinations. Circuitous paths have bound them to new transnational communities of Muslims and Christians; others have attempted to maintain ancestral religions in a foreign milieu. It is particularly rich to see the interactions of Yorubas whose trajectories have created diverse iterations of diaspora. Thus, such groups as “Saro,” “Aku,” and “Brazilian” represent historically distinct experiences of Yoruba diaspora returnees that are rightfully considered alongside those of the Yoruba who remained abroad.

This book is a convenient compendium of current scholarship on the Yoruba, and the wide array of top specialists provides insight into distinct disciplinary and regional debates. There is some unavoidable repetitiveness of quantitative and historical data, but because these are contextualized within each essay, each restatement provides a fresh angle and allows for chapters to better stand alone for reading assignments. A map would have been helpful.

Given the essays’ emphasis on the dynamism of the Yoruba diaspora, it was a bit disappointing to find no discussion of the contemporary migrations of Yoruba peoples to Europe and the United States. The relationship of older to more recent waves of diaspora remains to be fully explored. This, however, was not the central objective of this book, which promises to be a useful reference on one of the most influential cultures of the African diaspora.
This book brings together a series of quite distinct essays published by Torres-Saillant between 2001 and 2005. His perspective, he says, is that of the ethnic studies approach cultivated in the U.S. academy. He describes at length how he learned to read and write as an ethnic and, like Edward W. Said, “to apportion my intellectual respect mostly to humble luminaries” (p. 101). That is as far as the humility of this book goes. This book, he says, “considers the ambiguous position of U.S.- and European-bred Antilleans who can now wield the power to redraw the image of the Caribbean from the very center of the West” (p. 9). That being the explicit theoretical purpose, what does the Caribbean look like to one sitting in the West and launching such an intellectually ambitious undertaking?

There are, to be sure, very good comparative portrayals of Caribbean cultural creations and expressions, and his take on Caribbean literature and music are particularly detailed and nuanced. They reflect an author who is not only well-acquainted with the region, but emotionally involved in and with it. That
said, there is nothing here that shows him to be either favorably impressed or sanguine about the region’s culture. The space Caribbean writers and thinkers had created during the 1950s, he claims, is “shrinking” (p. 40). It has become a region which now “specializes in losing,” in part because it is in the hands of “morally feeble leaders.” Rather than advancing culturally, the region is regressing so much that “now we can hardly find traces of that former sense of intellectual autonomy, authenticity and leadership.” There is, in short, “a loss of luster of the products of the Caribbean mind” (p. 43).

What prism does Torres-Saillant use to reach such categorical conclusions? Astonishingly, the “theoretical” (always used in quotes) approach laid out in Chapter 1, “which dominates the rest of the book,” is derived entirely from his intellectual and political autobiography (p. 8). As interesting and revealing as his origins in the Dominican Republic and “colonial migration” to the United States are, on what grounds can he claim that his personal experiences open the door to a “new ‘theory’ of Caribbean history, culture, and destiny”? (p. 7).

A major weakness of the book is that while Torres-Saillant quite ably focuses on a multitude of “humble luminaries,” he has overlooked some of the classical debates that are already part of the region’s intellectual history. One could start with his premise that the Caribbean is “a distinct culture area, a region with ecological imperatives of its own” (p. 5). Lacking is any reflection on the long-standing question as to whether the Caribbean is indeed a “culture area” (namely Melville Herskovits, Sidney Mintz, Richard Morse) and how answering that might impact our interpretations of the one, or many, cultures.

Torres-Saillant rejects all Western ontologies, only to postulate his own ontology stating that he is pursuing “an archeology” of ideas derived from a history which has gone through “successive stages of domination, insurrection, resistance, adaptation and nation building” (p. 7). Nowhere is there discussion of the more recent comparative literature asking why in certain parts of the Caribbean there have been no insurrections and why there has been a distinct definition of nationhood that has little to do with independence. (See, for instance, Oostindie & Klinkers 2003 and the essays in Sutton 1991.)

Equally superficial is Torres-Saillant’s adoption of Kamau Brathwaite’s “alternative paradigm” of “tidalectics,” which he claims is “an autochthonous paradigm befitting the Caribbean’s sinuosity” (pp. 42, 241). The literary figure cum sociological metaphor-paradigm of Caliban is central to his view of the region and he draws on Brathwaite’s 1983 study and the 1972 use of the metaphor by the Cuban Fernández Retamar. This being the case, it might have been useful if he had discussed O. Mannoni’s original (1950) formulation of the metaphor in his Prospero and Caliban and the devastating critique of Mannoni’s theory of a Third World “Prospero complex” by Mannoni’s ex-student Frantz Fanon in his Black Skin, White Masks (1952). In the final analysis they are all referring to the “colonial situation” which, as Mannoni pointed out, involves “a mass of illusions and misunderstand-
ings” not dissimilar to the substance of Brathwaite’s “tidalectics.” Again, is Torres-Saillant interested in pursuing long-standing debates or reinventing the wheel of Caribbean intellectual history? On what grounds can any new “intellectual history” of the Caribbean ignore the many queries and challenges raised in the most celebrated and combative intellectual history of the region, Gordon K. Lewis’ *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought* (1983), or write about the Dominican Republic’s nineteenth century without any reference to H. Hoetink’s 1971 classic, *El pueblo dominicano*?

Certainly the course of Caribbean intellectual history-writing should heed the words of Philip Mason in his foreword to the 1956 English edition of *Prospero and Caliban* (Mannoni 1956). While in fundamental disagreement with Mannoni’s formulations, Mason tells us that Mannoni’s book has to be read “as the opening speech of a debate, which best serves its purpose if it provokes an eagerness to continue the discussion.”

One certainly welcomes the contributions of scholars from the various diasporas. One can only hope, however, that in “redrawing the image” of what the Caribbean is, they will not relegate much of what has already been written and debated to the trash heap of history.

**References**


J.H. Elliott’s comparative study of English and Spanish colonization in the Americas is a sweeping synthesis that contributes significantly to our understanding of how European empires rose and fell from the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth. To make the study of these empires over more than three centuries manageable, Elliott chose to focus on British efforts in Massachusetts and Virginia, and Spanish efforts in Mexico and Peru, leaving out Brazil and the Caribbean. Drawing on a vast amount of secondary literature in Spanish and English, for which there is an excellent bibliography, as well as printed documents, he makes a number of important comparisons and contrasts between the two imperial enterprises. His thesis is that the English were aware of the earlier Spanish example and were influenced by it in the seventeenth century. On the other hand, in the late eighteenth century the Spanish colonies emulated the British North American colonies in their independence movements. That is, Spanish American independence “would not have come, or come in the form that it did, without the American Revolution to the north” (p. 391).

Elliott’s approach, perspective, and purpose are clear throughout the book. He wants to assess England and Spain as imperial powers, and in doing so he finds that Spain compared well to England in its colonization efforts, unlike what many nineteenth- and twentieth-century histories and stereotypes comparing the United States and Latin America suggest. Spanish colonial administration was quite efficient and “modern” in the sense of being able to exert state power and influence over its subjects. In fact, Elliott believes that it was more successful at this than the government at home in Spain, or in any other European government at the time. If the two regions took separate paths after independence, the causes were rooted more in the way independence came about than in their respective colonial experiences. Elliott’s perspective, using the traditional comparative imperial approach and the metropole-periphery model to analyze each empire, precludes an investigation of Indians and African slaves as players in colonial developments.

Elliott makes numerous important points in his comparison of the two empires. The Spanish archetype was to establish a seat of government and
rule the native population, induce natives into the European economy, and promote a “civilizing” mission (to include wearing European clothes and conversion to Christianity). In the seventeenth century English colonists in North America attempted to follow this model, incorporating the enslavement and Christianization of Indians, but the circumstances were simply too different to bring success. The Spanish were dealing with heavily populated, centralized, urban areas in Mexico and Peru, while the English were dealing with scattered, rural native populations in North America. Moreover the English were influenced by their experience in Ireland, which involved slowly expanding their area of settlement and influence without directly exploiting labor or conversion to Protestantism. On the other hand, the Spanish were influenced by methods employed during the Reconquista, which included conquering urban areas and conversion to Christianity. In the end New World conditions and Old World backgrounds led the English to abandon their attempts to emulate the Spanish colonial model by the second half of the seventeenth century. British ascendancy beginning in the late seventeenth century was based upon the sugar revolution, seizure of Spanish possessions in the Caribbean and Central America that furthered piracy (directed primarily at the Spanish silver fleets), and a more flexible imperial approach that allowed self-government in its colonies and relatively little royal administration. Spanish decline set in during the same period because of troubles in Spain itself, increasing trade among the colonies instead of to Spain, and with this increasing creole power and interests separate from those of the Spanish crown. The turning point came with the Treaty of Madrid in 1670, when the Spanish ceded lands that the English had already taken from them.

In the eighteenth century creole elites in both empires were engaged in the precarious process of building and maintaining their status and power without upsetting the mother countries or the lower order in their colonial societies. They had to do this in a very different world from that of elites in England and Spain. In both cases notions of creole degeneracy, as well as imperial reform movements in the second half of the eighteenth century, alienated creoles. These elites strove to become loyal equals to their transatlantic counterparts, but they were rejected because of the cultural view that the New World environment (contact with other races, primitive conditions, for example) had, over time, made them inferior and because of diverging political and economic interests. Creoles in both empires revolted at about the same time (the 1770s and early 1780s), but only the British North Americans were initially successful. Their success helped to pave the way for Spanish colonials later.

Elliott’s comparative analysis of empires does not go far in exploring the situation of Indians and especially African slaves. Yet the Atlantic slave trade and African slavery in the Americas were critical components of the Atlantic World that many historians have addressed lately, and this omission leaves Elliott’s comparison of the two empires somewhat incomplete. However, the
book is important for what it does do. The argument that the English followed the Spanish lead in the seventeenth century is well supported. And while Elliott’s view that Spanish creoles followed the British creoles in the path toward independence is more asserted than demonstrated, he is certainly in good company with this claim. Perhaps more importantly, his point that British and Spanish creoles found themselves in a similar position in the late eighteenth century and made their moves accordingly is critical in understanding Atlantic developments in this period.


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It is difficult to generalize about a field as sprawling as Atlantic history. Indeed, even if we narrow our focus a bit and consider only the British Atlantic world, the task isn’t easy. One thing most scholars in the field would agree upon, however, is the seminal role that Jack P. Greene has played in the development of this area of inquiry. Not only has Greene, a prolific scholar if ever there was one, been producing path-breaking work on the British Atlantic world for over forty years now, but he has also been producing – or at least working with, mentoring, and encouraging – wave after wave of talented students pursuing research along parallel lines. Most of these students first encountered Greene at Johns Hopkins, the school that in the eyes of many has done more than any other over the years to promote the Atlantic approach. Greene, his students, and Johns Hopkins converge harmonically in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*. The volume is part of a series under Greene’s general editorship, almost all of the contributors worked under Greene, the volume was co-edited by his former students Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shamas, and it was published by the Johns Hopkins University Press. That this reviewer is also a former student of Greene’s squares the circle, as it were. As difficult as it is to generalize about Atlantic history or even about the British Atlantic world, it is arguably more difficult still to avoid Jack P. Greene, his scholarly progeny, and Johns Hopkins, when trying to do the same.
To say that *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* is the product of a harmonic convergence is not to suggest that the thirteen essays included in the volume demonstrate much thematic unity. In her very insightful – and inventive – introduction, co-editor Carole Shammas strives hard to bring cohesion to the collection, classifying the contributions under three broad rubrics: “Transatlantic Subjects,” “Transatlantic Connections,” and “Imperial Visions and Transatlantic Revisions.” If truth be told, though, Shammas’s efforts aren’t completely successful. To this reviewer the volume is united rather more by the association of the contributors with Greene – and, not surprisingly then, by the high quality of the individual essays – than either by alliteration or by subjects, connections, visions, and revisions (transatlantic or otherwise!).

The range of Greene’s interests is suggested by the scope of the volume, which includes essays on virtually every aspect of the British Atlantic world over the course of the period between about 1500 and 1820. The only major field that is not treated explicitly is economic history, and even so several of the individual essays deal in part with matters economic. Part I of *The Creation of the British American World*, entitled “Transatlantic Subjects,” includes five essays that, as far as I can tell, are grouped together mainly because each of the essays is on a subject! That said, two of these essays are absolutely first rate: one by James Horn and Philip D. Morgan on the quantitative and qualitative contours of European and African migration to British America, and another by Joyce E. Chaplin on the importance and implications (and, alas, relative scholarly neglect) of Indian slavery in early British America. The three remaining essays in this section of the collection are valuable microhistories, wherein the authors, Mark L. Thompson, David Barry Gaspar, and Ray A. Kea, use individual cases at once to enhance and complicate our understanding of the bases of allegiance and authority in early British America (Thompson) and of race and slavery (Gaspar and Kea).

Part II (“Transatlantic Connections”) comprises four illuminating essays dealing with the social, legal, and religious history of early British America. April Lee Hatfield documents the important role merchants, shippers, and seamen played in British America by providing landlubbers with up-to-date information about goings-on around the Atlantic world. According to Hatfield, this role was particularly important in the seventeenth century when a greater proportion of land-based colonists came into contact with the marine community and before alternative sources of such information – most notably newspapers – were widely available. In a stimulating piece on the legal culture of colonial British America, William M. Offut discusses the many different sources of “legal capital” settlers drew upon before narrowing their “legal imaginations” in the late seventeenth century to the common-law tradition. The last two essays in this section are what might be called religious offerings: In one, Avihu Zakai provides a close analysis of Jonathan Edwards’s engagement with, and partial rejection of, various aspects of Enlightenment
thought, and in the other, Wolfgang Splitter lays out the problems German Lutheran missionaries faced in attempting to organize and structure spiritual activities in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania.

However tenuous the relationships among the essays in Parts I and II – and they are tenuous indeed – things become even more exiguous in Part III, which is creatively entitled “Imperial Visions and Transatlantic Revisions.” In my view, there is no substantive way to relate the four essays in this section to one another. Not to worry, though: Each of them is very good and merits our attention. In the first, Elizabeth Mancke, who co-edited the volume, draws attention to the complex history of chartered colonies in the British American world, while in the second, the always interesting Robert Olwell traces striking imperial/botanical connections between the creation of Kew Gardens and the British colonial project in Florida. Following Olwell’s essay is an excellent piece by John E. Crowley on the beginnings of landscape painting in Britain in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the manner in which this genre was deployed for imperial purposes. The volume ends with a fascinating essay by Karin Wolf on the ways in which one important Quaker family in Pennsylvania made strategic use of its British roots to create cultural capital helpful, if not necessary, in negotiating the changing political landscape of post-Revolutionary America.

At the end of the day, then, what we find in The Creation of the British Atlantic World is a collection of superb essays connected not so much by matters of substance, but by the relationship of the authors to one Jack P. Greene. For me – and, I suspect, most readers – that connection is more than enough to deem the volume a success.


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Adam Hochschild is the author of _King Leopold’s Ghost_, a superb example of compelling history for a general audience. He writes with a journalist’s eye
for pace, nuance, and drama, while at the same time giving close attention to a wide range of historical sources. If one were looking for a highly readable, generalist account of the movement to abolish the slave trade, *Bury the Chains* is a good choice. But I suspect most historians will be dissatisfied, and at times even irritated, by Hochschild’s elegant reconstitution of the tale of a handful of high-minded Englishmen who rendered the trade in human beings abhorrent by forcing their fellow Britons to acknowledge the horror that lay behind the sugar they consumed, the tobacco they smoked, and the coffee they drank.

At the end of the eighteenth century it was no small task to end the transatlantic slave trade, as Hochschild forcefully reminds us. It was a crackpot, wildly idealistic notion that flew in the face of contemporary economic reason. Yet, driven by the passion of the indefatigable Thomas Clarkson, the abolitionists persisted with their utopian quest to create a popular movement, which became the very first human rights campaign. Hochschild is clearly in awe of the gangly, redheaded Clarkson. The self-serving sons of William Wilberforce effaced Clarkson from the history of abolitionism, but Hochschild’s book determinedly reinscribes this passionate moral warrior as the movement’s dynamic center. The passing of the Abolition Bill in 1807 was a significant achievement and Hochschild does well to remind us that the dogged moral integrity of the abolitionist crusade cannot be reduced to pragmatic economic imperatives.

*Bury the Chains* presents a satisfying and engaging narrative, never so simplistic and self-congratulatory as the book’s subtitle and gushing blurb might suggest. Hochschild is aware of the limitations of the first abolition movement in refusing to tackle the problem of slavery. Even so, the book is disappointing for its failure to engage fully with the moral ambiguity of this movement and its key players. Hochschild is astute enough to see that the Wedgwood medal of the kneeling slave captured the essential paternalistic character of the movement, and his discussion of the abolitionist-inspired settlement in Sierra Leone hints at how their humane concern could evaporate when slaves got up off their knees. Yet he has ignored the cynically exploitative elements of the Abolition Bill and the seamless transition of abolitionists into the movement for the Christianization and colonization of Africa. In concluding his discussion of the bill, Hochschild seizes upon a significant exchange between William Wilberforce and his close colleague, Henry Thornton (p. 308). “Well Henry, what shall we abolish next?” the exultant Wilberforce declaimed. To which Thornton replied, “The Lottery, I think.” Here is a delicious scene of pious self-congratulation demanding deep analysis, yet Hochschild foregoes the opportunity rigorously to interrogate this incident.

Not only were Wilberforce, Thornton, and their allies unconcerned about extending humane reform to the institution of slavery itself, they actively facilitated the forced exploitation of Africans. With an eye to the prosecu-
tion of the war against France in the Caribbean, the Abolition Bill provided that slaves liberated from slave ships were forfeited to the Crown. To ensure compliance with the new act, Wilberforce, Thornton, and others formed the African Institution, while at the same time they furiously lobbied the government to make Sierra Leone a Crown Colony, advising the prime minister to designate Freetown the receiving depot for captured slave ships. Here, all fit African males slaves “liberated” from slave ships were turned over to military and naval authorities. It was a cynical and immoral manoeuvre. The first governor of the crown colony, Wilberforce’s protégé Thomas Perronet Thompson, quickly recognized that forced recruitment into lifetime military service in the West India Regiments was just one step removed from slavery. He refused to be party to it and wrote strong letters of protest. Enraged, Wilberforce ordered him to relinquish his command to Captain Columbine of the Royal Navy, who had instructions immediately to reinstate the recruitment of liberated Africans.

This behavior only appears grossly hypocritical if you choose to believe what the book’s subtitle trumpets, that Wilberforce and his allies were engaged in a “fight to free the Empire’s slaves.” This was not their fight. These pious Englishmen adopted the abolitionist issue because they believed complicity in the trade degraded the moral integrity of the nation. Theirs was a moral crusade that took on a special impetus in the wake of the humiliating defeat by the American colonists. It was not so much the living conditions of enslaved Africans that they cared about; rather they were concerned about the condition of their own souls. What happened on plantations in America and the West Indies was a small matter, so long as Britons could be absolved from the corrupting taint of the trade in human beings. True, Thomas Clarkson did have a humane interest in the plight of African slaves, yet no less than Wilberforce he was driven by self-regard, seeing in the abolition campaign the opportunity to gain distinction as a heroic visionary. Ironically, Clarkson’s overweening conceit was probably the greatest weapon in the abolitionist arsenal. As Christopher L. Brown has eloquently argued in his masterful Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism, Clarkson presents a case study in the way that self-aggrandizing impulses can facilitate idealistic and humane actions.

Reference

The abolition of the transatlantic slave trade did not end the purchase, sale, and forced migration of people of African descent in the Americas. From the United States to Brazil, the trade in slaves continued, with merchants facilitating fluid markets and transporting slaves hundreds or thousands of miles for re-sale. *The Chattel Principle* offers a rich collection of essays exploring such trade and the forced human migration it entailed. The authors push beyond analysis of the trade itself to raise broader questions about the implications of the internal trade for the nature of the slave system, the relationship of slavery to the market, and connections between the trade and antislavery movements.

Most fundamentally, the collection emphasizes the importance of the internal trade to the territorial spread of slavery. With the rise of cotton production in the United States, planters pushed the frontier incessantly south and west, clearing and cultivating new fields with slave labor imported from the older slave states. Essays by Steven Deyle and Michael Tadman show that most of such slaves moved not with migrating plantation owners, but in the possession of merchant speculators. Their activities supplied much-needed labor to the fledgling plantations, but also propped up slave values in exporting regions. Richard Graham and Robert W. Slenes show similar links between Brazil’s older sugar-producing regions and the emerging coffee plantations after Brazil’s abolition of the transatlantic trade in 1850. Perhaps no essay illustrates the importance of the internal trade to the functioning of the slave system more dramatically than Seymour Drescher’s analysis of the British intra-Caribbean trade after 1807. Drescher shows that severe (and unique) British restrictions on the internal trade prevented a major migration of slave labor to newly acquired territories in Demerara and Trinidad. As a result, “any major frontier boom [in the British Caribbean] was preemptively prohibited” (pp. 238-39). The “chattel principle” – the notion that people of African descent could be owned as movable property – was crucial, these authors argue, to the profitability and expansion of the slave system.

Reflecting on this instrumentality of the trade, Tadman, Walter Johnson, Adam Rothman, and Daina Ramey Berry critique the notion that slavery...
in the United States is best understood as a paternalist system. They assert that, given the frequency with which plantation owners sold individual slaves and severed families to streamline their workforces, the slave regime must be understood as fundamentally market-oriented, even capitalist despite the lack of wage labor. “If this was not ‘capitalism,’” Johnson argues, “then in some important way the descriptive power of that term as a tool of historical analysis has been diminished. For slaves ... were pieced out and priced on a grid that applied abstract notions of physical ability and potential” (p. 8). Edward E. Baptist hastens to add that in this market slaves were often “fetishized commodities,” with the promise of sexual exploitation and mythical meaning factoring into the prices buyers paid. Even Lacy Ford – who offers a dissenting voice with his assertion that the critique of the paternalist paradigm “scarcely draws blood” – acknowledges the importance of the market, arguing that the steady volume of trade helped keep the enormous amount of capital tied up in human property liquid.

_The Chattel Principle_ suggests that this market orientation of American slave regimes had a decidedly negative impact on the enslaved. Tadman, Graham, and Slennes illustrate the trade’s regular destruction of families in the United States and Brazil. On the other hand, Hilary McD. Beckles shows that regulation of the internal market in the British Caribbean typically forced slaveholders to move whole families together. The essays also emphasize that masters used the threat of sale to long-distance traders as a tool to control their slaves with fear. Robert H. Gudmestad and Philip Troutman both show the desperate lengths to which slaves would go to escape the trade, through suicide, rebellion, and flight. Though few such efforts met with success, they were not without impact. Several of the authors argue that such resistance called attention to the trade, inciting public debate and antislavery sentiment in both the United States and Brazil.

The chief weakness of the collection is a lack of geographic and temporal balance. Of the thirteen essays, eight focus on the United States, leaving just three for the West Indies and two for Brazil. To some degree the imbalance reflects the scale of the internal markets – that of the United States was indeed the largest, with over one million slaves moving to the southwest from 1790 to 1860 (p. 93). Nonetheless, the U.S. bias limits the opportunity for comparison. In addition, the focus on the period after transatlantic abolition prevents comparison across time. Johnson suggests that before abolition there had been no “knowledge or regulation” of “the internal slave trade” (p. 4). That is not exactly true. The internal trade certainly received less attention while the transatlantic trade operated, but several British North American colonies enacted duties and prohibitions to limit slave imports from other colonies, voicing preference for African shipments. The Jamaican Assembly, on the other hand, passed several duties on slaves exported from that island in an effort to prevent the transshipment to foreign colonies of slaves arriving from
Africa. Likewise, during the Minas Gerais gold rush, some of Brazil’s sugar planters sought to limit the internal slave trade to interior mining regions. One wonders what a more thoroughgoing comparison of internal slave markets before and after the abolition of the transatlantic trade might yield.

It is a sign of the importance of *The Chattel Principle*’s subject and the quality of its conception and scholarship that readers are left wishing for more information on many points, despite constantly gaining new insights. Together, these essays demonstrate the vital importance of internal slave trades to the functioning of American slavery, for such markets kept property in slaves (and hence the labor force) mobile and liquid. The book’s rich examination of the connections between internal slave trades and the workings of the whole slave regime makes it required reading not only for students of the slave trade, but also for those interested in the institution of slavery and the lives of the enslaved more broadly.

*The Dutch Slave Trade, 1500-1850.* P.C. EMMER. New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006. 166 pp. (Cloth US$ 75.00, £ 45.00)

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In 2000 Piet Emmer published *De Nederlandse slavenhandel, 1500-1850.* Written in Dutch but intended for a broad audience, the book created a little controversy. Johannes Postma, a renowned specialist on Dutch transatlantic slave trade, reviewed the book for this journal in 2002, giving it a mixed evaluation:

While the book does well in dispensing new information, the tone is potentially disturbing. Emmer seems to delight in denouncing views that reveal the worst aspects of the slave trade, sometimes bordering on ridicule ... He often cites popularly held notions and interpretations propagated by abolitionists, which he then refutes with contemporary research. Despite periodic assertions that the traffic was inhumane, he creates the impression that the slave trade wasn’t so bad after all.

The book was reprinted three years later, in 2003, exactly as before with one exception: the addition of an epilogue entitled, “Slave Trade and Political
Correctness.” In this amazing chapter, Emmer rebuked his reviewers and critics, calling Postma the “head accountant” of the Dutch slave trade (p. 265). The book under review is an English translation of the 2000 edition, with the 2003 epilogue fortunately omitted.

How does one review a book that has already been reviewed in the same journal by the specialist in the field? Postma provided a clear outline and setup of the book, which I will not repeat here. Nor do I disagree with his assessment, quoted above. Rather, I will focus on two aspects of the book that, in my view, are misleading: the use of sources and the title.

The book is based almost exclusively on secondary sources. Although the introduction suggests that it “includes the findings of the most recent research on the slave trade in general,” (p. 123) the bibliography reveals that it draws on only one publication published after 1999 (McLeod & De Haseth, Slavernij en memorie). It does not take into account new information on the volume, operation, and nature of the slave trade in general and the Dutch slave trade specifically, provided recently by Jelmer Vos, David Eltis, Johannes Postma, Han Jordaan, and others. The bibliography also reveals a selective use of secondary sources: many scholarly publications that disagree with Emmer’s views are ignored, for example Alex van Stipriaan’s analyses of investments in slavery and the crisis of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange of 1773.

The title, too, is infelicitous, for the book is not about the entire Dutch involvement in slave trading. In explaining that his book is “limited to the Dutch slave trade in the Atlantic area,” (p. ix) Emmer points out that the Dutch also participated in the slave trade in Asia and in South Africa but that there is far less archival material about that trade. This is a curious argument for a book based almost exclusively on secondary sources. The book would be more accurately titled The Dutch Transatlantic Slave Trade. As for the time frame (1500-1830), merchants from the Netherlands were not to my knowledge involved in the slave trade before 1600 in either the Atlantic or Asia.

The book’s polemical character and selective use of sources have led to a number of inaccuracies. To cite but one of many, Emmer alludes to the sale of slaves on the island of Curaçao (pp. 82-86). However, during the asiento trade with the Spanish colonies, most slaves on Curaçao were not sold, but simply transferred to the agent of the asiento merchants on the island, while accounts between the Dutch West India Company and the asiento merchants were settled in Amsterdam. Only sick slaves were auctioned in those years. Surprisingly, the word asiento does not even appear in the index.

It is unclear for what audience this book is intended. It certainly is not a book for scholars. In that respect, Postma’s 1990 book is still unsurpassed. For use in the classroom, Emmer’s tone is too polemical. Postma’s concise survey, The Atlantic Slave Trade (2003), or even Herbert S. Klein’s The Atlantic Slave Trade (1999), both written for classroom use, are more appropriate. So what kind of audience is left? Maybe Emmer’s purpose was to provoke, and in that
respect the book excels. Employing a question-and-answer style, the book provides a summary of the Dutch participation in the Atlantic slave trade. Accounting for less than five percent of that trade, the Dutch were statistically minor participants in the traffic, yet their involvement was significant.

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The appeal of the nine essays in this book will largely depend upon the reader’s own interest and intellectual sensibilities. The title and introduction suggest “the Atlantic world,” but outside a single essay from Barbara Fuchs on the work of a seventeenth-century Andean writer Felipe Guaman Poma, the contents emphasize select areas of the British Atlantic. The Caribbean is basically absent – a point the editors admit, and lament, in their introduction. Many of the
essays favor a postmodernist approach, with close readings of selected text(s) or authors. Two essays, one by Benjamin Braude on the visual evolution of the Sons of Ham and the other by Gordon Sayre concerning the colonial origins posited about Native Americans, which continue to resonate in contemporary debates, interpretations, and even academic texts, are particular standouts.

Many of the contributors focus their analysis upon one text or author. Karen Kupperman analyzes how Tacitus’s *Life of Julius Agricola* helped to shape English colonial interpretations of an attack made in Virginia by Pamunkey’s Indians in 1622 (p. 30). Kim Hall examines the works of seventeenth-century domestic manual writer Thomas Tyron, with a focus on his discussion of food practices to condemn slavery. By pursuing this line of inquiry, Hall hopes “to show modern readers the ways in which foodways were used to mark often racialized status differences” (p. 103). Francesca Royster frames her analysis around a question: “What can representational intersections between African and Animal in early modern drama tell us about the perceived subjectivity of black people during this period?” (p. 113). Her answer is found in a close reading of John Webster’s 1612 play, *White Devil*, and examination of the image of Zanche, “a Moorish serving maid,” interspersed with “early modern discourse about the ownership and domestication of animals – namely dogs” (p. 114). Curiously though, while the play’s general outline is provided, no information is provided about the author, or where and how he acquired (or invented) his ideas about Moors. Joseph Roach examines Covent Garden in England and its uses or appearances in the play *Pygmalion*. Roach outlines his goal early (“I want to evoke a particular place, a situation, which is also a place in time, a predicament that goes by the name of the modern”), before offering the argument that “time – the supreme cultural fiction no matter how it is narrated is more often experienced as heterogeneous and uneven, as cyclical rather than linear, as asynchronous rather than synchronous” (p. 138). Less sweeping is David J. Baker’s analysis of the “heterogeneous, conflicted, and volatile” nature of seventeenth-century “New English writing directed against the inhabitants of Ireland” (p. 154). While the evolution of English thinking toward the Irish receives investigation, corresponding English actions, violent and bloody, are not equally emphasized.

The essay by co-editor Philip Beidler provides a broad survey of American (read: United States of America) views toward early modern Islam, arguing that Americans found both Muslims and their religion simultaneously exotic and repelling. Beidler suggests that with the most recent immigration of Muslims into the United States, combined with the increasing amount of media images of them, “we still don’t know who they are” (p. 182), which leads to the same sort of racialized thinking that many of the earlier essays discuss as having occurred toward Africans (and to the Irish and Native Americans). Here, Beidler nicely connects the “medieval” to the “modern” of the volume’s title, though the ease with which he locates the use of racial
constructions purely in “the west” (p. 183) seemingly omits the long history of Islamic slavery and anti-Black-African stereotypes that both preceded and continued past the era of the Atlantic slave trade.

Gordon Sayre’s essay on “colonial theories of the origins of native American peoples” deftly analyzes the “five types of evidence that were and are used in debates about Native American origins, and then five major types of theories built upon that evidence” (p. 55). Equally fascinating is Benjamin Braude’s piece on the transition of the story of Noah and the sons of Ham from “a vehicle for Jew-hatred to a vehicle for Black-hatred,” and the link with Michelangelo’s *Nakedness of Noah* (p. 79). Regrettably, this book omits the key visual images so important for Braude’s argument. His project, which analyzes “how the story of Noah and his sons has been visually imagined, before and after the Sistine Chapel,” brilliantly chronicles the shifting uses of Ham against Jews and then Africans (p. 80). Braude, like Sayre and Beidler, successfully links the medieval to the modern, a worthy goal pursued with vigor by many of the book’s contributors.


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The tropics have long defined Europe’s central horizon for exotic fantasy. This edited volume is aimed at providing a more meticulous scholarly account of how the midsection of the globe entered colonial imagination through moments of art, science, and commerce. To this end it offers a richly detailed and particularistic set of essays, here densely tangled together and there separated enough to reveal patches of open ground. Like any collection, the result is far from uniform or even, but in this case aptly conveys the variegated nature of alterity that it seeks to describe.

*Tropical Visions* opens with an introductory overview by the editors. In it they suggest a parallel between “tropicality” and Orientalism, although cautioning that such conventions of representation were not unidirectional,
but rather produced Europe alongside its others. They note that vision holds a prominent place in the construction of these conventions, and that Alexander von Humbolt played a pivotal role in defining them along a borderline between art and science. Key concerns thus include the significance of presence and observation, mapping, and the typification of sites and iconic images. Driver and Martins emphasize the regionalism of tropical tropes, following David Arnold in pointing out that landscapes in the Americas and the Caribbean influenced the geographical definition of the tropics to a far greater extent than those of India. Based on this overview, they sort the collection under three headings: voyages, mappings, and sites.

The first section commences with a chapter by Claudio Greppi that focuses on the importance of direct observation in the production of iconic tropical landscapes. As Greppi notes, even as academic conventions expanded, topographic painting found redemption in the service of natural history. From the time of Captain Cook on, an expedition artist was expected to capture, in La Pérouse’s memorable words, “everything it is impossible to describe” (p. 26). This tradition led to Humboldt’s effort to capture the “physiognomy of nature” and the well-illustrated voyage of Charles Darwin. In the next chapter, Michael Dettelbach explores the Humboldtian moment in greater detail. Humboldt saw his exploration of comparative physiology and anatomy as an investigation into the geographic influence on animate forms. He not only observed, but also experimented, and Dettelbach suggests that Humboldt’s tropics really entered the world through his cold, drafty laboratories on his home continent and his earlier exploration of the subterranean geography of mines. Humboldt’s tropical project, he proposes, was as much representation of self and sensibility as of surroundings. The third contribution, by the two editors, examines William Burchell’s collection of tropical nature. A careful observer of “tropical exuberance,” Burchell produced an assemblage that did not always fit easily into the theoretical system with which he sought to order it. Just as travelers are not always in control, collections can overwhelm their makers (p. 74).

Peter Hulme introduces the section on mappings by comparing descriptions of Dominica and Tahiti within a broader imaginative construction of tropicality. Noting obvious differences between the two islands, such as the moment of their European discovery, he traces framings that nonetheless united them, such as ethnographies of temperament strung along a line between savage and civilized life. Ultimately, Hulme suggests, the destruction wrought by European expansion could be read back into the islands and regions themselves, suffering from what Evelyn Waugh called “the fatal gift of beauty.” Starr Douglas and Felix Driver turn the discussion from literature to entomology to examine the eighteenth-century work of Henry Smeathman on termites. Following the Atlantic triangle trade both to West Africa and the West Indies, Smeathman found in termites both a subject for natural history and a model for government, one that he would cite in promoting the
settlement of Sierra Leone. Although that colonial project would take a different trajectory than in his plan, Douglas and Driver underscore the lasting impact of Smeathman’s illustrations as iconic representations of tropical nature for entomology. In the third essay of this section, D. Graham Burnett explores the oceanography of Matthew Fontaine Maury. Maury, an autodidact American naval officer, embarked on a massive effort to collect information about oceanic conditions via logbooks and the aid of international correspondents. With this assemblage he created charts for winds and currents and even whale habitats, the last proving of value to Herman Melville. Although both Maury’s theoretical paradigm and the age of sail would soon be superseded, he left a legacy of improved sailing times and an image of tropical waters as a seething cauldron dividing the oceans from within.

David Arnold brings in the theme of sites with a study of Joseph Hooker’s travels on the Indian subcontinent. Although formally in the tropics, India was not a part of its dominant representation. Hooker, however, made extensive use of the idea of the tropics in his scientific descriptions, combining close observation of plant species with emotional and experiential associations, bringing the subcontinent into its proper conceptual latitude. Leonard Bell contributes an examination of photography in Samoa, comparing pictures of specifically local experiences with those presenting tropical generalities. Noting the stagecraft necessary to produce all photographic images at this time, he makes the case for a more complex understanding of colonial representation than simple imposition of ideology. The photographic record suggests a borderland with a range of different projects, some of which are remembered and printed more frequently than others. Rod Edmond follows this with a chapter addressing tropical disease, particularly leprosy, and Metropolitan fears of degeneration. Following the nineteenth-century expansion of the term “tropics” to apply to disease and clothing, Edmond finds both fears and speculations for antecedents of biological warfare, as well as a deepening sense of incommensurability between tropical and temperate worlds.

The book closes with an afterword by Dennis Cosgrove that discusses the concept of tropicality at greater length. Noting that the original tropics were celestial rather than terrestrial markers, he both underscores Humboldt’s role as a pivotal figure, and reminds readers that the physical world itself also contributes to the general construction of geographic difference. Recognizing unifying factors such as the movement of sun and earth, he suggests, only brings the diversity that Humboldt emphasized into sharper focus.

The volume’s coverage may be far from exhaustive, and focused more on the British Empire than on others. Nonetheless, the case studies provide a welcome wealth of historical specificity to support theoretical claims about the co-construction of both Europe and its colonies. Featuring a number of excellent color plates as well as black-and-white illustrations, the assemblage also offers visual images of “tropicality” which, as Douglas and Driver...
remind us, can leave a deeper impact than words. Although the density of detail in *Tropical Visions* might daunt casual readers, it is hard to imagine a better short collection for scholars interested in these themes.


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Travel writing is often regarded today as a minor, somewhat marginal genre, but across the long eighteenth century, in Britain at least, it dominated the literary marketplace. This was a period of vigorous imperial expansion that also witnessed on the domestic front a boom in tourism, and these two developments generated a vast travel literature that took a bewildering variety of forms and modes. In all its different manifestations travel writing was hugely popular with the reading public. And if in some forms, or for some readers, it was simply a source of entertainment, a repository of curious facts and rousing adventures, there was also a much more serious side to the genre. Travel narratives could be at the cutting edge of both scientific enquiry and aesthetic theory, on the one hand supplying vital data to disciplines such as natural history, geography, and anthropology, and on the other offering new reflections on the nature of the sublime and the picturesque. Simultaneously, they often fed directly into some of the most urgent political, moral, and economic debates of the day. Whether one was concerned to celebrate or lament the modernizing tendencies at work in British society, or to state the moral and economic case for or against the abolition of slavery – to cite just two of the burning issues of the age – travel writing in the eighteenth century was essential reading, and a key medium for both the dissemination of information and the shaping of opinion.

The massive presence of travel writing in British culture in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is conveyed powerfully by *Travel Writing, 1700-1830*. A substantial volume that brings together almost 80 extracts from some 70 texts, this excellent new anthology amply illustrates through its size
alone the sheer abundance of travel writing in the period. More importantly, the collection also provides a fairly comprehensive survey of the diversity of styles, modes, and agendas embraced by the genre, and the key stages of its development across the period. Most of what one might regard as the “landmark” texts of the form—the narratives of Dampier, Cook, Park, Addison, Gilpin, and the like—are represented here, along with many less familiar works. Inevitably, the majority of these accounts are by White, privileged males (a reflection of the realities of both travel and publication in this era), but care has also been taken to provide contrasting perspectives: the volume includes 17 accounts by female travelers, for example, and a handful by lower-class figures such as the ex-slaves Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince, and the seaman John Nicol. Moreover, some judicious selections ensure that readers do not forget the many unlettered individuals on the move in this period, and the numerous unfortunates who in many cases might be more accurately categorized as “displaced persons” rather than travelers. Thus Nicol recalls his dealings with the female convicts he helped transport to Australia, while Janet Schaw provides a poignant account of meeting with a group of Scottish emigrants, forced from their homes by the machinations of an unscrupulous landlord. As this suggests, the volume as a whole offers some fascinating juxtapositions that serve collectively to illustrate both the dominant paradigms of eighteenth-century travel writing, yet also the many alternative viewpoints and voices to be found in the genre. Throughout, the editors’ expert commentary succeeds admirably in contextualizing this material, demonstrating both why the accounts sampled here mattered so much in their own day, and why they remain relevant to a great variety of current academic debates.

The anthology’s geographical coverage is not complete. Organized in the first place by region, and then by topics relevant to each region, there are no sections relating either to the Arctic, South America (although the Caribbean section does include John Gabriel Stedman’s account of his experiences in Suriname) or more crucially, India. The Caribbean, however, gets a section to itself, as do the regions that arguably most impinge on Caribbeanist concerns: Africa, North America, and Britain itself. The Caribbean material is grouped under the headings of “Natural History and Aesthetics” (Hans Sloane and James Hakewill), “Working Travellers” (Stedman, Olaudah Equiano, and Mary Prince), “Planters” (William Beckford and Matthew Gregory Lewis), and “Ladies” (Janet Schaw and Maria Nugent). Here as elsewhere in the volume, interesting selections have been made that play off each other in illuminating and thought-provoking ways. Thus the determinedly aestheticizing focus of James Hakewill and William Beckford, their concentration on the picturesque potentialities of Jamaica, seems more obviously an act of wilful blindness, if not outright collusion with planter interests, when juxtaposed with the powerful accounts of the brutal realities of life in a slave-owning culture by Stedman, Equiano, and Prince. Overall, the nine extracts convey
well the dominant discourses shaping British perceptions of the Caribbean, the tensions and contradictions inherent in those discourses, and the protests sometimes raised against them.

Taken as a whole, *Travel Writing, 1700-1830* marshals an impressive range of material (much of it out of print, or hard to get hold of for those without access to a good research library), at a reasonable price. Students and researchers from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds, and engaged in any number of academic debates, will find it an invaluable introduction to a hugely influential genre, while for any teacher designing a course that features the travel writing of this period, it is an absolute godsend. And even for those already familiar with the material, this well-conceived collection opens up interesting new perspectives and fruitful avenues of enquiry.

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This ambitious and bold book both surveys the main currents of Anglophone Caribbean literary history and proposes alternative modes of examining the literature. It focuses on “exclusions, eclipses and eschewals embedded in other West Indian literary histories,” not in order to “marginalize” the well-known texts, but because “the profile, prestige and platforms accorded [them] have served to drown out the more subtle, strained and sometimes discordant tones of many others, still waiting to be heard” (p. 7). Thus it contributes to the tradition of what Donnell identifies as “liberatory poetics” (p. 245): its intent is not simply to write a history of literary history but to rewrite the extant literary history, freeing those works that have been ignored. It adheres strongly to what Donnell suggests is the “general precept of postcolonial literary criticism that reading literature can bring us to an understanding of the conditions of being in such a way as to increase the possibility of positively reshaping those conditions” (p. 232). There is a missionary zeal to this work, the frequent “I wish to argue” insertions revealing both the confidence with which Donnell rejects the colonizing by critics, publishers, academics, and
media of so much of West Indian literature and her passion for championing the unsung authors who don’t fit the paradigms of dominant theories.

Because Donnell’s distrust of unexamined orthodoxies is coupled with a broad interest in literary contexts, this book is a stunning combination of survey, criticism, and informed reading. Donnell is vitally aware of the conflation of history, literature, and theory, and her discussions are grounded in close attention to both texts and the political and cultural history surrounding them. Influenced by David Scott’s use of “problem spaces” (1999), she structures the book around a series of “critical moments” involving “a cluster of issues – anti-colonialism, nationalism; migration and diaspora; the centrality of African Caribbean ethnicity; the concept of women as doubly colonised and the marginalisation of sexuality and homosexuality” – that have influenced the paradigms of Caribbean literary history (p. 5).

Donnell sees the first surge of literary theory appearing in the 1960s and 1970s, “during the critical moment of cultural nationalism” (p. 7). It focused on post-1950 literature, produced mainly by male writers who migrated to London. She examines the reasons for this emphasis, including the reluctance of critics to visit the archives and, more significantly, the concerns voiced by such critics as Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Gordon Rohlhr, and Sylvia Wynter. The reigning view that West Indian authors had a duty to their society to focus on the culture and language of the people, particularly those of African descent, as distinct from colonial models, fueled literary criticism throughout the rest of the twentieth century. Donnell does not question the usefulness of the paradigm, but she does show how its limitations have warped the canon. There were writers who did not fit the cultural nationalism agenda of the period, particularly those who wrote before 1950. By examining the works of such figures as J.E.C. McFarlane, Tropica (Mary Adella Wolcott), Vivian Virtue, and Una Marson within the context of colonization and empire and illustrating overlaps in both forms and ideologies between them and the literature of cultural nationalism, Donnell draws them into the canon of West Indian literature.

Donnell identifies the second stage of literary theory as “black diasporic” (p. 7), its seminal text being Paul Gilroy’s The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (1993). Just as cultural nationalism theory excluded pre-1950 literature, the Black Atlantic ignored that of writers who stayed in the Caribbean and wrote about it rather than the migratory experience. Donnell goes “against the ‘flow’ of Black Atlantic studies by focusing on writings that contest the seemingly naturalised version of Caribbean identity as always elsewhere,” once again pointing to “under-researched archives” (p. 79), as well to homegrown contemporary literature and criticism that show the importance of geographical location. Counteracting the emphasis on “dislocated” cultures and “flattened” identities that neglects island-based works, Donnell examines Samuel Selvon’s 1955 An Island is a World and Earl Lovelace’s 1996 Salt, as
well as the writings of Olive Senior, Erna Brodber, and the pre-1950 Scottish-Jamaican Albinia MacKay, to illustrate that the metropolitan-centered literature of the Black diaspora less easily defines West Indian literature than that created in the islands, which are themselves both linguistically and culturally global. She also suggests that “by returning the critical gaze to the local and the dweller we can recover the literary connection to forms of resistance and agency that seek to secure the pathways between social justice, cultural recognition and the writings/rightings of history” (p. 127).

Donnell describes the widely accepted notion that West Indian women’s literature began with Merle Hodge’s *Crick Crack Monkey*, published in 1970, as the second mythological boom in West Indian literary history, the first being the perception that West Indian literature began in 1950. While the male-oriented Black Atlantic criticism was flourishing, feminist criticism emerged and, not surprisingly, followed in its wake, focusing on the Black female migratory experience of West Indian writers and their characters. As with its model, Donnell says, this feminist paradigm was exclusive, neglecting the works of Indian-Caribbean and Creole, as well as pre-1970, writers, one of whom, Una Marson, she discusses in some detail. Donnell’s survey of Black feminist criticism leads her to critiques of the use of African-American feminist theory to describe Caribbean literature, challenged by the localized studies of Evelyn O’Callaghan and Carolyn Cooper, and of the negative term “double colonization.” She proposes instead the espionage term “double agent” to describe how writers “mobilise gender, as well as ethnicity and cultural identity, as a site of resistance and affirmation” (p. 138). Donnell further tries to rectify the limitations of Black feminist theory with an extended discussion of the Indian-Caribbean writers Narmala Shewcharan and Ramabai Espinet and the indigenous poetics of *matikor* and *dougl* proposed by Rosanne Kanhai and Shalini Puri.

The study concludes with a look at the critical moment now emerging, in which we see “the articulation and inscription of diverse sexual identities” that “question the dominant matrix of race, ethnicity, gender, class and nation through which Caribbean literary forms and cultural identities” (p. 181) are commonly viewed. Donnell suggests that most of the literature up to the 1990s, much of which focused on childhood and adolescence, was silent about sexuality. More recent works, however, have treated a variety of sexual experiences, including mixed-race unions (as in Clem Maharaj’s *The Dispossessed*, 1992); intense violence (as in Edwidge Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, 1994); and what Evelyn O’Callaghan sees as a pervasive absence of joy in sexual encounters (as in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*, 1991). Observing that “freedom struggles and rights movements have been the political foundation of postcolonial studies from its very beginnings” (p. 202), Donnell argues that recent literature has provided a variety of relevant sex-related topics, including same-sex unions, AIDS, and transgender
experience. She examines the social context for this literature, particularly the laws enacted following the Buju Banton “battyman” affair in Jamaica, and provides detailed discussions of the works of several authors, including Dionne Brand, Lawrence Scott, Patricia Powell, and Shani Mootoo.

Both in the works Donnell discusses and in this study, we see the complexities involved in forging standards of literary theory and criticism. With a work as wide-ranging as this, there are bound to be readers who question the selections under discussion or the use or definitions of the “critical moments.” The emphasis on Jamaican as well as women’s literature may seem in itself exclusive. More troublesome is the narrowness of Donnell’s definition of postcolonial literature, exemplified in her criticism of Jamaica Kincaid’s My Brother (1997) for its lack of interest in “the ethics of sexuality” (p. 228). But such caveats are more than offset by the introduction of new subjects in both theory and literature, by the careful and often innovative reading of texts, and by the intelligence of the discussion.

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Cannibal Modernities brings together two cultural traditions which, considering how much they have in common, know surprisingly little about each other – those of the Caribbean and Brazil. Using an impressive theoretical framework, Madureira offers a careful and well-crafted analysis of twentieth-century avant-garde movements in both regions. The overall question that pervades his analysis is the Derridean conundrum of whether it is possible for writers and artists from countries with a colonial past to criticize the West without becoming themselves part of its grand narrative of progress and enlightenment. He concludes that it is possible, or at least, that it was possible for some modernist writers, among them C.L.R. James, Aimé Césaire, Oswald de Andrade, and Alejo Carpentier, to change, from the margins, the overall meaning of European modernity. In his words, “these marginal repetitions of the signs of modernity and modernism affect a fundamental rethinking and reformulation of the modern” (p. 215). Cannibal Modernities proposes, then, the same inversion formulated in the works it studies: instead of accepting the common assumption that Caribbean and Latin American modernisms are nothing less than derivations of European movements, it proclaims that European modernity itself has been partly shaped by its encounters with the Americas.

To arrive at such a conclusion, Madureira engages in dense theoretical discussions. He accepts the Jamesonian proposition that it is necessary to articulate the local and the global, but sees as equally fundamental the “postcolonial interrogation of the (epistemic) violence associated with such totalizing (critical) projects” (p. 11). This subscription to postcolonial theories does not keep him from criticizing Homi Bhabha, however, for under-theorizing the “modes of articulation between the rhetorical and the political” (p. 11). It is Paul Gilroy’s Black Atlantic (1993), and indeed Derrida’s Writing and Difference (1980), that nonetheless seem to provide Cannibal’s Modernities with its most important theoretical insight, which is that “‘marginal’ critiques of modernity are necessarily located both inside and outside the very enlightenment tradition whose ‘operational principles’ they seek simultaneously to put into question” (p. 28).
Madureira’s theoretical ponderings are carried through in his close analyses of several primary works. Chapter 1, “Lapses in Taste: Antropofagia as the Primitive Aesthetic of Underdeveloped Brazil,” takes a thorough look at Antropofagia, focusing not only on the foundational “Manifesto Antropófago” but also on Oswald de Andrade’s later developments of his own theories. “In the Land of the Great Serpent: The Poetics of National Development and the Sublime Topography of the Amazon” is dedicated to Raul Bopp’s long poem Cobra Norato. Instead of seeing the poem as the quintessentially antropófago text (as most critics do), Madureira compares it, quite convincingly, to an exemplary work from the nationalist wing of the São Paulo avant-garde, Cassiano Ricardo’s Martim Cenerê. Chapter 3, “God in the Machine: Primitivism, National Identity, and the Question of Technology in Mário de Andrade’s Macunaíma,” is a study of Mário de Andrade’s seminal novel. Once again, Madureira diverges from most readings of Macunaíma, which tend to see it as an allegory of Brazil and its three formative races (Indian, European, and African). In Cannibal Modernities the novel is defined by the discontinuity between “the people” (a gente) represented in the protagonist epithet (hero of our people), and “the people” that have been silenced by the genocide of European invasion, and in whose name the narrator claims to speak at the end of the novel. Chapter 4, “Cannibal Allegories: Cinema Novo and the ‘Myth’ of Popular Cinema,” analyzes two films: Joaquim Pedro de Andrade’s Macunaíma, and Nelson Pereira dos Santos’s Como Era Gostoso o Meu Francês (How Tasty was My Little Frenchman). The fifth chapter, “The Shadow Cast by the Enlightenment: The Haitian Revolution and the Naming of Modernity’s Other,” focuses on C.L.R. James’s The Black Jacobins and Aimé Césaire’s Toussaint Louverture and Cahier d’un retour au pays natal (Notebook of a return to my native land). Their views of the Haitian Revolution are read under the theoretical light of Frantz Fanon and Édouard Glissant. Madureira emphasizes James’s and Césaire’s revision of Hegel’s unidirectional (and racist) definition of History. He chooses neither to accept nor to dismiss the question of whether these authors are not ultimately making what could be described as a Hegelian critique. Instead he affirms, with Gilroy and Derrida, that James’s and Césaire’s views of History, like Oswald de Andrade’s Antropofagia, are written from both within and without the Hegelian system. Chapter 6, “The Marvelous Royalty of Henri Christophe’s Kingdom: Cultural Difference and the Temporality of Underdevelopment,” compares the figure of Henri [Henry] Christophe in Aimé Césaire’s La tragédie du roi Christophe (The tragedy of King Christophe) and Alejo Carpentier’s El reino de este mundo (The kingdom of this world). In different ways, both authors use Christophe as a denunciation of Europe’s problematic claim to modernity. The last chapter, “‘Something New in a Decaying World’: Alejo Carpentier’s El siglo de las luces, or, The Signs of Progress on the Margins of History,” analyzes
how Carpentier’s *El siglo de las luces* (Explosion in the cathedral) exposes “the incompatibility between the discourses of the French Revolution and the struggles for liberation that the narrative of History tends to transcribe in minor key” (p. 212).

*Cannibal Modernities* is an illuminating study, not only for scholars specializing on the Caribbean or Brazil. Its theoretical breadth and sensitive close readings will appeal to anyone interested in the way avant-garde movements developed under Europe’s shadow, and the idea that their power to affect Europe’s own modernity may be greater than most traditional cultural histories have been willing to admit.

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In this book Zilkia Janer departs from Doris Sommer’s critical term “foundational fictions” (1993) to analyze what she defines as “impossible romance” in Puerto Rican nation-building literature. If for Sommer nation-building narratives in Latin America were defined by the economic and political marriage of the main social actors as symbolized by heterosexual marriage, Janer argues that in Puerto Rico (as in other literatures of the Caribbean) this alliance between nationalism, politics, and the state appears as an impossibility. She defines “impossible romance” as “the dominant allegory, articulating the incapacity to satisfactorily define the relationship between different sectors of Puerto Rican society ... Seduction, rape and humiliated manhood – instead
of romantic love – are used to articulate the relationship between different groups in the nation” (p. 7). For Janer, this impossibility relies on the ways colonial relations have shaped the political history of the island. She coins the term “colonial nationalism” to define the historical particularities of Puerto Rican nationalism, and the continuous negotiations, mediations, and transactions of the political and intellectual elites, first under Spanish domination and secondly after 1898, when Puerto Rico became part of the United States. Framed in the theoretical discussions of history and class from the Subaltern Studies Group in India and Latin America, and views of discourses of race, gender, and sexuality from postcolonial studies, the book depicts Puerto Rican colonial nationalism as “an ally of United States colonialism and hemispheric hegemony” (p. 10), while it describes clearly the contradictions of Creole and working-class subaltern intellectuals in their struggles for representation and hegemony.

In the introduction Janer defines her theoretical framework, emphasizing the ways colonialism has shaped Puerto Rican literary production as a type of “battlefield” for representation. Her analysis, which is organized around her definition of subaltern intellectuals as mediating figures, hegemonic within their working-class group and subaltern when seen vis-à-vis Creole intellectuals, covers works by Puerto Rican working-class men and women, as well as Creole men and women in the period 1849-1930. One of the main contributions of this book is the way it puts together Creole canonical authors of Puerto Rican literature and culture, such as Manuel Alonso, Manuel Zeno Gandía, Antonio S. Pedreira, Salvador Brau, Luis Palés Matos, Vicente Géigel Polanco, René Marqués, Pedro Juan Soto, Enrique Laguerre, Carmela Eulate Sanjurjo, Ana Roqué, and María Cadilla de Martínez with non-canonical women writers and working-class intellectuals such as Mercedes Solá, Carmen Polo Taforó, Ramón Romero Rosa, José E. Levis, Magdaleno González, Arturo Más Miranda, and Luisa Capetillo.

Chapter 1, “Colonization as Seduction,” focuses on the work of Manuel Zeno Gandía and Manuel Alonso (El Gíbaro) and their paternalistic representations of the jíbaro or peasant population. One of the key elements here is Janer’s analysis of the complexities of Zeno Gandía’s novels, going beyond his canonical work La charca (The Pond) to his other novels, El negocio, Garduña and Redentores. Chapter 2, “Creating a National Womanhood,” focuses on the writings of Creole women, mainly the ways these writers raised their voices in defense of women’s education and right to vote. As Janer concludes from the work of these writers, Creole White women, wanting to be modern without losing their “femininity,” claimed and constructed the “feminine” as the center, not only of the great Puerto Rican family but also of Puerto Rican national culture.

Chapter 3, “Rape in the Family,” focuses on dramatic dialogues and labor press articles written by working-class intellectuals. Here we see how these
intellectuals negotiated race and gender tensions in the Puerto Rican labor movement and how they represented themselves vis-à-vis Creole intellectual discourses. This chapter, which includes a brief history of the relationship between the United States and the labor movement in Puerto Rico, is to my view, the best of the book. Chapter 4, “The Failed Bildungsroman,” concludes with the raising of Populism and the political foundation of the ELA in the late 1930s and the 1940s. As Janer makes clear, there is a type of “consensus” shaped by social unrest and political repression of anticolonial parties in the 1950s (PIP, Nationalist Party). She concludes with reflections on how colonial nationalism opened and closed political perspectives on the women and labor movement in Puerto Rico, and a critique of contemporary discourses of nationalism and globalization in Puerto Rico. While she includes the theme of migration and the diaspora in her literary analysis she does not engage completely with the complex transnational perspectives that have shaped Puerto Rican nationalism since the nineteenth century.

The book is enhanced by the inclusion of archives and voices of the Puerto Rican labor movement, particularly their dramatic dialogues and narratives. One regrets, however that Janer did not make use of the abundant bibliography of Puerto Rican literary and cultural studies published in the last ten years. Canonical essays in Puerto Rican Studies such as Literatura y paternalismo en Puerto Rico by Juan Gelpí or the anthology Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity could have given her other critical perspectives on the relationship between sexuality and the colonial body, and the transnational-diasporic dimensions of the labor movement in Puerto Rico.

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Beyond Sun and Sand seeks to cast new light on Caribbean environmental issues and the social movements that have emerged to address them. The first part of the book, “Issues and Movements,” consists of two chapters. “The Political Ecology of Paradise,” by Sherrie L. Baver and Barbara Deutsch Lynch, and is an excellent and timely introduction to environmental issues affecting the Caribbean. While much of what is written on Caribbean environments focuses on conservation and rural or marine ecology, this essay applies a political ecology approach that takes on environmental justice concerns – the spatial concentration of poverty, racism, and degraded or polluted environments – and includes urban environmental problems. Next, Francine Jácome gives an overview of environmental movements in the Caribbean, proposing a convincing typology for analyzing the variety of environmental organizations in the region. This essay, the only one of its kind that I know, is a version of an article that Jácome had already published in 21st Century Policy Review in 1996, including minor adaptations but no significant updates. It remains a worthwhile read for its broad scope and analytical angle, but has become dated in the last decade, as it fails to incorporate, for instance, increased regional cooperative efforts, newer trends in environmental activism, and the importance of information communication technology for social movements in and outside the region.

The book’s second part, “The Political Ecology of Sun and Sand,” contains three case studies on environmental issues and organizations in relation to the Caribbean tourist industry. Marian A.L. Miller looks at the commodification of Jamaican environment and culture, critically examining the social and environmental consequences of both mass tourism and ecotourism. Manuel Valdés Pizzini discusses processes affecting Puerto Rico’s coastal zone and the environmental movement that emerged in opposition to changing landuse patterns, including “coastal gentrification” and the concurrent displacement of local users. Maurice Burac focuses on the development of the environmental movement in Martinique and its mobilization in efforts toward sustain-
able tourism, pointing out how the nature of the Martiniquan tourist industry invites the merging of environmental and political struggles.

The third part, “Behind the Beach: Productive Landscapes and Environmental Change,” examines issues related to developments beyond tourism. Neftali García, Mara Muñoz Vazquez, Norma Delgado, Tania García Ramos, and Sara Peisch give a clear economic and environmental overview of Puerto Rico, focusing on environmental issues associated with the island’s unregulated urban expansion and the transition from agriculture to industry to services. Barbara Deutsch Lynch compares Cuban and Dominican paths toward agricultural sustainability, discussing the impact of national policies, cultural obstacles, weak positions in the global economy, land-use changes, and technological paradigms. Katherine T. McCaffrey and Sherrie Baver analyze mobilization and coalition-building against U.S. military operations on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. The struggle, initially framed in politically contentious terms of sovereignty, gained victory after framing the issue in terms of environment, health, and human rights.

The volume’s final section, “Risky Environments and the Caribbean Diaspora” is innovative in its inclusion of diasporic Caribbean environmentalism, though transnational connections are underemphasized. Ricardo Soto-Lopez discusses aspects of the Puerto Rican environmental justice movement in the United States, describing success stories, advocating proactive rather than reactive strategies, and proposing a framework for community involvement in land-use decision making. Immanuel Ness and Lorraine Minnite examine exposure to environmental health risks in a Latino neighborhood in New York, studying links between levels of medical awareness and social capital.

In the volume’s conclusion, “Toward a Creole Environmentalism,” Barbara Deutsch Lynch provides an intelligent take on issues relevant to island residents and contextual factors of fragility, diversity, and a peripheral role in the global political economy. It reframes the diversity of the environmental movement and suggests possibilities for a “Creole environmentalism.”

This book is a welcome addition to the growing field of Caribbean environmental studies. The political ecology approach and the incorporation of diasporic communities are refreshing additions and many of the articles are informative and well written. Highlights include the introduction and conclusion, the comparative contribution on Cuban and Dominican agriculture, and the analyses of the Vieques protests and Nuyorican environmental justice struggle.

However, a number of articles appear to be rather dated, using mainly or exclusively references that are over a decade old. And while this volume presents a satisfying variety of topics and authors, its regional case studies have a strong Hispanic Caribbean bias. The eight case studies include six on Latino islands or communities, of which five are on Puerto Rico or Puerto Rican diasporic communities. The remaining two cases discuss issues in
Jamaica and Martinique. No mention is made of the Dutch Caribbean, other than an incorrect reference to Aruba as an “oil-producing nation.” Finally, the volume’s depiction of the environmental movement is largely uncritical. One of the contributors characterizes the Puerto Rican environmental movement as engaged in an “ongoing process of empowering members of communities, groups and institutions to confront the state.” Given the elite status of many environmental activists, the classed nature of environmental problems, and the cooperation between governmental and nongovernmental organizations, all referred to in this volume, this would seem to be an overly upbeat take on the matter. The presentation of the volume as “subaltern perspectives on the etiology of environmental degradation” also seems somewhat overstated. Not every environmentalist is a subaltern hero; the small island societies under study here deserve a more nuanced analysis than the simple opposition of “environmental movement versus the state and global capital” posited in a number of the chapters.

Overall, the volume contains a wealth of factual information and a number of novel approaches, worthwhile to anyone interested in the Caribbean environment.

REFERENCE


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Legend has it that the West Indian came to Harlem to “teach, open a church or start trouble.” He has done all of these things ... The development of left wing organizations among Negroes is largely attributed to him, to the extent that the typical Negro Radical was described as “an overeducated West Indian without a job.”
Thus wrote Roi Ottley, in *New World A’Coming*, 1943 (quoted in Kasinitz 1992:47).

While at the time West Indian activities in New York may have been regarded with a touch of cynicism or even irritation, contemporary recollections and scholarly reconstructions of the early twentieth-century West Indian presence in New York are marked by nostalgia and admiration. *Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance* is no exception. In this vividly written book, Joyce Moore Turner focuses on a small group of Caribbean migrants who not only made a life for themselves in the Big Apple, but also stand out for their political struggles. Theirs was a fight both against White racism and for socialism, or communism. They thought the U.S. Communist Party would be the best instrument to accomplish these objectives – at the end of the book one is left with the impression that they themselves were instruments instead, used and abused both by their national comrades and Moscow.

The number of protagonists in the book is not altogether clear. Turner at times writes about a revolutionary trio consisting of the Suriname-born Otto Huiswoud (1893-1961), the author’s Barbadian father Richard Benjamin Moore (1893-1978), and the St. Kittian Cyrill Briggs (1888-1966). Frequently the Jamaican Wilfred Adolfus Domingo (1889-1968) is added to this set of characters. And there is the Guyanese Hermine Dumont (1905-1998), who became Huiswoud’s wife and sister-in-arms and outlived her husband for nearly four decades to tell some of the stories detailed in this book.

The lives of these Caribbean characters are painted on a larger canvas where a long series of West Indian militants and intellectuals from Marcus Garvey and Claude McKay to Langston Hughes and George Padmore play auxiliary roles. The setting is first Harlem, but later in the book widens to include not just other parts of the United States, but also the Soviet Union, various West-European countries, and briefly the Caribbean.

While Turner discusses the broader cultural context and impact of the Harlem Renaissance, her emphasis is on its political significance and on the pivotal role played by Caribbean migrants who by 1930 formed one-quarter of Harlem’s population. She agrees with previous scholars – and with Franklin W. Knight, who wrote a laudatory introduction to the book – who explained this Caribbean preponderance by referring to the fact that these new African Americans were less disposed to accept the racism they encountered in the United States and at the same time better equipped to fight it. Originating mainly from the West Indies, they came from societies which, though utterly colonial, had provided their populations with better education. Moreover, racial self-esteem was higher, as people of African descent formed great majorities in these societies, while racism was more subdued and vibrant traditions of resistance to slavery were not forgotten.

The real protagonist of *Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance* is however not a British West Indian, but the Surinamese Otto Huiswoud.
Born into what was apparently a (lower) middle-class family of mixed origins, Otto was one of several brothers who emigrated at an early age. In 1910, just sixteen, he set foot in New York. He soon forgot about the initial idea of further education in the Netherlands, settled, started working, and became a political activist. In 1919, he was the sole African American charter member present at the founding of the Communist Party.

Huiswoud’s founding membership and his particular engagement with, and expertise on, “the Negro question” elevated him to the status of an international militant within the Communist International, working in the Soviet Union, Western Europe, and even South Africa. He was also confronted with the racism and opportunistic neglect of the race problem within American Communist circles, and with the cynical machinations of the Soviets.

Most of this book details the incessant discussions and political infighting over the proper insertion of the American “Negro question” in the wider Communist debates on class struggle and nationalism in the United States and on Communism worldwide. Those interested in these debates will find a good deal of information in this book. Bearing in mind the marginal importance of Communism in the United States and the poor record over the past century of Communism worldwide when it comes to combating racism, I found the painstaking rendering of these debates at times superfluous. On the other hand, Turner does present a colorful and at times moving picture of these militants who had much reason at the time to feel no bourgeois support would ever be forthcoming to wipe away racism and exploitation, and who therefore hoped for a better future by choosing the Communist alternative.

Huiswoud himself was nicknamed “the Sphinx.” Unfortunately, he too remains an enigmatic figure throughout this book. Turner made good friends with his wife, Hermine Huiswoud Dumont. Apparently the many conversations she had with the somewhat paranoid Hermine were of little help in unraveling the mysteries of the Sphinx. Thus, what the book offers is a great deal of information on ideological and organizational issues that may be of interest for specialists, but not really a biography sketching a lively image of this remarkable man – or, for that matter, his wife. In this context, too, it is odd that Turner did not consult the doctoral thesis on Huiswoud by Maria van Enckevort, defended in 2000. But then again, that thesis also failed to make the Sphinx a man of flesh and blood.

The last chapter, “Home to Amsterdam,” is disappointing. It offers some well-articulated reflections on the pre-war story, but little of what came after. In just a few pages we learn what happened after the Huiswouds’ last stints in the Soviet Union and Western Europe in the 1930s. Otto fell ill, went to Suriname in 1941, and was interned there for some time during the war. Hermine lived in the United States, and they were not reunited until 1946. Rather than returning to the United States, they settled in Amsterdam, where Otto took a modest office job.
Why didn’t Hermine come to Suriname earlier? Why did they decide to settle in Suriname’s colonial metropolis rather than returning to New York? Why didn’t they join the ranks of the Dutch Communist Party? How precisely did Otto become the organizer of the still tiny Surinamese community in Holland? Turner offers no answers and even ignores the available studies on this period which provide much more information than she gives. This is the more remarkable as it was precisely in this period that Otto paved the way for the Surinamese nationalist movement which eventually obtained independence in 1975. But I hasten to add that the previous chapters offer a good deal of information and many acute observations – above all on the political context of the Harlem Renaissance.

REFERENCES


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In the American migration story, second-generation migrants were en route to becoming American, acting as brokers and translators to their parents but absorbing also the ethos, languages, and attitudes that marked them (and subsequently their children) as indelibly American. This motif, which had its origins in early studies of European migrants, was considered to be applicable to all migrant groups. Despite Ira Reid’s The Negro Immigrant: His Background, Characteristics and Social Adjustment 1899-1937 (1939),
which pointed to different experiences and processes for Black immigrants, it is only in the last two decades or so that scholars such as Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, Georges Fouron, and Mary Waters have challenged the universal applicability of this migration model and, in particular, have indicated that for Black migrants to the United States, assimilation was never straightforward, and never into the mainstream of American society. Rather (as Reid first identified), for first-generation Caribbeans it involved a careful and often painful renegotiation of identity and Blackness and a tension between the desire to be part of America and to avoid being subsumed by and into African America. As a result, for many British West Indians, particularly in the first three decades of the twentieth century, emigration to the United States was accompanied by the espousal of an island, regional, or even British identity. Migrants from the Hispanic Caribbean had an equally complex relationship with the United States, compounded in their case by their Hispanic or Latino heritage. It is a story replicated by their children.

Thus this book is a welcome addition to the new scholarship on Caribbean migration and in particular to the burgeoning interest in second-generation Caribbeans in America. This time, however, the focus is on the artistic expression of second-generation Caribbeans. Contextualizing their art as both an encounter and an engagement with the racial binaries of America and the complex politics of African America in the fifty years after the World War II, McGill asks: how have these second generationers constructed a Black self? The answer is that they have done so through a continuing engagement with the Caribbean, predicated for the most part on a dialectic between political convictions and political context. Harry Belafonte, poised at the start of the civil rights movement, and active within it, played into a particular Caribbean persona, representing the face of the “safe” Black man, while simultaneously charging it with all the ambivalence and danger of miscegenation. Paule Marshall, active in left-wing and Black politics, and Audre Lorde, committed feminist and lesbian, engaged with their multiple personas through an emphasis on the diasporic element of their heritages. For Marshall, this involved a journey back to a shared and celebrated African heritage (exemplified by Avey in Praisesong for the Widow). For Audre Lord, the struggle for lesbian as well as Black identity led her into conflict with the mainstream of Black politics, as well as her family heritages. Resolution was found through an emphasis in her poetry on sisterhood and sexual empathy in African societies, and through the engagement of the Black goddess Afrekete “who connects and empowers multiple and seemingly irreconciliable communities” (p. 149). Puerto Rican Piri Thomas reveals the complex world of Black Latino identities. His resolution is through a continuing espousal of both an African and a Puerto Rican identity. Finally, McGill’s examination of the merengue hip-hop of Proyecto Uno takes us into the more contemporary complex urban milieu of second-generation Dominicanos and their fusion
of Dominicano merengue music and American hip-hop (itself heavily influenced by the British West Indies) through which they negotiate and articulate their ideological and racial battles with America.

The argument is convincing: there can be no one-size-fits-all set of assumptions on the responses and behavior of second-generation Caribbeans in the United States. Instead, they have responded to the respective particularities of their island heritages and their encounters with the United States in very different ways and through very different processes, emerging not as fully assimilated Americans, nor as unreconstructed islanders, but with a multifaceted Caribbean-American persona.

Rich though McGill’s analysis and contextualization of the chosen artists is, I have two points of criticism. While Belafonte and Proyecto Uno provide the bookends of the argument, located in the 1950s and the 1990s, and while the contemporary U.S. contexts are well delineated, there is nothing that indicates the distance traveled by these performers and writers, or by African America. Nor is there discussion of the way different time frames condition and permit some responses and not others. In other words, while McGill is careful to point out the processes of identity making, she omits attention to the fact that the historical process itself plays a part in those identities and in migrant responses to (as well as by) America. In a related spirit, while the Black struggle in America and in the African colonies is acknowledged as a vital influence in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, there is nothing on the struggles for nationhood or nationalisms in the Caribbean itself or the ways those may have impacted on the consciousness of Caribbeans abroad, be they Puerto Ricans, Dominicanos, or British West Indians. Fifty years is a long time in a nation’s gestalt, and given how powerful the Caribbean has remained across generations of its migrant communities, some examination of Caribbean nationhood could have enriched the profiles and enhanced our understanding of Caribbean engagement with the Americas.

REFERENCE

A rich literature on race in Cuba has emerged over the last ten years. Scholars from Cuba, North America, and Europe have looked at shifting racial categories, the character of race relations, the relationship between ideology, nationalism, and violence, the interactions among race, class, and gender, and the intellectual and social roots of both racism and antiracism. Their research has extended broadly through time if not in space; while there is work on the colonial, republican, and revolutionary periods, much of it centers in Havana. A few exceptions focus on Santiago de Cuba in the eastern province of Oriente, or attempt to range across the entire island nation. From a historical perspective, the path-breaking work of Aline Helg and Rebecca Scott set the terms of the debate: how did Cubans of African descent understand their place in the complex transitions from slavery to emancipation and from colony to nation? While there is a measure of disagreement with regard to the extent and nature of Black mobilization, most scholars also agree that the making of race in Cuba was a layered process, characterized more by tensions and contradictions than by simple explanations. The question of whether Cuba is racist has given way to an understanding of the problematic origins of that question, which arose in the context of broader comparisons of the United States and Latin America. The normative framing of this question meant that whatever the answer, the standard was created in a North American context, rather than a Latin American one. In response to this critique, students of race in Cuba tried to look at specific, local racial dynamics. The looming question of the United States was not eliminated but rather posed in a different way: How did the United States and Cuba influence one another in terms of racial practices and understandings?

Mark Sawyer’s examination of race in revolutionary Cuba has benefited from some of these conversations. His view is that race in Cuba should be understood as a set of practices and understandings shot through with tensions. Intermarriage and formal equality co-exist, he asserts, with persistent racist beliefs about the inferiority of Cubans of African descent and their propensity toward criminality. “Inclusionary discrimination,” the term he uses to describe the dominant racial dynamic, refers to the way that Cuban Blacks
are considered part of the nation and part of the revolutionary project even as they are relegated to second-class status. The explanation he offers for this is one of “racial cycles,” whereby political circumstances can either pave the way toward greater equality or close down any available opportunities and foster inequalities in the workplace or in social or political life.

To make this argument, Sawyer draws on interviews and surveys that he conducted in Cuba. One body of material consists of forty-four interviews with Cubans in 1997-1998 in which he spoke with people from all over the island about their thoughts and experiences with race and discrimination. He found, somewhat unsurprisingly, that Cubans who consider themselves Black or Mulatto experience a measure of discrimination in their daily lives, and that this was exacerbated by the economic crisis and subsequent reforms known as the “special period.” Sawyer has gone to great lengths to protect both himself and his sources, claiming that discussions of race continue to threaten the regime and as such are potentially subject to censure. Yet the result of his caution is that he seems to understand his results as relatively transparent, hesitating to challenge his informants even on factual issues. When one interviewee misremembers the Havana riots in the summer of 1994 as having taken place in 1993, for example, Sawyer fails to use that as an opportunity to reflect on the nature of memory and knowledge production.

Another chapter, based on primary material, uses surveys conducted in 2000-2001. These demonstrate, he argues, that race continues to be a salient category with regard to social, economic, and political life in Cuba. Yet these findings remain on superficial grounds. When he observes, for instance, that Blacks are more likely than Whites to join all-Black organizations, one wonders about the nature of Black organizations to which he was referring, about the subtext of that question, and about the way Cubans would have reacted to being asked that question. Indeed, one of the most intriguing things about this chapter, which remains unexplored, is the very process of the survey itself. He points out that this is only the second survey in forty years to be conducted by a North American researcher. Yet he does not discuss the process of convincing Cubans to participate or explaining its purpose to them, or mention which questions they found more puzzling than others.

The remainder of the book aims to place these findings in context with a historical overview of racial formations in Cuba. Sawyer synthesizes material on twentieth-century racial politics, including as well some material on U.S. Black activists’ relationships to Cuba. Unfortunately, Sawyer leaves out key factors, such as the Constitution of 1940, which banned racial discrimination. Scholars have pointed to this moment not as a turning point after which racial equality was attained, but rather as an indicator of the complexity of a society engaged in racialized mobilization and cooptation.

Most puzzling of all however, is the intended audience of this book. Its academic prose and engagement with the academic literature suggest that it
was not intended for a general audience. At the same time, it falls short as a scholarly monograph, with very few footnotes and limited primary research. Yet this book might be useful for all readers, confirming as it does that race in Cuba has been, and remains, a complicated and important matter.


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Since the 1970s, many accounts of the uniqueness of contemporary globalization have emerged. Observers point to the ways in which access to air transport, digital technologies, and porous national boundaries generate new synergism. Some believe that this wave of globalization will homogenize societies, while others fear that centrifugal forces will tear them apart. Most theses gloss over the contribution of politics and class to contemporary globalization, as deregulation, free trade pacts, and the erasure of strict currency controls facilitate the hurtling bodies, commodities, information, and money – all this through policies pursued by, and favoring, particular classes.

*Contemporary Caribbean Cultures and Societies* addresses globalization in several Caribbean societies, focusing particularly on Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica. In their introduction, Franklin Knight and Teresita Martínez-Vergne argue that the post-Columbian Caribbean experience should inform globalization theses, especially in understanding social and cultural factors.

In the first of the book’s four sections (“The Economics of Globalization”), Helen McBain addresses the contemporary Caribbean’s experience with liberalization, expanding service sectors, and the new technologies associated with globalization, even as it grapples with poverty, decreased foreign aid, and developing new markets. McBain, however, does not address the way class interests factor into challenges to Caribbean economies. Alex Dupuy’s chapter (focused on Haiti) does raise class-oriented issues, examining the international and local dimensions of World Bank aid and suggesting that World Bank
policies reflect the Washington Consensus. The Washington Consensus, he argues, promotes neoliberal “reform” and rewards “good governance,” which leads to low or no tariffs, deregulated markets, and minimal public subsidy. President Aristide, for example, and his early populist efforts, were not seen as good governance, while export assembly was. Export-related policies such as tax holidays worked against Haiti’s “development” (although enriching some elites in Haiti and the United States). Thus, Caribbean societies must be mindful of the consequences of violating the Washington Consensus.

In the second section (“diasporas in a global world”), Antonio Benítez-Rojo superbly illustrates the historical complexities of globalization (and creolization) in Cuba without recourse to dense abstraction, showing how, for example, Cuba’s developmental trajectory created situations that facilitated the blending of different musical genres across centuries. Frances Negrón-Muntaner uses the idiom of “showing face” to discuss national identity in Puerto Rico, pointing out that Puerto Ricans address identity, status, and politics through the achievements (or failures) of their prominent sons and daughters, and boxers have a key role in assessing the national self. The essay, while interesting, has perplexing moments, such as the assertion that “pop stars are sites at which shamed subjects negotiate ambivalent effects of national visibility and transnational desire” (p. 98). Juan Flores’s chapter contests the assumption that “cultural baggage” moves primarily in one direction, asking “what about the cultural baggage that goes the other way?” (p. 118). Using salsa and rap music, Flores addresses the way the experience of the diaspora lodges itself in Caribbean “homelands” like Puerto Rico. Raquel Romberg then discusses how the Afro-Latin phenomenon of brujería combined elements of several religious traditions into an adaptive complex. Today, she points out, it is enjoying valorization during an era of celebration of Puerto Rican indigeneity and, far from being threatened by globalization, has flourished.

Valentina Peguero contributes the first essay in Section 3 (“global forces in local politics”), looking at women’s grassroots organizations in the Dominican Republic and their fundamental but neglected role in Dominican society, where it has often been national and international events that propel women to organize in support of families, communities, and the nation. Peguero’s leaders are elite women, and little is said about other kinds of women’s associations that exist in the Dominican Republic. Aline Helg then treats race and politics in Cuba, depicting Cuba’s racial history as an ongoing struggle between Whites seeking to maintain hegemony and Blacks seeking empowerment. This played out to the refrain that “there is racial equality in Cuba.” Helg suggests that Fidel Castro’s revolution tackled White racism indirectly rather than head on, and that Black disempowerment persists during the nation’s “special period.”

Section 4 (“global markets for local politics”) opens with Jorge Giovannetti’s essay on the global presence of reggae music, focusing on
its intersection with Jamaican politics and the appeal of its sociopolitical commentary to people outside Jamaica. Surprisingly, little is said about how reggae reaches the global marketplace. Giovannetti emphasizes “conscious” reggae, neglecting other permutations – lovers rock, nonsensical rhymes, and “slackness.” This elides the fact that in places such as the United States, reggae is more associated with fun than with social commentary. The concluding chapter, by Anthony Maingot, is a revealing account of globalization through a history of rum. Maingot gets at the complexities and absurdities of globalization without a drop of abstract theory, showing how rum quickly became an integral element of global trade and colonial consumption – the “brand” of families, corporations, and nations. However, globalizing processes drew it into political intrigue and post-World War II corporate mergers and acquisitions. Today, rum’s point of production and “original” name brand no longer tell consumers exactly what they are getting, and from where, since the best rum in the world is as likely to hail from Australia or Guatemala as from Puerto Rico, Cuba, or Barbados.

The articles in *Contemporary Caribbean Cultures and Societies in a Global Context*, all interesting, demonstrate the Caribbean’s richness as a laboratory for the study of the cultural, social, and politico-economic dimensions of globalization and manage to get at complexity without unnecessary conceptual abstraction. Taken together, they offer many ways to approach contemporary globalization, especially as it is experienced by insular societies with limited natural resources.


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This book fills an important void in the historiography of slavery and its aftermath in the Caribbean. The precise dynamics of the transition from slavery to free labor in Puerto Rico remain largely unknown. The meaning of free labor, and freedom in general, to the over 30,000 slaves who benefited
from the 1873 law of abolition has only rarely been addressed as a significant problem of inquiry.

Figueroa sets out to accomplish a double agenda. He wants to fill the well-known information gap on the whereabouts and conditions of the slaves freed in 1873, based on a detailed study of the southeastern region of Guayama, a leading slave sugar producer in the nineteenth century. And secondly, he aims at recovering the memory of slavery and racism in Puerto Rico. Guayama, as a stronghold of Black Puerto Rican population and culture, or what Figueroa refers to as Afro-Caribbean heritage in Puerto Rico on account of perceived similarities to other neighboring Caribbean islands, is ideal for both of his objectives. He attempts a forceful denunciation of the erasure of slavery from Puerto Rican cultural analysis, as seen in a 1972 local chronicle that omitted slavery from the picture in describing the region’s nineteenth-century economic foundations. If academic historical narratives are by now fully aware of the importance slavery had for the nineteenth-century sugar industry, the issue of slavery and the racial oppression this institution fostered has not made its way easily beyond scholarly discussion. Figueroa questions the folkloric portrayals of Blackness that are frequent in studies of Puerto Rican cultural manifestations, and offers an alternative analysis based on historical research.

Early in the century the landed elites of the region had forged a project to import much-needed African slaves, controlling the numbers so as to preserve the balance between the White and the Black population. The region of Guayama turned out to have a particularly high proportion of Blacks and slaves, though the island in general preserved the projected moderation in the number of African slaves. This story of racial and cultural planning, along with reflections on “race” as a practice of domination, lays the groundwork for Figueroa’s study of Guayama’s slave sugar industry.

Guayama’s nineteenth-century planters relied heavily on slaves to harvest their sugar cane and process sugar. Figueroa takes us through the twists and turns of the expansion of sugar haciendas, the clandestine introduction of thousands of African slaves, the attempts at technological modernization, and most importantly, the development of Guayama’s irrigation system, since this region is the second most arid in the island. Having achieved relatively high levels of productivity, planters kept their hold on their slaves until the very eve of abolition.

This book is particularly valuable for the attention it pays to some of the major debates that surround the study of slavery and abolition. One of these concerns Orlando Patterson’s view that slaves lived in a state of complete alienation from society and were deprived of family connections (in strictly formal legal terms, I must add). Figueroa develops an enticing argument about slaves’ ability to resist such a state of isolation. His evidence is too scanty to support a full rebuttal of Patterson’s views because in Guayama’s
archival materials, so thoroughly researched by Figueroa, the negotiating power of slaves vis-à-vis masters, both before and after abolition, is virtually invisible. The unavailability of empty land is seen as impeding their independent agricultural activities, with no significant alternative ways to display agency. Manumissions (mostly by self-purchase) were too few, and two-thirds occurred among women, who were far from the majority of the bonded population, nor was their access to an autonomous income source representative of that of the majority. Most likely the information rendered by Guayama’s documentary collection is bound to leave the reader (and I suspect, the author as well) wanting to grasp more fully the specific strategies through which enslaved Afro-Puerto Ricans shaped communities of support. On the plantations of the northern coastal region in the municipality of Manatí, thanks to an exceptionally rich municipal archive, one can see, besides occasional opportunities for economic gain and in spite of cruel punishment and restraint, hints of deep family ties, expressions of affection, and desire to care for the ill among slaves. Above all, the specific microscopic incident is crucial for grasping the frequency with which slaves contested the masters’ power on the eve of abolition, with the strategic support of local colonial authorities who were seeking and at times forging alliances with the recently freed population. This portrayal should cast new light on the supposed “declining Spanish colonial regime’s inability to construct a new colonial hegemony adapted to the conditions of the postslavery transition to colonial capitalism” (pp. 13-14).

But Figueroa’s account focuses on another equally important concern of the postemancipation population: the shared interest of the state and the property groups in disciplining the labor force. In order to study resistance and protest, he centers on the laborers’ practice of torching plantations, attacking the most evident sign of the planters’ economic power. The incidence of arson registered in Guayama suggests to Figueroa that resident peons (formerly plantation slaves) were by no means passively accepting paternalistic bondage to their former masters, but were participating in “more detached vertical life and work relationships” (p. 194).

This well-written story of Guayama’s slavery and postemancipation experience fulfills expectations. It not only enhances our understanding of the regional map of sugar and slavery in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico, but is a welcome invitation to overcome the vague depiction of slavery and its aftermath that still prevails in the memory of the people of this island.
Anyone researching the last decades of nineteenth-century Puerto Rico can attest to the overwhelming preoccupation of the Creole and colonial elite with the peasantry’s “lawless” behavior. The peasantry manifested their “disregard” for the colonial legal system through recurrent land squatting, petty robbery, disobeying of work regulations, drinking, dancing, gambling, and ignoring court citations and fines. In this study, Rosa Carrasquillo re-evaluates and contextualizes the pervasive rhetoric of lawlessness ruling island politics and economics during the last period under Spanish rule. She explores the micro-history of the central-eastern town of Caguas to uncover the transformations that led to more rapid capitalist expansion and fueled elite desires for further control over natural resources and labor. Carrasquillo invites us to reconsider the peasantry’s wide range of actions as part of the broader field of practices of citizenship. The peasantry’s apparent “disregard for institutions” and “lawlessness” cannot be taken as signs of avoidance, lack of knowledge, or complete rejection of the legal system, but instead represented the peasantry’s alternative ways of engaging, negotiating, and challenging the many systems of oppression. In the process, the rural laboring population defined citizenship on their own terms, which she calls marginal citizenship.

To Carrasquillo, marginal citizenship rested upon the peasantry’s appropriation and deployment of the natural-law construct in their daily practices and their formal engagements with authorities. She defines natural law as “the practical belief that everyone is entitled to eat, work, and move freely to make a living” (p. xxii). It was the popular understanding of their rights to survival that led the rural population to subvert and transgress the legal and social principles they deemed unfair. Carrasquillo suggests, however, that the rural population employed this legal abstraction (in practice and discursively) and “resuscitated the principles of natural law within the Spanish system in order to justify access to land and its resources with the right of use and labor” (p. 114). Though this is an interesting and original approach, she does not provide sufficient evidence to uncover convincingly the extent to which different sectors of the rural population understood the workings and
limitations of natural law as a legal concept. Did members of the peasantry recognize natural law as a legal construction of resonance in their communities and in the courts? Were they aware of the Spanish legal codifications of natural law and did they thus exploit them in their dealings with the state?

While Carrasquillo attempts to answer these questions, her investigation only goes as far as to explore individuals’ extra-legal practices, which when assessed together show that the rural population sought to retain customary rights over material resources and their personal mobility in the face of increasing land privatization and policing. By examining a wide array of sources, particularly police records (which stated who committed a “crime,” who pressed charges, and which acts were deemed worthy of reporting to authorities), she describes alternative practices of communal living and distribution. A more productive avenue of inquiry could have been to uncover intersections and areas of overlap between the peasantry’s defense of customary rights and the Spanish legal system’s codification of these practices (among them, natural law). Additionally, an in-depth exploration of the articulations of discourses about natural law and other related concepts, perhaps through more extensive textual analysis of court cases and peasants’ claims to authorities at different historical moments and social locations within the island, would have strengthened the theoretical framework. In this regard, the final chapter of the book, dedicated to exploring gender hierarchies within marginal citizenship, is the most revealing. The peasantry, especially women, resorted to authorities to intervene on their behalf in domestic disputes. Ironically, these actions reasserted the state’s legal and patriarchal authority. Through these claims and appeals, readers can begin to unravel some of the peasantry’s expectations regarding the state, although it is not clearly explained how these demands fit within the larger framework of natural law. The understandings of (and means available to practice) marginal citizenship obviously differed for women and men. But readers are left to wonder how racial differences shaped the practices of intracommunal marginal citizenship and how race marked the ways in which different sectors of the urban population engaged the state.

One of the major strengths of this study is Carrasquillo’s ability to delineate the fundamental structural transformations that economically strangled the rural population in the latter part of the century. Her comprehensive and meticulous discussion of the 1878 Municipal Law, the 1880 Law of Mortgage and Property Registry, the 1884 Regulations for the Composition and Sale of Unused Land, new taxation regulations, and the implementation of Cédulas de Vecindad in 1881 fully demonstrates the sophisticated means the elites devised to carry out the peasantry’s land dispossession and control of their labor. In this story, however, elites often appear as a homogeneous block invested in the rapid development of agricultural capitalism. A more textured story would have emerged if Carrasquillo had paid closer attention to the
many ideological and material cleavages among the upper strata of society, which at times created the space to forge fragile alliances with groups from among the laboring population. Readers need to understand Liberalism as an ideological field that entails a wide spectrum of practices and beliefs, often disconnected and in contradiction with each other. Although Carrasquillo’s main goal is to scrutinize how, through everyday practices of avoidance and engagement, the peasantry reformulated their communities during a period of rapid change, one can only fully understand these processes by looking simultaneously at the conflictive constitutive course other groups experienced. What sorts of subjectivities are emerging (and clashing) through these mutually constitutive processes in this particular historical conjuncture? The exploration of these social articulations in urban and rural Caguas could have been another effective way to explore internal municipal conflicts and examine how this municipality followed or departed from the major sociopolitical and economic trends experienced in other geographic sites within Puerto Rico. Despite the few shortcomings mentioned above, the intricate social history Carrasquillo unfolds in the pages of this book deserves the attention of subaltern studies scholars in Latin America and the Caribbean because of the comprehensive insights it provides on the particular experiences of rural Puerto Ricans and the survival strategies they crafted.


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In the title to this book, Michael Largey captures the ambivalent mindset of elite Haitians during the past century: invoking their island’s peasant culture to express their nationalism, yet retaining some distaste for that culture along with an attraction to Western art forms. For Haitian composers of “classical” music, Vodou performance represented a paradox: “Haitian art music could only realize its potential with the enlivening infusion of Vodou musical materials. Conversely, the music of the Vodou ceremony could only be claimed by
all Haitians once composers separated it from ... ‘superstition’” (p. 214) and “developed” it along more “universal” lines.

While this quick sketch of the book’s central theme may sound familiar, Largey’s handling of it is subtle and revealing. Although Haiti’s milat (light-skinned), French-speaking elites distance themselves from peasant culture, historically they have also maintained a sense of opposition to external interference, particularly the U.S. occupation of 1915-1934. Intellectual attention to indigenous folk culture first emerged during this period, not only in music but also in painting, literature, and ethnography. Largey’s first chapter, “The Politics of Musical Ethnography,” examines this phase, with a focus on folklorist/diplomat Jean Price-Mars, one of the first to identify the African strain as central to Haiti’s culture. In contrast, Chapter 3, “Africans and Arawaks,” introduces a competing elitist ideology claiming a mixture of pre-Columbian Native American, African, and European cultures as Haiti’s unique heritage. Composers who adopted this view (Largey focuses on Ludovic Lamothe and Justin Elie) may have been racist in rejecting African primacy, but the ways in which they drew upon various strands of musical influence are creative and interesting nonetheless. Readers familiar with the contemporary créolité movement in Martinique and Guadeloupe will find strong echoes in this chapter.

Haitian composers do not simply appropriate folklore; some of them are in turn appropriated. The story of Occide Jeanty (1860-1936) in Chapter 2 provides a fascinating example. The popular imagination identified Jeanty, a military bandleader during the U.S. occupation, with revolutionary hero Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and both men with the Vodou warrior deity Ogou. Vodou songs to Ogou were understood to apply to Jeanty and Dessalines as well, popular songs referenced all three, events that happened to Dessalines were seen echoed in the life of Jeanty and vice versa, and Jeanty’s musical references to the Haitian revolution became a focus of nationalist feeling. Largey calls this play of symbols “recombinant mythology.”

Chapter 4, “African American Operas about Haiti,” looks at the crossing of African American and Haitian intellectual currents, a notable instance of what Largey terms “diasporic cosmopolitanism.” Early in the American occupation such luminaries as W.E.B. DuBois and James Weldon Johnson took an interest in Haiti – mainly in protest against U.S. involvement – and Price-Mars was influenced by them. The 1930s saw two operas with contrasting interpretations of Haiti’s history: “Ouanga” focused on a sensationalistic yet sympathetic presentation of Vodou, while “Troubled Island,” based on a play by Langston Hughes, placed class conflict between dark-skinned peasants and light-skinned elites at center stage.

Largey winds up, in Chapter 5, with an extended study of composer Werner A. Jaegerhuber, who perhaps went further than any other twentieth-century artist in merging Haitian folklore and classical music. Jaegerhuber compiled his own folklore collection and transcriptions as a preparation for
composition. Like other elites, he “collected” mainly by sitting with selected informants on a hotel veranda. (Largey’s account of Langston Hughes’s rowdy, hard-drinking stint in Haiti’s countryside contrasts amusingly to the hotel veranda method.) Yet Jaegerhuber was diligent, publishing not only his own compositions but also folk song collections, and seeming to view his contribution in both realms as equally germane. For ethnomusicologists, Largey’s discussion of Jaegerhuber’s aims and methods of transcription, based on the work of his near-contemporary Harold Courlander, will be a highlight.

Throughout the book, Largey shows how strands of ideology compete; there is never just one dominating interpretation. Similarly, his book straddles academic fences. Nationalist movements in art music have received much attention. In fact, this is one of the chief areas in which music history has adopted the contextualizing perspective of ethnomusicology. But nationalist musical movements in such tiny, poor countries as Haiti are less well known, and some academics may still think of them as belonging to ethnomusicology. (The jacket for *Vodou Nation* classifies the book as “ethnomusicology” but not “music history.”) As for ethnomusicology, despite that field’s claim to encompass all music it has provided few accounts of Western classical music-making. In that sense, *Vodou Nation* is one of the more groundbreaking ethnomusicological studies of recent years.

I wish Largey had developed some aspects of his subject more fully. His transcriptions and musical examples are well selected but only briefly elaborated, particularly in Jaegerhuber’s case. His focus on a handful of dead composers (in typical music history manner) means that we get only the barest glimpse of what art music means to Haitian elite performers and audiences today. Yet Largey’s “Epilogue” betrays extensive participatory observation, including his own performances in choirs and orchestras, as well as a stint as a choral director. Caribbean elites in general remain an understudied group. More on their lives would have been welcome.

For those interested in Haitian life and religion, African diasporic intellectual history, or the intersections of politics and music, *Vodou Nation* is a thought-provoking read.
In her new book, Donna Hope adds to a growing literature exploring the culture of dancehall music in contemporary Jamaica. Arguing that gender, sexuality, and violence play major roles in identity politics, she explores how these concepts relate more broadly to the struggle for cultural power.

Hope’s primary claim in Chapter 1 is that the cultural identity of dancehall music emerged in the 1980s but was a legacy of 1970s civic and economic failures. She begins with a brief survey of Jamaica’s Manley-era political landscape to show how the effects of poor fiscal planning invigorated the informal economy and compelled a revived entrepreneurial class to work out new strategies for both social critique and daily survival. She identifies two such responses in the 1980s of particular note, the re-emergence of the predominantly female sector of informal commercial importers (ICIs or, more commonly “higglers”) and the rise of male-dominated dancehall music, a development, she argues, that served as the needed “safety valve to release the pent-up frustrations of many dispossessed Jamaicans” (p. 8). She then provides a short survey of the evolution of dancehall as a musical genre and suggests that it was a “definite point of disjuncture with preceding manifestations of popular Jamaican music culture” (p. 21). She attributes this to a more generally radical deejay style that reflected new realities in Jamaica and underpinned an ideological shift in the class status of the informal economy that, she argues, valued acquisition and consumption over social responsibility and respectability.

In Chapter 2 Hope defines “dancehall,” coupling the word with a concept she calls the “dis/place.” This formulation, used throughout the book, blends oral, aural, and orthographic meanings to simultaneously evoke the “overlapping symbols of power and domination and the ongoing struggles” (p. 25) that characterize the physical and ideological spaces within which dancehall culture operates. Inside these boundaries she identifies two broad types of actor who are referred to throughout the remainder of the book – the “affectors,” or producers of dancehall culture (organized solely according to occupation) and the “affectees,” its consumers (organized first along gender lines and then by occupation).
Chapter 3, an examination of sexuality in dancehall culture, begins with an image of the social construction of gender and explores how ideas about beauty and mobility are tied to colonial-era notions of class and complexion. Her analysis is insightful, noting right away how carefully the boundaries of masculinity are policed and how important sexuality is in the dis/place as a site of both male and female identity negotiation. There, maleness is affirmed by “conquering” (p. 48) the punaany (slang for female genitalia). While having children with (or simply having) multiple sexual partners is one way for men to assert their identity, Hope argues that female roles, such as skettel (loose woman) and matie (other woman), are roles that reinforce the boundaries of masculinity largely by not challenging them.

In contrast, Hope explores how the “queens” of the dancehall dis/place – largely self-reliant women, many of whom have accrued some measure of personal wealth and professional renown in the informal sector – use their “sexuality ruthlessly” (p. 62) to navigate the rigid boundaries of masculinity and attain respect and mobility. Although seeing the dis/place as “an arena that facilitates the sexual liberation of women” (p. 77) is compelling, Hope cautions against this view. Her comparison of two important female deejays, Carlene Davis and Lady Saw, and her analysis of dancing contests show that even dancehall queens who achieve fair personal success are ultimately constrained both by complexion and economic background. Her analysis also looks at male homosexuality and not only sheds light on the politics behind anti-gay feeling in dancehall culture (condoning male homosexuality, she argues, is thought of as being a feminizing act), but also suggests the role that women – even independently minded women – who play to masculinity have in sustaining these feelings.

Chapter 4 is about violence. Hope builds on the work of others to suggest that although conflict is often played out in dancehall lyrics symbolically (see Cooper 1994), she sometimes found it “tenuously linked to real acts of violence” (p. 88), mainly when violent narratives reflect lived realities in Kingston’s inner city. In these narratives dons and shottas, the “anti-heroes of violence in the dancehall dis/place” (p. 91), figure prominently. Representing an authority more relevant than any state agency, Hope argues that they become important role models for inner-city youth struggling to attain a measure of social power. Through a description of several musical events, she demonstrates how the boundaries between symbolic and real violence shift and how the discourse that arises from these events helps maintain moral distance between the dis/place and the rest of Jamaican society.

The book’s short final chapter recapitulates Hope’s earlier ideas about dancehall symbols and ends with a meditation on identity politics in which she suggests that although the dancehall dis/place enables people to assert publicly “self and status” (p. 128), doing so contributes to a wi versus dem dynamic that divides Jamaican society largely along class lines.
Many will find Hope’s work useful. Her argument for putting the informal economy and entrepreneurial class at the heart of dancehall culture is insightful, and helps shed fresh light on both the violent trajectories of inner-city youth and the different ways sexuality is used as a means for self-determination. Others, however, will want a fuller exploration of dancehall’s musical and historical elements. Readers who are familiar with Norman Stolzoff’s work on dancehall will find many aspects of her book familiar, none so much, however, as Hope’s notion of the dancehall dis/place, which appears to be a retelling of Stolzoff’s (2000:1, 6-12) earlier ideas about dancehall culture. Ultimately, while Hope’s work may have a few gaps, it is a welcome addition to the literature.

**References**


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This portrait of Creole women’s life in Paramaribo, Suriname, is truly a gem. Since 1936, when *Suriname Folk-Lore* by Melville and Francis Herskovits was published, no account of similar depth and scope on Creole women’s private and social worlds has appeared. Gloria Wekker’s *Politics of Passion* is as vivid, as lively and — contested though the epithet may be — as authentic as theirs. The case study that opens the book is exciting, and the rendering of women’s intimate conversations in the home country, and their experiences in the Netherlands, creates an impression of being true to life.
The book focuses on the world of mati, working-class women who have evolved a specific social and sexual lifestyle, based on the Afro-Surinamese worldview. I cannot think of any other ethnographic account of intimate relations among women in the African-American diaspora that is as incisive. As Wekker was quick to discover, the difference from the Western lesbian lifestyle she was familiar with proved to be considerable. The “mati work” is disclosed as a cultural complex, characterized by its own ethos, norms, values, and social codes. Wekker opted for a research strategy of active personal involvement. This not only required her to become fluent in Sranantongo, the creole language of Suriname (which her parents had discouraged her from using as a child), but also to familiarize herself with a different cultural code in dealing with lovers. The candid appraisal of the problems she faced during this period of reorientation is much to her credit.

Wekker situates her contribution in the field of sexuality studies. She takes part in current debates on sex and gender, for instance, by tackling the question of whether same-sex sexuality can be best understood under the rubric of identity or that of behavior. She forcefully challenges received opinions about female sexuality current in Western lesbian circles. Considering sex as “self-driven,” she stresses the desirability of disentangling sex from love. By taking that position, her opinions fly in the face of many prevalent views and simplistic generalizations.

The book clearly fills a gap in Caribbean studies. In the many publications on Black family life in the “New World,” much attention has been paid to forms of mating and kinship, but little to sexuality per se, let alone the way this field of experience is articulated by subaltern voices. By demonstrating the enduring quasi-kin ties among mati, Wekker proves the significance of such relations for the wider kinship system. Consanguineal and heterosexual relations are not exclusively privileged in creating lasting bonds.

Wekker clashes with quite a few predecessors in the field of Caribbean social studies. She raises objections to those students of matrifocality who represent the female heads of households primarily as losers, thereby losing sight of the opportunities arising in a world free from male surveillance. Mati make abundant use of this free social space. One cannot conclude, however, that all insights gained from “matrifocality studies” are easily dismissed. There is little ground to doubt that the profound economic insecurity, so marked in many a Creole woman’s household, played an immense role in creating mati culture. But on the whole, Wekker is successful in placing mati life within the context of Suriname’s social realities, past and present.

The findings also bring her to question the viability of another Caribbean perennial – the linked concepts of reputation and respectability. In this perspective, women are regarded as striving primarily to gain respectability, while men fight for enhancing their reputation. This would not hold for mati, as Wekker convincingly shows. Assertiveness, sometimes reinforced
by violent action, boosts a woman’s highly valued reputation. Nevertheless, respectability and fear of gossip remain a major concern.

Wekker considers the “unconscious grammatical principles,” postulated by Mintz and Price (1976/1992) in their influential *The Birth of African-American Culture*, as basic to any understanding of African-inspired culture in the diaspora. In this perspective, the *mati* experience can be understood as part of an African heritage. Wekker rests her case on the Creole concept of the self believed to harbor powers that are male as well as female. Though admittedly a hypothesis – the multiplicity of the self is recognized in many African cultures – such an inference about the African origins of *matihood* cannot be substantiated, and she acknowledges its speculative character. Few would deny that sexuality tends to be charged with unconscious motivation, but this would not go far in explaining any feature of the *mati* complex. The term “unconscious” has obvious psychoanalytic connotations, which she dismisses in other contexts. Wekker takes Van Lier (1986) to task, for example, for locating his interpretation of the *mati* complex in a psychoanalytic framework. The “grammatical principles,” carrying structuralist implications, do not seem to be of much help either, and Wekker makes no further moves in this direction.

The image of self as a key to an understanding of *mati* life brings Wekker into the orbit of Winti studies, the field of Afro-Surinamese religion and worldview many working-class women subscribe to. Here she relies on what practitioners tell her and on her own reading of the extensive literature. Not surprisingly, she notes discrepancies between what her various sources tell her, as could be expected. This is no excuse, however, for misquoting Wooding (1981:91) when he presents his classification of Winti pantheons of gods and spirits, and failing to discriminate between interpretations given by informants and what she has learned from written sources. In this presentation it is no longer clear who is responsible for certain strange notions. Who, for instance, volunteered the idea that an *Akantasi* spirit belongs to the pantheon of sky gods (p. 100)? I have never come across this extraordinary opinion, either in the literature or during my years of fieldwork in Suriname.

The book’s main problem is its structure. Subjects are raised, only to be dropped for other topics, and then taken up again in other contexts. Subjects such as women’s income and position in the labor market, matrifocality, and negative stereotypes about Black female sexuality turn up twice or even three times in the text. Repetition and redundancy work as an anti-climax, and some pruning would have been welcome. The writing style, so naturally fluent in discussion of the “cases,” conversations, and experiences, loses its eloquence when theoretical issues are addressed. Translation presents other problems. Some expressions, more or less transparent to anyone familiar with Dutch (“Bourguignon’s analysis … speaks to me more,” [pp. 92-93]), may appear enigmatic to Anglophone readers. Some translations of song texts...
and proverbs in Sranantongo – for which she received assistance – appear misleading. No deep historical knowledge of plantation life is needed, for instance, to know that a granmisi who, as an old song suggested, gave birth to a son with a donkey chin (p. 12) is not an older woman, as the translation says, but the master’s prime consort. The thrust of the song’s meaning, its social critique, is lost this way. But these infelicities should not make us lose sight of the real qualities of this unusual and profound ethnography.

References


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This collection of essays is intended to clarify the relexification hypothesis (RH) presented in Lefebvre’s 1998 book Creole Genesis and the Acquisition of Grammar. It elaborates some of her explanations, and to some extent addresses issues raised over the years about her positions.1 Unfortunately, because little effort has been made to reduce redundancies and little new has been added, her efforts to elaborate on specific aspects of her relexification

1. Lefebvre’s RH on the development of Haitian Creole (HC) has been extensively discussed over the years. See, for example, DeGraff 2002.
hypothesis and highlight the contribution that creolistics can make to general linguistics are less than fully successful.

The book revolves about the evolution of creoles, especially Haitian Creole (HC), and the role of relexification and leveling in this process. According to Lefebvre, these are “processes otherwise known to play a role in language genesis and in language change in general” (p. 2). Relexification operates within individual second language learners, while leveling reduces variation among them, through what I suspect to be mutual accommodations. But why would individual speakers first relexify the target language only to level out their differences in order to converge toward a communal system? Wouldn’t the relevant learners have found it more cost-effective to listen to each other and select structures that guaranteed successful communication even before they had fully relexified the target language at the cost of little mutual intelligibility?

Following the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 argues that creoles and pidgins have developed only in multilingual communities, but it says nothing of Berbice Dutch, which evolved out of the contact of primarily Eastern Ijo and Dutch. Lefebvre claims, as traditionally in creolistics, that in settings where creoles developed, “speakers of the substratum languages generally [had] little access to the superstratum language” (p. 8). She does not address the counter-position that there was no break in the transmission of the lexifier (Chaudenson 2001, Mufwene 2001). She also claims that creoles developed abruptly and that HC “was formed between 1680 and 1740” (p. 30). What makes a period of sixty years so abrupt in a language history that spans three centuries and half? Besides, she presents an evolutionary scenario that is in effect gradualist, as she argues correctly that the target language for the bozal slaves must have been a lingua franca formed by the earlier slaves that need not be identical with the initial European model.

Other than the case of Media Lengua that inspired her, Lefebvre finds apparent indirect support for the RH in Melanesian pidgins, which display significant substrate influence. But the contact settings in which these pidgins emerged differed from the Haitian situation, producing different implications for population growth and language transmission. For instance, the former had a Creole population, whose earlier generations spoke closer approximations of the European target language, whereas the latter had pidgin speakers as transmitters of the European language. Also, the substrate languages were typologically more homogeneous in Melanesia than they were in the Caribbean.

Chapter 3 spells out details of substrate hypotheses, repeating some of the very prose and illustrations of the previous chapter. The usual questions arise here regarding whether HC constructions that reflect congruous patterns of Fongbe and nonstandard French must necessarily be interpreted as “relexified” from the substrate languages and why. No new arguments are
presented against Chaudenson (1992, 2001) and DeGraff (2002). Lefebvre is undoubtedly correct in arguing that structures of creole vernaculars do not “represent the unmarked case” (p. 121), if one assumes some universal scale of markedness. However, one can also argue that creole structures represent unmarked options relative to those available to their “creators” in their specific contact ecologies (Mufwene 2001).

Unsurprisingly, Lefebvre concludes that “from a typological point of view, Haitian Creole should be classified with its substratum languages” (p. 122). Since the substratum is not typologically uniform, why favor the connection to it over what HC shares with some nonstandard French dialects? I agree that creoles do not all have identical grammatical structures (p. 123), but maintain that they still show a number of interesting similarities on the family-resemblance model.

Chapter 4 states that “we would not want to exclude the possibility that other languages (e.g., languages not known to be creoles and difficult to classify due their history) may have been formed in the same way creoles have” (p. 128), but gives no examples. Nor does Lefebvre consider the fact that contact and varying degrees of language mixing seem to have played a central role in the evolution of any modern language. Nor does she discuss the fact that specific and by now classic hypotheses have been proposed in this connection before – e.g., Schlieben-Lange (1977) about the evolution of Romance languages. While Lefebvre discusses some connection between relexification and L2 acquisition, she does not show how research on creoles can contribute, for example, to understanding the phenomenon of transfer. Neither is there any allusion to “leveling,” regarding whether it causes variation to disappear and why (not).

In Chapter 5, which focuses on data, Lefebvre presents justifications for the way she has conducted her research but does not clarify how her approach can help improve construction and use of data in general linguistics. Contrary to Lefebvre, I hold that large corpora such as those used by quantitative linguists would seriously improve the treatment of data in creolistics and theoretical linguistics, especially if the data were not elicited (except for curious omissions) and if one tried to identify curious constructions in the free discourse of native speakers. While caution is surely needed in using written sources in the practice of diachronic creolistics, her statement that “Haitian historical materials are not considered as a valid source of data” about earlier stages of HC is shocking. If one truly believes in variation in language, should “inconsistencies” within and among speakers really be considered a “problem”?

Skipping on to Chapter 9, Lefebvre acknowledges the relevance of social factors to “leveling,” but she does not discuss them, instead referring readers to other scholars’ publications (pp. 232-33). She gives no information about inter-idiolectal “leveling,” especially regarding differences that have their
origins in variation in the speakers’ respective learning skills, and no explanation why variation is not all eliminated at the same time (p. 237). A more committed interest in social factors and the history of the setting might have shed light on this question. Lefebvre’s discussion here also raises the question of whether the disproportion between Europeans and non-Europeans on the plantation colonies, which would become increasingly lopsided in favor on non-Europeans as the plantation industry prospered, should be confused with the proportion of native to nonnative speakers. As Chaudenson (1992, 2001) makes clear, all Creole children of the homestead phase spoke basically the same koinéized colonial varieties regardless of race. Therefore the growing disproportion between Europeans and non-Europeans did not necessarily mean that the bozal slaves lacked adequate access to the colonial varieties of the European languages during the early stages plantation phase, when segregation was initially instituted. The native speakers need not have been (fully) of European descent.

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