Angelique V. Nixon

Resisting Paradise: Tourism, Diaspora, and Sexuality in Caribbean Culture. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015. xii + 229 pp. (Cloth US\$ 65.00)

Resisting Paradise is an insightful analysis of how Caribbean-descended cultural producers and workers resist the concept of “paradise” in Caribbean tourism. Angelique Nixon’s primary approach to the relationship between neo-colonialism and tourism is through literary and cultural analysis; further, her use of ethnographic methods is a welcome surprise. The project is largely focused on the Anglophone Caribbean—with multiple examples from her native Bahamas—and identifies several voices of resistance to the paradise trope within Caribbean literature and cultural work. Across the chapters, Nixon analyzes select novels, poetry, films, and essays by women (and one man) of Caribbean origin or descent, while also considering the perspectives of cultural workers in the region.

The first chapter lays out the book’s key argument about the relationship between tourism and neocolonialism and provides a strong review of the literature that grounds the project theoretically. The second one focuses on Jamaica Kincaid and Edwidge Danticat, both of whom have origins in the Caribbean but now live in the United States. Nixon analyzes Kincaid’s novel *A Small Place* as a narrative of an “insider” returning to tour her native Antigua, now critically observing the neocolonialism of tourism as an “outsider.” Danticat’s *After the Dance* takes on the guise of a travel guide in which she reminisces about returning to her native Jacmel, Haiti for Carnaval; it is described as a counternarrative to guidebooks in its prominent insertions of culture, history, and lived experience that is generally silenced in that genre.

Chapter 3 fits Nixon’s argument somewhat less easily. The works of Paule Marshall and Audre Lorde are analyzed with attention to their subject locations as descendents of the Caribbean (Lorde has roots in Carriacou, while Marshall’s parents were from Barbados), though both were born and lived most of their lives in the United States. In one of Marshall’s best-known novels, *Praisesong for the Widow*, the main character is an older middle-class black American woman who goes on a cruise to the Caribbean and has a revelation about her heritage during a stopover in Grenada. The tie-in with tourism is more tenuous in Lorde’s essays and poems wherein African Americans (broadly understood) are exhorted to fight U.S. neocolonial exploitation of the Caribbean. Nixon connects the revolutionary travel from the essay “Grenada Revisited” with the spiritual travel she locates in Lorde’s biomythographic chronicle, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*.

While the questions of diasporic travel and resistance to neocolonialism raised in the early chapters of *Resisting Paradise* are illuminating, I found the strongest parts of the book to be Chapters 4 and 5, which incorporate ethnographic methods to consider on-the-ground perspectives of people who live in the Caribbean. Chapter 4 reports on Nixon's interviews with tourism workers, which show that the more reliant they are on tourism for their livelihood the less resistance they have to the overall industry. She also conducts interviews with Arlene Nash Ferguson, a Bahamian cultural worker who unifies intellectualist theory with the practices of everyday Caribbean people through the Educulture program she founded to educate both Bahamians and tourists about the Junkanoo festival that has been popularized by the Ministry of Tourism. The chapter ends with analyses of Bahamian poet Marion Bethel's critical approach to tourism, and visual artist Dionne Benjamin-Smith's critique of the Bahamas' heavy reliance on foreign investment.

Chapter 5 shifts to Jamaica to consider Esther Figueroa's documentary, *Jamaica for Sale*, on unsustainable development in tourism and the environment, as well as Edna Brodber's novel *Myal* and her Educo-tourism project. As a writer who made her vision concrete through an educational and collaborative form of tourism, Brodber singularly unifies Nixon's project which is otherwise awkwardly stitched together throughout the book. Chapter 6 highlights the dynamics of race, culture, sex, and (to a lesser extent) sexuality in tourism through the works of Jamaican novelist Michelle Cliff, British-born novelist Oonya Kempadoo who is of Guyanese heritage, and Bahamian poet Christian Campbell.

The conclusion summarizes the book and attends to the artistic project at the new Baha Mar resort, which has local artists and other cultural producers on staff in a move toward more ethical tourism. It also brings in Nixon's personal background for an illuminating auto-ethnographic angle that helps situate the book's tendency to focus on intellectual elitism.

Resisting Paradise provides thought-provoking literary analyses of several well-known and lesser-known Caribbean cultural producers, underscoring their resistance to neocolonialism. At times, Nixon forces the works under consideration into the realm of tourism; at other times, she stretches the concept of Caribbean subjectivity to its limits. The project attends far less to the views of tourism workers or lay Caribbean people than to the cultural elite, though the brief glimpses of them are among the highlights of the book.

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