Glyne A. Griffith, *The BBC and the Development of Anglophone Caribbean Literature, 1943–1958*. Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. xi + 230 pp. (Cloth US\$ 99.99)

Postwar Sunday evenings have become an iconic moment in the literary history of the Anglophone Caribbean. Glyne A. Griffith's study returns us to the 1940s and 1950s to reassess *Caribbean Voices*, the weekly radio program broadcast from London to the West Indies that has become synonymous with the rise of contemporary Caribbean writing. Although any study of Anglophone Caribbean letters will acknowledge the program's importance, this is the first time it has received a book-length treatment. What Griffith finds is "a virtual community ... produced by the intersection of radio broadcast and letter writing" (p. 118). In its approach, the study complements recent analyses of the intersection between broadcasting technologies and national/transnational cultural production, from Todd Avery's *Radio Modernism* (2006) to Emily C. Bloom's *The Wireless Past: Anglo-Irish Writers and the BBC, 1931–1968* (2016). This turn to the cultural practices of sound is part of a challenge to the primacy of textual cultural studies, but the irony for Griffith to negotiate is that only the scripts of *Caribbean Voices* remain.

The focus on a "Critics' Circle" and "A Sustaining Epistolary Community" (Chapters 2 and 4) enables Griffith to trace the central role of Irish editor Henry Swanzy in shaping Caribbean letters, and to attend to the transnationalism and migrant aesthetics that were central to the formation of *Caribbean Voices*. His method proceeds by the impressive accumulation of detail about editorial process, offering a rich sense of the range of critical and epistolary transatlantic conflicts and alliances. The time he spent with Birmingham University's Henry Swanzy Papers pays off, as tensions about content, accent, and idiom come into focus. For example, Cedric Lindo (the Jamaica-based subeditor of *Caribbean Voices*) worries about a young Derek Walcott's grasp of vocabulary; Swanzy defends his group of West Indian readers over the "BBC Repertory Company"; and the General Manager of Radio Distribution in Barbados complains that listeners will not tolerate the "obscenities" of Sam Selvon's short story "Behind the Hummingbird" (p. 22). A contradictory politics of voice emerges, one that had to negotiate BBC convention, the mediating position of "migrant intellectuals" (p. 32), and the "complicated Caribbean 'colonial' attitudes" that John Figueroa saw in debates about West Indian representation on the BBC. How West Indian listeners responded to these debates is an intriguing question for Caribbean reception studies. The difficulty of identifying audience figures, and understanding the reach and impact of the program beyond listeners who wrote

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creatively, is clearly felt here. Yet Griffith's book reveals that there is still much to learn from the archives about the competing discourses of Caribbean literary value.

The archival voices to which this study gives space show the extent of Swanzy's attention to questions of literary development and to "local color"—a phrase associated with Swanzy, and one that Griffith glosses as the "focus on national vernaculars as a critical aspect of engaging verisimilitude" (p. 5). His intellectual commitment is to unpacking the political periods and literary methods that we have been quick to think we already fully understand. He notes that Swanzy self-identified as having a "sort of left-wing view" (p. 29), encouraging us to consider how these instances of Caribbean "local" aesthetics connect to global flows of politicized cultural action. Influenced by Arthur Calder-Marshall, Swanzy's editorial activities might also be weighed against the mores of the British Left and a politics of taste-making that was both pro-decolonization and implicated in the uneven production of global literary culture. It is a little but telling moment when Calder-Marshall says of Edgar Mittelholzer's *With a Carib Eye*, "I must confess that the bit I liked best was the bit about me!" (p. 159).

As Griffith's study comes to a conclusion, questions about the metropolitanism of the BBC and late imperial literary values are channeled through the personalities of V.S. Naipaul, Swanzy's 22-year-old successor, and Edgar Mittelholzer, the final substantial editor of the program. Eschewing Swanzy's willingness to nurture the "thread of gold," Griffith quotes Naipaul's wish "strictly to encourage those who do write and can write" (p. 149). Inevitably, what we gain from focusing on the powerhouse editorship of Swanzy (and to a lesser degree Naipaul and Mittelholzer), we also lose in terms of grasping the dispersed genealogy of a BBC Caribbean. Under the various, sometimes brief and ad hoc, editorships of Una Marson, Mary Treadgold, Henry Swanzy, V.S. Naipaul, Edgar Mittelholzer, Sylvia Wynter, Stuart Hall, George Lamming, and Andrew Salkey, different inflections of cultural development, autonomy, and independence emerge. Griffith's study is important historical groundwork here. In his hands *Caribbean Voices* comes into focus as a connecting and disruptive transatlantic presence. This book is an essential resource for anyone studying literary production in a decolonizing world.

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