Richard Price & Sally Price, *Saamaka Dreaming*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2017. xiv + 245 pp. (Paper US\$25.95)

This inspiring book combines ethnography with a brilliantly written autobiographical account of the experiences of an American couple during their anthropological fieldwork with Saamaka Maroon women and men on the Upper Suriname River in the mid-1960s. *Saamaka Dreaming* could be read as either an ethnography or a travelogue, were the combination of the two writing styles, as well as the authorship of the rich description of the daily life of Saamaka villages, not written by Richard and Sally Price, the most well-known and prolific authors on the Maroon people. More than 35 years after the short field trips of another American couple, Melville J. Herskovits and Frances S. Herskovits, in the late 1920s, the Prices conducted more than two years of fieldwork beginning in 1966, and continuing during later visits, over which time they became both specialists on the people and interlocutors of a generation of female and male Saamaka dignitaries and priests. *Saamaka Dreaming* differs from their dozens of pathbreaking books and articles—written either individually or together on topics ranging across traditional art, kinship, women and gender, history, and human rights—by depicting what might be called the Prices’ “first time,” revealing how, by becoming participants in a village on the upper river, they began acquiring Maroon knowledge—sometimes witnessing conflicts provoked by their own presence as *bakaa* (outsiders).

As the Prices recognize, they never left behind this irremediable condition. Their acceptance as nonkin and outsiders in the village and in the domestic life of Maroon women and men meant being confronted with special ordeals and jealousies. It also meant limited access to places and knowledge, and a mediated contact with Saamaka ontology. The book explores all this asymmetry in detail with a faithful sincerity and seen from the viewpoint of daily life. We could say that *Saamaka Dreaming* works both as a sort of “kitchen” of the ethnographic experience—especially for readers initiated into the Maroon academic literature—and an after-the-fact commentary, free of academic jargon but maintaining a dialogue with academia. In both cases, the book is extremely rich in methodological insights and critical reflections on fieldwork politics. Thus the image of a kitchen is not intended to evoke the foregrounding or revealing of the unsaid, the secret ingredients that make up anthropological knowledge, or the “less noble” sides of fieldwork experience, but rather, the deep dimension of ethnographic experience. It concerns, precisely, what Michel-Rolph Trouillot, in *Silencing the Past* (1995), calls “instances”—where, how, and when ethnographic knowledge is being produced, emerging in rela-

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tion to someone or through other relations. These “instances” are not made of “data” produced or collected, but created out of different relationships.

The Prices have participated, each in different ways, in multiple processes of creating knowledge with their Saamaka interlocutors. We are presented, therefore, with two authors involved in distinct, noncomparable experiences with gendered interlocutors, busy with their everyday problems, and concerned with the presence and will of the ancestors, gods, and spirits. By extension, there are not just two voices but many relationships involving Saamaka men and women, depicted by a woman and a man, both anthropologists, acting as authorized narrators. This journey includes a fashioning of ways of remembering, or “dreaming”—not as a knowledge revealed through a dream, a learning practice of huge importance among Maroons in Suriname and French Guiana, as a prominent Dutch anthropologist, Bonno Thoden van Velzen, has explored elsewhere (“Antropologie en droomtaal,” *Etnofoor* 1991). In *Saamaka Dreaming*, the work of dreaming symmetrizes the work of memory. Instead of condensing a past event into a stable depiction, the book transforms the very process of remembering, as if the “real” on which the memory was based were, in fact, a dream.

The anthropologists’ “dreaming” is revealed as a recollection of lived experiences among their interlocutors. Their presence in a Saamaka village, unexpected, was submitted to the acceptance of the hosts’ ancestors, gods, and spirits. These everyday negotiations involved human and nonhuman entities. Dreamings of a woman anthropologist showing up and isolating herself from men and children during periods of menstrual seclusion (“Going ‘Outside,’” p. 34). Dreamings of a man walking along hidden paths, forbidden rivers and creeks, protecting himself and his peers from taboos and spiritual effects; he is almost but not entirely incorporated into the powerful world of Maroon men. *Saamaka Dreaming* is a controlled description, a partial way of knowing Saamaka ontology and historical experience. Although not always manifested through the use of style, voices, and formatting—the strategies used by Richard Price in his brilliant *First Time* (1983)—this partiality, the way in which the authors position themselves as the main protagonists of their interlocutions with Saamaka villagers, is precisely what makes the book so rich.

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