Tim Barringer & Wayne Modest (eds.), *Victorian Jamaica*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2018. xx + 722 pp. (Paper US\$34.95)

Beginning with the seeming paradox of its brash title, *Victorian Jamaica* confronts habituated oppositional exclusivities of imperial and nationalist thinking. Together, the book's 31 contributors illuminate ways in which Jamaicans reckoned with the technologies—in that term's most ample sense—and ideational judgments, theories, and mores of the Victorian period, bending, resisting, and reshaping them even as they were being molded by them. The essays expose, moreover, ways in which the ideational armature and contradictions of Victorian Britain themselves emerged in relation to its continued management of this once central though now displaced Caribbean colony. The book helps to reveal, then, the mutually constitutive sociocultural fabric of imperial Britain and postemancipation Jamaica. It is an impressive volume by an interdisciplinary cast of scholars: lavishly produced with over 250 illustrations, a substantive introduction, 22 brief artifact studies, 23 longer essays, and a carefully prepared index.

With its emphasis on material culture, *Victorian Jamaica* extends significantly the conventional archive of sources for studying nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Jamaica and its transnational contexts, and serves to counteract many of the silences of the written archive. In the first section after the introduction, "Object Lessons," a diverse sampling of "artifacts" are briefly unpacked interpretively. The longer essays that follow are arranged in three sections: Part One, "Making Victorian Subjects," draws largely on documentary sources to consider key aspects of the shifting paradigms of thought and the ideological, institutional, and imperial matrix through which new forms of governance and informal rule were instituted; new modes of social differentiation initiated; and freedom narrowly constrained. Building directly on "Object Lessons," the essays in Part Two, "Visual and Material Cultures," chronicle the shift from landscape painting and lithography to photography; look closely at exemplary texts from particular genres (such as architecture and furniture-making), or bodies of work (a late-nineteenth century photographic album, a collection of photographs of South Asians in Jamaica, public monuments to Queen Victoria); and discuss the deployment of museums and international exhibitions to project particular imaginaries of Jamaica. While they are focused largely (though not exclusively) on artistic forms and practices of the island's elites and outside observers, the essays show the agency Jamaicans of all strata exercised through these cultural representations. Drawing on an equally varied array of texts—from short stories to ritual language and music, clothing style to modes of performance—the essays in Part Three, "Race, Per-

formance, Ritual,” more pointedly explore emergent modes of self-perception and self-fashioning by majority black and brown Jamaicans in the Victorian years.

The volume builds on work by scholars—some of whom are also contributors—writing on this important though relatively neglected period of Jamaican history: Thomas Holt, Catherine Hall, Patrick Bryan, Gad Heuman, Veront Satchell, Belinda Edmonson, Brian Moore and Michele Johnson, among others. However, *Victorian Jamaica* provides a more comprehensive, incisive *cultural-political* reading of the period: offering “a thick description of Jamaican culture and its artifacts that moves beyond what is possible within the framework of a narrative history” (p. 35). In textured and subtle ways it opens up and helps us reflect on the minutiae of everyday life; micro-institutional practices of colonial rule; the partial, often ambivalent and misleading ways in which both Jamaicans and the British have come to know and narrate themselves; and formative aspects of Jamaican subjectivities that are still resonant nowadays. Emancipation’s bright dawn was more constricted than its promise, these authors show; the capabilities and humanity of the majority population continually doubted; the need to restrain, control, protect, and civilize them, taken as unquestioned. Meanwhile, in their narratives of Britain’s imperial ascendancy and relationship with the Caribbean, British historians became amnesiac. Together, the essays tell of the varying modes of incision through which the ideas of incapacity were implanted and the civilizing properties of the dominant order inculcated, and foreground the complex and creative modes of Jamaicans’ responses.

One important crucible of Jamaican subject-formation whose role warrants a chapter of its own, is that small constellation of elite high schools founded in the nineteenth century. In particular, the ways in which these institutions inculcated “a sort of ‘education of the feelings’ as much as of the mind”—as Stuart Hall describes in *Familiar Stranger* (2017, p. 117)—deserves to be more fully unpacked. While several contributors tellingly refer to the formative importance of the school experience, none take it as a central concern. This superb collection, emphasizing constraint, accommodation, and transformation, contributes significantly to postcolonial studies and to rethinking pasts and presents on both sides of the Atlantic. As the school example suggests, it opens up other areas of study and fresh approaches in Jamaican historiography.

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