Matthew Casey, *Empire's Guestworkers: Haitian Migrants in Cuba during the Age of US Occupation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. xii + 313 pp. (Cloth £64.99)

The Haitian presence in Cuba is a central component for an understanding of the African diasporic and global social forces of capitalism, racialization, migration, and liberation consciousness. *Empire's Guestworkers* focuses on these neighboring islands during the first four decades of the twentieth century, contributing important insights on a period of history that saw shifts in the global economy, imperialism, migration flows and policies, labor, racial ideologies, and nation building. Matthew Casey challenges the top-down narrative stemming from corporate entities and the State, focusing on the “areas where institutional power broke down,” and thus centering on the lives and experiences of people influencing networks of economy, spiritual practice, community formation, racial concepts, and state policies (p. 2). In a volume of seven chapters plus introduction, prologue, and epilogue, he illuminates a much-needed dimension of Caribbean, African diasporic, Haitian, and Cuban history. By utilizing archival, journalistic, and literary sources from 18 archives and libraries in Haiti, Cuba, and the United States, he brings these individuals' stories to life despite the limitations of their agency and the subjective manipulation of narratives penned by the institutions and individuals who profited from the exploitive State and corporate practices reliant on the Haitian migrant labor force. By framing this issue from the beginning, Casey is able to navigate within the sparse first-person accounts and extricate Haitians' voices in a way that gives new insight into their lives, networks, and experiences.

Chapters 1 and 2 enhance the global and regional contextual dynamics raised in the introduction and prologue to situate the migration wave that serves as the central focus of the book. They challenge the assumption that policies were primarily shaped by corporations in need of laborers, and instead highlight the experiences and realities of the migrants themselves as people responsible for influencing border policies and social exchanges, building from longstanding historical connectivity between the two spaces. Chapters 3 and 4 center on the social formations, interactions, and experiences within the two dominant labor spaces—sugar plantations and coffee farms. Casey challenges the convenient ideological narratives promoted by the corporate entities and State interests that undercut the realities of the migrants' experiences, tasks, communities, and interactions with laborers of other nationalities, as well as the formation of family units and economic networks. Casey also presents a challenge to generalized perceptions of Haitians as migrant laborers, and demonstrates the various roles they played, including as recruiters and consuls. This provides a

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necessary integration of class to the intersections of gender and race that are highlighted in these chapters, all the while situating these dynamics and formations within the socio-political context of global migration policies concerning recruitment, state building, nationhood, racial ideologies, and repatriation efforts.

Chapters 5 and 6, on ideological constructs of identity, focus on religion and race—two foundational concepts used to justify global and local anti-blackness associated with Haitian identity. Casey situates this analysis within the Cuban national “civilizing” campaign to eradicate African inspired religious practices that was used to rationalize the denial of full citizenship rights within the process of building a “modern” nation—a campaign that integrated racialized identities of Haitian and Jamaican migrants, as only certain aspects of these spiritual and cultural practices were legitimated under the folkloric concept and the Afrocubanismo movement. These ideological frames presented through the media influenced the complex ways the public engaged debates on race in both Cuba and Haiti, particularly in response to the political organizing of the Partido Independiente de Color (PIC), which Casey connects to previous discussions on class distinctions, family units, and migration flows across the two nations.

Chapter 7 and the epilogue discuss the experiences, influence, and politics of return to Haiti—via both forced repatriation and voluntary migration—within the context of Haiti after the U.S. occupation, raising issues of economics, radicalism, urbanization, culture, and identity politics. The epilogue focuses on the relationship between Haiti and Cuba in the period after 1940, to contextualize migration as well as political, cultural, and racial realities that continue to the present. Casey reminds readers that the time period at the center of this volume, while representing but one moment within a larger historical trajectory, demonstrates the continuity of ideological, economic, and top-down narratives that characterize the lived realities of Haitians and their Cuban-born descendants. *Empire's Guestworkers* is a much-needed contribution to studies of Cuba, Haiti, migration, and global-economy literature, especially with its focus on eastern Cuba, providing not only important content, but also a methodological model to call attention to, and challenge, top-down narrative assumptions.

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