Julius Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*. London: Verso, 2018. ix + 246 pp. (Paper US\$ 23.99)

Julius Scott's *The Common Wind*, published at last, is quite simply a masterful work. Originally written as a Duke doctoral dissertation in 1986, it has been circulated among scholars of comparative slavery, the Atlantic World, the Age of Revolution, and the African Diaspora for over three decades, animating the scholarship and electrifying the imaginations of students and scholars alike. Even in its unpublished form, it powerfully shaped the ways in which historians have understood black circuits of mobility in the early Atlantic, cross-class networks of communication, and the impact of the Haitian Revolution. More to the point, Scott provided historians with a language to articulate the political imaginaries of the black Atlantic, the forms of survival embedded in black movement, and the practices of autonomy and sovereignty created by enslaved and free people of color.

One of Scott's signature contributions is his concept of "the masterless class," the runaway slaves, free Blacks, lower-class Whites, deserters, sailors, smugglers, pirates, and others who eluded the grasp of slaveholders and colonial authorities, and often took refuge in port cities and on sailing vessels. The mobility and resistance of these laboring classes alarmed and confounded elites on both sides of the Atlantic. Scott was among the early scholars to systematically track this masterless class, as they pried open the crevices of plantation regimes, placed themselves beyond its reach, and exposed the fragility of colonial governments intent on managing their defiance. The maritime world of the early Caribbean provided particular refuge for slaves and free people of color, and those who boarded sailing vessels or worked among the port communities often found moments of freedom, prospects for mobility, and a fugitive seafaring culture that produced much anxiety for local authorities.

Mobilizing a far-flung archive, Scott brings to light the sailors, runaways, buccaneers and others who brought critical news to American shores about the abolition debates in Britain, Bourbon reforms in Spain, and popular revolution in France. But Scott's greatest contribution is undoubtedly his tracing of the seismic reverberations of the Haitian Revolution. From Jamaica to Venezuela, the Revolution stimulated and galvanized enslaved and free people of color in unprecedented ways. Throughout the region, colonies and states attempted to police the arrival of news and people from revolutionary Saint-Domingue, and to secure their ports against the subversive ideas that traveled with them. Port cities took every precaution, inspecting ships, confiscating written materials, and monitoring the movements of black and brown foreigners. Yet in spite of these efforts, news of the Haitian Revolution seeped out into urban centers

and rural communities, inspiring slave rebellions and conspiracies in Curaçao, Dominica, Venezuela, Cuba, Louisiana, South Carolina, and other places.

Though it is now commonplace to speak of the news, rumors, information, and ideas—as well as the people and goods—that were placed in circulation by maritime black and white dissidents during this period, Scott was among those who pioneered the study of this immaterial exchange. He exquisitely illuminates the networks of mobility and communication that enslaved and free people of color forged across the circum-Caribbean region, tracing the bodies, practices, and spaces that made such communication possible. In so doing, he sheds light on an epistemological as well as an embodied black geography that traveled, morphed, and refashioned itself across imperial lines. He demonstrates that enslaved and free people were producers of *knowledge*, and he tracks the making of a regional anti slavery discourse that defined a burgeoning transatlantic black world. Such a rival mapping of black political imagination directs our attention to a porous world that was alive and teeming with the energies of black debate, critique, dialogue, and opposition. Scott thus introduces us to a history both intellectual and political, and he follows the political visions of people with and without masters.

At various points in the text, Scott highlights the women of the masterless Caribbean, such as the black women who deserted their masters to flee the violence in Saint-Domingue in the early 1790s. Their stories merit deeper exploration. Indeed, the impact of black manhood and masculinity on both black mobility and the unfolding Haitian Revolution require much more study in the literature of Atlantic history. Scholars are currently building on Scott's legacy, exploring how deeply gender structured black mobility, and the manner in which women shaped the itineraries of black knowledge and opposition that circulated in the Atlantic. This avenue of research will take Scott's pioneering research in critical new directions. The longevity of his work is proven by this book's ability to inspire fresh work in the field.

Aisha Finch

Department of Gender Studies and African American Studies, UCLA
akfinch@ucla.edu