Brooke N. Newman, *A Dark Inheritance: Blood, Race, and Sex in Colonial Jamaica*.

New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2018. xii + 340 pp. (Cloth US\$65.00)

A Dark Inheritance offers a rich and deeply researched exploration of race-making in the colonial British empire. An intellectual history of evolving conceptions of race and property, it seeks to answer several central questions about the way discourses of blood, genealogical inheritance, and imperial belonging consolidated into law and changed over time in colonial Jamaica and the British metropole in the era of slavery. These discourses, Brooke Newman argues, not only emerged from the local, provincial contexts but were also borrowed from Spanish and French legal discourses and cultural codes developed in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Caribbean, in the midst of a rapidly increasing enslaved (and free) population. The restrictions put in place protected the economic and genealogical interests of White Jamaicans and their White progeny.

Throughout the book, Newman explores how conceptions of blood inheritance, developing and circulating in the British Atlantic, increasingly rigidified racial distinctions and hierarchies while simultaneously allowing for certain individuals to “attain whiteness” through the accumulation of wealth and racial mixing, reducing the percentage of what the British called the “corrupted blood” of the “negro race.” Not simply focusing on how people of African descent—whether enslaved or free, Black or mixed race—were included or excluded from subjecthood, she also draws attention to the struggle of creole Whites to maintain their British birthright citizenship/subjecthood in the face of metropolitan prejudices and increasingly restrictive naturalization laws. One significant aspect of these temporally shifting concepts and laws of racial purity and exclusion, Newman points out, was the fiction of blood inheritance created by White Jamaicans and the British to make lineage descent specific to maternal lines in order to benefit the perpetuation of hereditary slavery. In the general focus and conclusions of this study, she concurs with previous historical work on the way Europeans created, produced, and justified White supremacy to extort infinite profit from the bodies of enslaved Africans. She adds to this scholarship with her substantiated argument that the British maintained ideas of “sanguinary divisions” adopted from their colonial neighbors in the Spanish and French Caribbean.

The book is organized in two parts, each with three chapters. Part One traces the development of Jamaican slave laws, the contests over rights and definitions of citizenship/subjecthood between Jamaica and England, and the limited permeability of Whiteness in the face of mixed-race or Black free Jamaicans petitioning for White status and civic privileges.

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The chapters in Part Two broaden the study of racial ideologies to the dialectic relationship between Jamaica and England in the era of abolition. They are tightly focused on the sexual and reproductive lives of White men (the Taylor/Tailyour and Johnston families), and show how their intimate relations with enslaved and freed women produced children whose fates rested in the hands of less-than-sympathetic fathers. Chapter 5 explores comic literary and visual depictions of Black women's sexualized bodies, concluding that the British believed that racial mixture between White male Britons and Black women "contaminated" Whiteness and contributed to the "degradation of the British racial inheritance" (p. 228). To balance out the focus on the European gaze and to avoid reproducing the perspective of White Britons on Black women and their bodies as portrayed in the archives, Newman might have included Saidiya Hartman's insights on the Captain Kimber case (in *Lose Your Mother*, 2008). Chapter 6 exposes the doubling-down of slavery's proponents, the entrenchment of ideas of blood inheritance, and the degradation of people who had even traces of African heritage.

Traditional historians of European, British imperial, and colonial histories will find the book well researched, empirically driven, novel, and insightful. Its focus illuminates British and White Jamaican sensibilities, desires, repulsions, and ideologies of race and racial mixing, as well as justifications of racial exclusion and hierarchy in the eras of slavery and abolition. Further understandings of colonial race-making and its impact might have been gleaned from scholars of the African diaspora whose work centers on the experiences of women and men of African descent in relation to enslavement, exclusion, and discursive and physical violence in this era—in the Caribbean and in England. These studies include art historians' analyses of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century visual culture that depicts Blackness and sexuality, interrogations of the impact and violence of European thought on people of African descent, and histories of Black women from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.

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