Eric J. Montgomery (ed.), *Shackled Sentiments: Slaves, Spirits, and Memories in the African Diaspora*. Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2019. xxxiv + 217 pp. (Cloth US\$95.00)

In *The Enigma of the Return* (2009), Haitian-born writer Dany Laferrière returns to Port-au-Prince after a prolonged absence, only to find himself “navigating through two worlds,” in which “images from the past constantly try to superimpose themselves on the present” (p. 197). Laferrière is seized by childhood memory-spirits who claim new life through his thoughts and actions, and ultimately his pen. Similarly, the nine contributing scholars to *Shackled Sentiments* navigate through their own worlds—past and present—to illuminate the often enigmatic power of “slave spirits” to inhabit and shape today’s world. The authors not only give voice to individuals and communities who represent the past (as is now expected for scholars of the African diaspora), but they recognize the power and importance of slave spirits themselves in conveying their stories through adepts. Indeed, this remarkable and wide-ranging collection of essays calls for a new approach to understanding how “memories, spirits, and history assemble and encroach upon the individual and community everywhere slavery existed” (p. 202).

Shackled Sentiments includes nine chapter-length case studies “of African beliefs, rituals, and memories of slavery” in western and eastern Africa, the Caribbean, and Brazil (p. xxi). Building on the groundbreaking efforts of Enrico Dal Lago and Constantina Katsari (*Slave Systems: Ancient and Modern*, 2008), Benedetta Rossi (*Reconfiguring Slavery: West African Trajectories*, 2009), and Patrick Manning (*The African Diaspora: A History through Culture*, 2009), the authors offer a collection of dynamic, cross-cultural analyses that represent new approaches to understanding how African descendant communities have “erected their own belief and moral system in response to institutionalized slavery” (p. xxiii). Taken together, the essays make one of the strongest cases yet for multidisciplinary scholarship that examines and compares local and regional conceptions of ritual, religion, and historical memory over time.

In the opening chapter of the volume’s first section, “Identity, Gender, and Slavery in the Caribbean,” Natacha Gialferi-Dombre explains how American women anthropologists helped to reveal Haitian Vodou as a creative, collective blend of religious systems that “had to answer the very specific needs of a deprived, abused, fragmented, and enslaved population and give its dramatic experiences a conceivable significance” (p. 4). Nixon S. Cleophas follows with a chapter that challenges the widely held conception of Vodou as “being simply a religion of black magic” (p. 23); he argues that Vodou is “the soul and the essence” of Haiti and its people and empowers the oppressed “to affirm that

no one, besides themselves, has power to obliterate their dignity and worth" (pp. 23, 38). Maureen Elgersman Lee then offers a thought-provoking analysis of maternal power in Barbados and Jamaica, calling on scholars to look more closely at the lives of enslaved women and mothers in spatial terms that might help map Black women's resistance to enslavement in the Caribbean.

The second section, "Slavery, Possession, and Power in Africa," contains richly researched essays on Ewe mimesis and ritual performance in Gorovodu and Mama Tchamba, the Tumbura spirit possession cult in Khartoum, and dynamic conceptions of Anlo vodun as it relates to the historical legacies of domestic slavery in modern Ghana. Each one reveals profound ways in which spirit possession confronts descendants of enslavers and the enslaved with unresolved aspects of a shared past. For example, in the case of Gorovodu in modern Togo, Eric J. Montgomery explains, "When northern spirits take over the bodies of southern adepts, the past of slavery is unveiled, while individual personhood is reshaped in the present" (p. 67). By entering the bodies of the descendants of their captors, "slaves of the past come back on the living to dance and 'rule' their former master" (p. 66).

The book's final section, "Kinship and Memories of Slavery in the African Diaspora," includes compelling essays by Beatrice Nicolini, Christian Vannier, and Laura Álvarez López, who investigate ethnospiritual power, dynamic identities, and evolving cultural practices surrounding spirit possession and the memory of slavery and resistance on the East African Coast, in Jamaica, and in Brazil, respectively. Each essay supports the notion articulated by Vannier that "the politics of moral orders are best observed in micro-social relations encountered in day-to-day life," since the spirits of the enslaved are "kept alive by the inherited identities that exist only in relation to one another" (p. 174).

Like the childhood spirit-memories in *The Enigma of the Return*, African spirits, deities, and enslaved ancestors once again have demonstrated their resilient and transcendent power to speak, dance, and rewrite themselves into the historical record—this time through the contributors to *Shackled Sentiments*.

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