Andrea Shaw Nevins, *Working Juju: Representations of the Caribbean Fantastic*.

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"The Caribbean has historically been constructed as a region mantled by the fantastic," Andrea Shaw Nevins states in the introduction to *Working Juju*. While some scholars have seen this labeling as a strategy intended to marginalize the region, Nevins argues for understanding the fantastic as an expression of Caribbean potentiality, even when a recognition of that power is "in contradiction to [a] text's ideological posture" (p. 2). Defining the fantastic as anything that "defies an explanation anchored in empirical knowledge" (p. 20), her engaging study brings together a broad range of texts—film, literature, nonfiction, folklore, and visual art—to trace connections between early characterizations of the Caribbean as an irrational, mystical space and contemporary texts that offer reworkings of those early stereotypes, what Nevins terms "acts of discursive juju" (p. 2).

Following an introduction that surveys the fantastic in Caribbean cultural production, two chapters show how a characterization of the Caribbean as fantastic or monstrous was imposed on the region from outside. Chapter 1 explores the treatment of Obeah in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature. Nevins details how the depictions of African-derived religious practices in texts such as Edward Long's *The History of Jamaica* (1774) and *Journal of a West India Proprietor* by Matthew "Monk" Lewis (1834) worked to characterize enslaved Africans as inferior and their religious practices as depraved. Given the recent bibliography on Obeah produced by scholars such as Simon Gikandi, Diana Paton, and Laura Putnam, there is not much more that Nevins can add in a chapter of this brevity, and at times her argument risks getting lost in her engagement with this scholarship. Nonetheless, this chapter does the important work of showing the historical underpinnings of the Caribbean's characterization as a fantastical space.

Moving on from the colonial era, the second chapter examines American films' portrayal of the Caribbean as supernatural. Nevins traces a cinematic arc that runs from zombie movies of the 1930s and '40s to crime thrillers to *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and shows how Hollywood has sold the American public an image of the Caribbean as a racialized and exoticized fantastic space. The juxtaposition of these diverse cinematic genres is the chapter's greatest strength, and Nevins's analysis sheds new light on these films, even as she emphasizes their consistency in positioning the Caribbean as a monstrous other.

If Hollywood's characterization of the Caribbean as fantastic "reveal[s] levels of anxiety about Caribbean bodies and indeed the region" (p. 77), *Working Juju's* final three chapters show how the fantastic mode can be a tool for shap-

ing Caribbean discursive agency. Chapter 3 examines a series of hauntings that took place in postindependence Jamaica—the Kendal Train Crash ghosts; a bird-driven coffin; and the Shirley duppy, the ghost of a deceased emigrant who returns to collect on her debts. Rather than viewing them as “folklore,” the public considered these paranormal occurrences to be true. Nevins argues that these ghosts made visible anxieties surrounding national events: Jamaica’s independence from Britain, the social unrest of the 1960s and ’70s, and the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s.

The fourth chapter explores a radically different iteration of the Caribbean fantastic: Grenadian writer Tobias S. Buckell’s “Xenowealth” trilogy. Science fiction that incorporates elements of Afrofuturism and steampunk, Buckell’s novels are set on New Anegada, a planet populated by the descendants of Caribbean nationals who left Earth generations ago. The trilogy follows the Nanagadans’ struggles to maintain their sovereignty in the face of threats from the Azteca, a neighboring population, and the Satrapic Empire, an alliance of alien planets (and a clear allusion to the European colonial system). As Nevins argues, the speculative nature of Buckell’s fiction allows him to play with the conditions of Caribbean colonialism, reimagining possible outcomes. An interview with Buckell, included as an appendix, gives us further insight into his approach to the science fiction genre.

Nevins concludes her study with an overview of the presence of the fantastic in the work of Haitian artists Edouard Duval-Carrié and Asser Saint-Val. Together with Buckell’s science fiction, Duval-Carrié’s and Saint-Val’s work serves to bolster her argument that “the deployment of the fantastic from within the region often serves to critique the region’s legacy of imperialism and internal deterioration” (p. 133). Given their compelling reimagining of Caribbean spaces and histories, I wish that Nevins had dedicated a whole chapter to visual art, rather than limiting it to the brief conclusion. Still, her analysis of their work reveals the potential of the fantastic genre as a tool for envisioning the Caribbean otherwise.

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