



# ***Newsletter***

***No. 58***

***Autumn 2009***



# **Society for Caribbean Studies Newsletter**

## **Autumn 2009**

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Dear Member of the Society for Caribbean Studies,

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to invite you to the 34th annual conference of the Society for Caribbean Studies which will be hosted by the University of Southampton, between Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> and Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2010. The conference will take place on the University campus, with accommodation located nearby. Southampton's history as a port city will be recognised in the opening panel of the conference and in a keynote speech by Professor Jean Besson, whose first footsteps in the UK landed on Southampton docks, when arriving from Jamaica as a young passenger.

The celebrated Ocean Terminal in Southampton was opened in 1950, alongside the Ocean Dock. For the following two decades, the terminal serviced a constant flow of passenger liners until travel patterns were shifted to the skies. One Southampton-harboured, but German-built, vessel was to play an iconic role in the creation of the modern Caribbean diaspora. The *Empire Windrush* departed from Kingston, Jamaica in May 1948, en route from Australia to England. The former passenger liner arrived at Tilbury docks on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1948 with 492 passengers from the Caribbean. The *Windrush's* home port was not London, but Southampton, and after this singular Caribbean voyage, it operated as a troop carrier between the Solent and Hong Kong. Today, the city has the UK's largest cruise and a significant container port, and the conference aims to mark Southampton's maritime and Caribbean connections with innovative and imaginative panels on *Ports of Arrival*, *The Windrush Generation* and *Maritime Studies*.

As usual, we hope to welcome an international and multidisciplinary range of delegates to present and to engage with new research across a breadth of topics. Additional proposed sessions include: *Archaeology and Material Culture*; *Pedagogy and Education*; *Intra-Caribbean Migration*; *Caribbean Popular Music*; *Performance*; *Regional Integration and the Future of Caricom*; *Post-Independence Trinidad*; *Oral History and Nature-Society Relations*. We welcome submissions for papers on the above

themes, or on any original research findings within the field of Caribbean Studies by 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2010

Further details of the conference, and of how to submit a paper and to attend as a delegate are available on the Society's website at [www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk](http://www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk)

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all Members for your continued support for the Society, and I hope that we will see you shipshape and sunny amid the summer sea breezes of Southampton this coming July.

Yours,

David Howard.

David Howard  
Chair, Society for Caribbean  
Studies  
Edinburgh, November 2009



R.M.S. "Queen Mary" at the Ocean Terminal, Southampton.

ET 1210

# **Society of Caribbean Studies Committee Members 2009-2010**

## **Officers and Responsibilities**

### **Chair**

David Howard, University of Edinburgh

### **Vice-Chair**

Christer Petley, University of Southampton

### **Secretary**

Clare Newstead, Nottingham Trent University

### **Treasurer**

Henrice Altink, University of York

## **Committee Members and Responsibilities**

La Tasha Brown, University of Warwick, Postgraduate Representative

Lorna Burns, University of Glasgow

David Clover, Institute of Commonwealth Studies (Newsletter and Book Reviews)

Sandra Courtman, University of Sheffield (Editor of Annual Conference Papers)

Lucy Evans, University of Leeds

Ruth Minot Egglestone (Schools Liaison)

Kate Quinn, Institute for the Study of the Americas (Bridget Jones Bursary)

# Society for Caribbean Studies ACCOUNTS

Presented to the Annual General Meeting on 3 July 2009

## CURRENT BALANCES [22 June 2009 ]

Capital Reserve (Bridget Jones)	£4,174.74
Current	£5,966.89
Reserve	£8,362.52
<b>Total current assets:</b>	<b>£18,504.15</b>

## FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2009

### CURRENT ACCOUNT

<b>Balance at 31 March 2008</b>	<b>2,304.74</b>
Total income	19,960.02
Total expenditure	16,073.83
Total Transfers	1,000.00
<b>Balance at 31 March 2009</b>	<b>£ 2,588.69</b>

### Income

Conference 2008	8,698.65
Conference 2009	75.00
Refunds committee	38.05
JISLAC	6,500.00
JISLAC CRSN	3,838.22
Membership (paid by standing order)	84.00
Other income	726.15
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£19,960.02</b>

### Expenditure

Committee travel 2007-08	110.03
Committee travel 2008-09	1,168.96
Conference 2008	7,173.39
Bridget Jones Bursary	1,266.01
CRSN Glasgow (January 2009)	1,702.42
CRSN Nottingham (May 2008)	1,201.34
CRSN Preston (January 2008)	297.00
CRSN York (October 2008)	647.86
JISLAC essay prize	250.00
JISLAC IT	1,000.00
Newsletter	389.54
Warwick administration	200.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£16,073.83</b>



## **34th ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**University of Southampton**  
**Wednesday 7th July - Friday 9th July 2010**

The Society for Caribbean Studies invites submissions of one-page abstracts and a short CV by **15th January, 2010** for research papers on the Hispanic, Francophone, Dutch and Anglophone Caribbean, and on Caribbean diasporas for this annual international conference.

Papers are welcomed from all disciplines and can address the themes outlined below. We also welcome abstracts for papers or for full panel proposals that fall outside this list of topics.

Those selected for the conference will be invited to give a 20-minute presentation and will be offered the opportunity to publish their work as part of the Society's online series of papers.

## PROVISIONAL PANELS

Maritime Studies  
Archaeology and Material Culture  
Ports of Arrival  
Pedagogy and Education  
The Windrush Generation  
Intra-Caribbean Migration  
Caribbean Popular Music  
Performance  
Regional Integration and the Future of Caricom  
Oral History  
Nature-Society Relations

To submit an abstract online, please consult the Society website:  
[www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk](http://www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk)

The Society will provide a limited number of **Postgraduate Bursaries** for presenters to assist with registration and accommodation costs. Postgraduate researchers should indicate that they are seeking a bursary when submitting their abstract, but please note that travel costs cannot be funded.

Arts researchers or practitioners living and working in the Caribbean are eligible to apply for the **Bridget Jones Award**, the deadline for which is also **15th January, 2010**.

For further queries, or alternative methods of abstract submission, contact Lorna Burns ([societyforcaribbeanstudies@gmail.com](mailto:societyforcaribbeanstudies@gmail.com)). For more information on the Bridget Jones Award, contact Kate Quinn ([kate.quinn@sas.ac.uk](mailto:kate.quinn@sas.ac.uk)) or visit the Society website.

## WELCOME TO SOUTHAMPTON

Southampton is a vibrant port city that has been a point of arrival, departure and transmigration over the centuries, and the port and the city have important historic connections with the Caribbean.

The conference will take place at the attractive Highfield campus of the University of Southampton, to the north of the city centre. The campus is easily accessed from Southampton Central railway station and from Southampton Airport Parkway. It has amenities such as shops, cafes and bars and is a short walk from Southampton common. For more information on the city and the university, see: <http://www.soton.ac.uk/> and <http://www.visit-southampton.co.uk/>.

Popular attractions in Southampton include:

- The Museum of Archaeology
- The Maritime Museum
- The City Art Gallery
- The John Hansard Gallery
- The Bargate Monument Gallery

Southampton's parks make it the greenest city in Southern England. Close to the Old Town are seven formal parks which were originally common land where the medieval townsfolk grew crops and grazed their animals, converted into elegant parks in the early Victorian period. These Grade II listed parks are now fully restored and have their traditional bandstand, rose gardens, elaborate fountains and imposing sculptures which evoke the city's history and civic pride. The huge 326 acre Common, just a short walk from the city centre, is a haven for flora and fauna and has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

## **The David Nicholls Memorial Prize for Postgraduate Students**

The David Nicholls Memorial Prize is awarded every two years to the author of the best postgraduate paper delivered to the Society for Caribbean Studies annual conferences. It is open to all post-graduate researchers who present papers in any discipline or topic associated with the Caribbean.

The most recent recipients have been Lucy Evans (2009), Rivke Jaffe (2007), David Dodman (2005), Audra Diptee (2003), David Lambert (2001), Sandra Courtman (1999) and Mimi Sheller (1997).

### **The prize**

Books worth £100 from Macmillan Caribbean

The opportunity to publish your paper in *Wadabagei: A Journal of the Caribbean and its Diaspora*

### **Entry details for the 2011 David Nicholls Prize**

Only papers presented by *postgraduates* at the 2009 and 2010 Society for Caribbean Studies Conferences will be eligible

Entrants must submit a written version before 1 October in the year the paper is presented

The paper should be properly referenced and not exceed 7000 words (including references)

The judging panel will consist of members drawn from the Society's Committee and will evaluate the originality of the research and the standard of scholarship

Papers may be submitted by email or post to:

Christer Petley  
School of Humanities (History)  
University of Southampton  
SO15 1BJ  
[c.petley@soton.ac.uk](mailto:c.petley@soton.ac.uk)

The award will be announced at the 2011 Conference. The next award will cover papers presented at the 2011 and 2012 conferences.

# BRIDGET JONES TRAVEL AWARD: CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Arts researchers or practitioners living and working in the Caribbean are eligible to apply for the **Bridget Jones Travel Award**, the deadline for which is the **15<sup>th</sup> January 2010**. The winner of the award will present their work at the Society for Caribbean Studies Annual Conference, which will be held at the University of Southampton from the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

## Eligibility

If you are an arts practitioner or researcher (postgraduate, postdoctoral or professional) living and working in any region of the Anglophone, Hispanic, Francophone or Dutch speaking Caribbean, you may apply for the Award. The successful recipient will receive **£650** towards travel expenses and, in addition, a full bursary to cover conference fees and accommodation. Applications are especially welcome from individuals with no institutional affiliations. We encourage applications from across the arts: from visual artists, performers, creative writers, film-makers, folklorists, playwrights etc.

## How To Apply

To apply for the Award you must submit the following:

- A covering letter
- Curriculum vitae (no more than 4 sides of A4)

Statements from 2 referees who are able to comment on your work

### **AND either:**

- (a) A proposal for a presentation of your work in the areas of film, literature, visual or performing arts.
- (b) A proposal for a reading of original creative work.

Presentations normally last for up to one hour, including time for questions from the audience. The most important part of your application will therefore be a full description of the proposed presentation detailing the themes and rationale behind the presentation, as well as how the presentation will be organised and any props required (eg. if intending to screen clips of films; show slides of artwork; incorporate live performance etc).

Applications and enquiries should be sent by e-mail to Kate Quinn, Chair of the Bridget Jones Award Sub-Committee on [kate.quinn@sas.ac.uk](mailto:kate.quinn@sas.ac.uk)

Completed applications must be received by **15th January 2010**. A decision will be made by the committee in late January.

For more information on the Bridget Jones Travel Award and the Society for Caribbean Studies, visit the Society website on

[www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk](http://www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk)

## Society for Caribbean Studies Annual Conference 2009 Panel Reports

### The Business Roots of Caribbean Slavery

**Nick Draper (UCL)** 'London Merchants and Caribbean slavery after the abolition of the slave trade'

**Albane Forestier (London School of Economics)** 'Debt litigation in a plantation society: Nevis and St Kitts at the end of the eighteenth century'

**Sheryllynne Haggerty (University of Nottingham)** 'Problems with business networks in the Jamaica slave trade'

**Simon Smith (WISE)** 'The trade of Richard Poor: Quaker merchant of Barbados'

### The Caribbean Short Story Chair: Lorna Burns

**Sandra Courtman (University of Sheffield)** 'Caribbean short stories and the relationship between genre and culture'

**Lucy Evans (University of Leeds)** "Ingeniously diverting?": Strategies of digression in E. A. Markham's interlinked stories'

**Abigail Ward (Nottingham Trent University)** 'Tracing significant foot-steps: Ismith Khan'

This panel presented three distinct approaches to the often-overlooked genre of the Caribbean short story. **Sandra Courtman** traced the development of the Caribbean short-story form and its relationship to the growth in interest in Caribbean literature in general. Sampling the short stories of the early pioneers of the form in the 1920s, Courtman presented the short story as a crucial site of decolonisation and precursor to contemporary postcolonial practices. **Lucy Evans** discussed the work the Montserrat-born writer E. A. Markham and his 2005 short story collection *Meet Me in Mozambique*. Evans offered Markham's use of narrative digressions, detour and disparate spatial locations as evidence of both the persisting legacies of devastation and enduring sense of possibility that characterise Caribbean writing. **Abigail Ward** explored the legacies of Indian indenture in short stories by the Trinidadian writer Ismith Khan and, in particular, his collection *A Day in the Country* (1994). Exposing the impact of Indian indentured labourers and their descendents on 1940s and '50s Trinidad, Ward suggested that it is the heterogeneous nature of the short-story form itself that enables Khan to present a diverse

cross-section of Indian-Trinidadian life. The three papers offered in this panel will all feature in a collection of critical essays *The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives*, due to be published by Peepal Tree Press in Winter 2009/10.

### **Alternative Sexualities in the Caribbean and Its Diasporas**

Chair: Henrice Altink

**Grainne O'Connel (University of Sussex)** ‘“Without” the nation and “within” the diaspora: queering the relationship between the Anglophone Caribbean and its diasporas’

**Ronald Cummings (University of Leeds)** ‘Marronage and queer Caribbean subjectivities: Transgressive bodies and (trans)national imaginaries’

There were two papers in this panel. The first by **Grainne O'Connel** explored the intricate links between gender and heteronormativity. By drawing upon recent diasporic literature, including Kei Miller's short stories, she convincingly argued that the constructedness of the relationship between Diaspora and nation is particularly apparent for queer subjectivities. Diaspora authors like Miller reveal in their work that queer men and women are not seen as part of the nation. The authors' migration to the Diaspora, however, is usually accompanied by bitter-sweet and often short-term celebrations.

**Ronald Cummings** proposed in his paper that transnationalism is a useful theoretical lens to discuss Caribbean queer politics as queers like maroons are simultaneously inside and outside the nation. He argued that if scholars see queerness as a transnational identity, they can talk about both identification and misidentification and belonging and unbelonging and thereby enhance understanding of Caribbean nationalism. The papers led to a lively discussion that centred on questions of migration and citizenship and dominant ideals of sexuality in the Caribbean.

### **Power, sickness and health in plantation societies**

**Kit Candlin (University of Sydney)** ‘Poison, paranoia and slavery’

**Randy Browne (University of North Carolina)** ‘“This bad business on the estate”: obeah, violence and authority in the British Caribbean in the early nineteenth century’

**Shalini Khan (Queen's University, Canada)** ‘Slave medicine in the pre-emancipation Caribbean’

## Religion

**Amitava Chowdhury (Queen's University, Canada)** 'Reciprocity and formational identity: Indian indentured labor diaspora in the Caribbean in a comparative perspective'

**Ennis B. Edmonds (Kenyon College, Ohio)** 'Local meets global: A case study of religious change in Jamaica'

## Caribbean and Atlantic Geographies: place and space

**Anyaa Anim-addo (Royal Holloway University of London)** ' "Capital, people, and texts": The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company in the post-emancipation Caribbean'

**Melanie Gidel (University of Paris, X Nanterre)** 'The city and its margins: A comparative study of Volga-Plage (Martinique, FWI) and Sea Lots (Trinidad and Tobago)'

**Bonnie Thomas (University of Western Australia)** 'Place and space in selected works of Gisele Pineau'

## Caribbean Literature Chair: Sandra Courtman

**Rose Mary Allen (University of the Netherlands Antilles)** 'Beyond enslavement: Social life after freedom in Curaçao and the process of remembering'

**Diana Pardo (University of Central Oklahoma)** 'The Evolution of Negritude in Spanish-speaking Caribbean Literature'

**Kei Miller (University of Glasgow)** 'Troubled genealogy: Considering the Caribbean epistolary novel'

This panel consisted of three high quality papers from scholars who work on Dutch, Hispanic and Anglophone Caribbean literature and culture. The panel began with a paper on the Dutch Antilles by **Rose Mary Allen** who described her field research on, and analysis of, the social act of remembering by Afro-Curaçaoans. The paper traced the little-researched histories of Afro-Curaçaoans and the linguistic and narrative devices they employ to keep safe the private memories of descendents from African slaves. Rose Mary Allen situated their oral histories within a broader framework of what is known about enslavement in the Americas. **Diana Pardo** continued with a paper on 'The Evolution of Negritude in Spanish-Speaking Caribbean Literature'. Diana spoke about the intellectual

consciousness of writers from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba who challenge existing misrepresentations of the Black population of these islands. The paper traced how these writers question the national values that shape the thought of Caribbean society through a literature of resistance. The panel concluded with a paper by **Kei Miller** on an original line of literary enquiry into the 'troubled genealogy' of the Caribbean epistolary novel. Kei challenged the practice of critics who attempt to place new work from Caribbean authors, such as Paulette Ramsay and Beryl Gilroy, within a genealogy of famous 18<sup>th</sup> century epistolary novels, notably Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. These papers stimulated a generous discussion and made interesting connections between three very different areas of research of these islands. The paper traced how these writers question the national values that shape the thought of Caribbean society through a literature of resistance.

### **Discipline, punishment and the law in the Caribbean**

**Helen McKee and Diana Paton (University of Newcastle upon Tyne)**

'Punishment, the slave courts and 'amelioration' in Jamaica'

**Maarit Forde (University of Newcastle upon Tyne)** 'Policing religion in colonial Trinidad'

**Clare Newstead (Nottingham Trent University)** 'Exporting insecurity: Deportation and the geopolitics of the 'criminal' body'

### **Cultural Practices and Modes of Representation Chair: Kate Quinn**

**Elsbeth Kydd (University of the West of England)** 'Caribbean autobiography, domestic photography and the family photo album'

**Karen Wilkes (University of East London)** 'Representations of Jamaica'

**Abdoulaye Gaye** 'Trading Places: Social Equality and the minimal consciousness of symbolic domination in the Dancehall'

This diverse panel explored issues of identity, representation and power relations manifested across different cultural forms: family photographs; tourist literature; and dancehall. **Elsbeth Kydd's** paper drew on images from her fascinating personal archive of domestic photographs to explore notions of autobiography and the ways in which photo albums 'present a complex and fragmentary view of Caribbean experience'. Moving from private to public imagery, **Karen Wilkes'** paper analysed the race, gender, sexuality and class dimensions played out in images representing Jamaica

as a tourist destination, showing how they construct ‘whiteness as the natural recipient of privilege and luxury and blackness as naturally signifying servitude’. Lastly **Abdoulaye Gaye** intervened in the ongoing debate around the meanings and values of Jamaican dancehall, raising issues of social inequality, economic and cultural domination. All three papers were very well received and were followed by a lively discussion from the floor.

### **Politics, resistance and slavery during slavery**

Chair: Henrice Altink

**Jamie Rosenthal (University of California, San Diego)** ‘Eliza Fenwick, radicalism, and the contradictions of race, gender, and class in the Caribbean plantation system’

**Gordon Gill (Oberlin College, Ohio)** ‘Strategies of slave resistance in the hydrologic plantation society of British Guiana’

The two papers in this panel focused on different slave societies. The first by **Jamie Rosenthal** examined how the white Eliza Fenwick understood her position vis-à-vis slaves in Barbados in late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In England, Fenwick had included amongst her friends many abolitionists. Rosenthal persuasively argued that it was her economic status – she was a single mother who had to work to support her family – that led her to adopt a pro-slavery stance and prevented her from identifying with slave women on the basis of a shared gender soon after arriving in Barbados. **Gordon Gill** examined slavery in British Guyana and more specifically slave resistance. He showed that slaves were less inclined to resort to collective and physical acts of resistance, such as rebellion, than to individual and non-physical acts of resistance, such as launching complaints with officials. He showed that although these acts did not overtly challenge the system of slavery, they did help to weaken it. The discussion following the papers posed some interesting questions, such as the impact of the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 on the slaves’ culture of resistance.

### **Decolonisation and Postcolonial Nations**

**Antony Bounds (University of Warwick)** ‘“Left to sick or swim”: The West Indies Federation and the realities of an imperial legacy’

**Hilbourne Watson (Bucknell University)** ‘The Anglo-American Cold War project, working-class struggles and self-determination in the British Caribbean’

## **Sexuality, morality and family** Chair: Henrice Altink

**Barbara Bush (Sheffield Hallam)** 'Edith Clarke's Jamaica: The West Indian Social Survey and Colonial Social Science Research Council, 1944-1958'

**Neel Ahuja (University of North Carolina)** 'The Panama Canal and the fallen city'

The first paper in this panel was by **Barbara Bush**, which revisited a seminal study on the Caribbean family: Edith Clarke's *My Mother who Fathered Me* (1958). Bush first of all traced the origins of the book. It was part of a larger project called 'The West Indian Survey', which ran from 1947 till 1952 and examined family life, sexual and social mores in three rural Jamaican communities. She then went on to show that the publications resulting from this survey including Clarke's did much to detract attention away from the structural reasons for poverty in the Caribbean since emancipation and also worked to influence social policies for African-Caribbean migrant families in Britain in the 1940s and 1950s. The second paper by **Neel Ahuja** looked at the same decades as Bush's paper but focussed on a different locality: the Canal zone. He examined a VD control programme by the US military and local government during the Second World War, which was based on the assumption that female migrant labourers and Panamanian women were inherently immoral. Fiction set in the region or produced by local writers, however, tried to counteract this image of sex workers, which racialised sexuality and sexualised race, as did the opposition of women to the VD control programme. But the fiction nevertheless revealed as much as the US military representations of the sex trade in the region, anxieties over miscegenation and transnational contact. The discussion following was particularly concerned with the silences in the archives.

## **Cultures of Resistance**

**Lorna Burns (University of Glasgow)** 'Becoming Bertha: Virtual difference and postcolonial resistance in *Wide Sargasso Sea*'

**Joanne Chassot (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)** 'Fragmentation as condition and possibility: History, narrative and resistance in Michelle Cliff's work'

## **New Approaches to Emancipation**

**Kate Hodgson (University of Hull)** 'New approaches to emancipation: Haiti and the nineteenth century abolitionist debate'

**Christer Petley (University of Southampton)** 'Slave negotiation and imperial governance at the point of emancipation: a reappraisal of the Jamaican slave uprising'

**For select conference papers in full text see The Society for Caribbean Studies online conference proceedings, volume 10, 2009.**

See <http://www.caribbeanstudies.org.uk>

## Seminars and Events

### Institute of Commonwealth Studies/ Institute for the Study of the Americas February 2010—

#### 20<sup>th</sup> January

**Raphael Hörmann**, University of Rostock, Germany *“British Radicals and the Haitian Revolution: John Thelwall & Robert Wedderburn”*

5pm Room G37 South Block Senate House

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> February

**Nick Draper**, University College London *“The price of Emancipation: the slave compensation records as a resource in Caribbean histories”*

5pm Room G32 South Block Senate House

#### 17<sup>th</sup> February

**Jean Stubbs**, Associate Fellow, Institute for the Study of the Americas  
*“Nations unbound: the ‘uncomfortable’ tobacco history of Puerto Rico, Connecticut and Cuba, 1898-2008”*

5pm Room G32 South Block Senate House

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> March

**Hyacinth Simpson**, Ryerson University, Canada

TITLE TBC

5pm Room G32 South Block Senate House

#### 17<sup>th</sup> March

**Paul Sutton**, London Metropolitan University/Caribbean Chamber of Commerce

TITLE TBC

5pm Room G32 South Block Senate House

**All Welcome**

**For further details please contact**

**Kate Quinn at [Kate.Quinn@sas.ac.uk](mailto:Kate.Quinn@sas.ac.uk)**

## CARIBBEAN EVENTS: SUMMER TERM 2010

**16<sup>th</sup> June**

### **Seminar & Book launch**

Colin and Gillian Clarke, *Post-Colonial Trinidad: An Ethnographic Journal*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010

**21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> June**

### **Conference: From Duvalier to Preval: Haiti Today and Yesterday**

Convenors: Paul Sutton and Kate Quinn

In 1979 Dr David Nicholls published a widely acclaimed book from *Des-salines to Duvalier* and followed it shortly after with another on *Haiti in Caribbean Context*. The aim of this two-day conference is to explore themes developed in these books and relate them to understanding and developing Haiti today.

The first day will examine the contemporary and historical evolution of politics in Haiti and how it relates to prospects for economic and social development today. Invited speakers will address these themes from both an academic and development practitioner viewpoint.

The second day will examine the present and past position of Haiti in the Caribbean and how it relates to the region and to the wider world. Again invited speakers will address these themes from both an academic and a practitioner viewpoint.

Proposals for papers on the themes of both days and/or expressions of interest in attending should be sent by 31 December 2009 to [p.sutton@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:p.sutton@londonmet.ac.uk) or [Kate.Quinn@sas.ac.uk](mailto:Kate.Quinn@sas.ac.uk). Proposals for papers should have a title and a short summary of the themes to be discussed.

The conference is being supported by the David Nicholls Memorial Trust and some financial support for those presenting papers at the conference may be made available.

# Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick

## Seminars

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2010

Miskitu Travellers in the Caribbean and in the Atlantic World

**Caroline Williams**, University of Bristol

5pm - 6pm; H0.56 Humanities Building

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010

Natural Disasters in a Slave Society - Hurricane & Volcanic Hazard on St Vincent

**Simon Smith**, W.I.S.E. University of Hull

5pm - 6pm; H0.56 Humanities Building

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February

'Hurting the Eye and Heart of the Feeling Reader: Violence and Disease in John Stedman's *Narrative* (1790)'

**Emily Senior**, University of Warwick,

5pm - 6pm; H0.56 Humanities Building

**All Welcome**

**For further details please contact**

**Kerry Drakeley at [k.j.drakeley@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:k.j.drakeley@warwick.ac.uk)**

**Caribbean Research Seminar in the North  
An Interdisciplinary Research Seminar on the Caribbean and its Diasporas, in association with the Society for Caribbean Studies**

Friday 22nd January 2010, 13.30 pm 18.45 pm  
University of Liverpool

Research Institute of Latin American Studies, 86 Bedford Street South

Programme

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1.30 – 2.00 Registration, tea and coffee

2.00 - 2.45 Dr Kate Marsh (University of Liverpool)

*'Rights of the Individual', Indentured Labour and Indian Workers: The Slavery Debate in the French Antilles post-1848*

2.45 - 3.30 Dr Elaine Bauer (Institute of Education) and Professor Paul Thompson (University of Essex)

*Jamaican Migration and Shifting Identities*

3.30 - 4.00 Tea and Coffee

4.00 - 4.45 Dr Leon Wainwright (Manchester Metropolitan University)

*In the Aftermath of Painting: Caribbean Transnationalism and Aubrey Williams*

4.45 - 5.30 Dr Andy Green, Birmingham Stories Project

*Black History and Public Heritage*

5.30 - 6.00 Wine Reception (hosted by RILAS)

6.00 - 6.45 Tanya Barson (Curator, Tate Collection)

*Black Atlantic Modernism*

A limited number of bursaries to cover the costs of travel within the UK are available for postgraduate students attending this event. To apply, please email Henrice Altink [ha501@york.ac.uk](mailto:ha501@york.ac.uk) stating your topic and giving the name and email address of your supervisor.

Registration is free.

A reservation for dinner at a local restaurant will be made for the evening. Please let us know you are coming, and if you would like to be included in the dinner reservation, by emailing Amanda Sives [asives@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:asives@liverpool.ac.uk).

Funded by JISLAC

**Caribbean Studies Association Annual Conference 2010**  
**Understanding the Everyday Occurrence of Violence in the Cultural**  
**Life of the Caribbean: Where Do We Go From Here?**

The phenomenon of violence has become widely recognized as an increasingly intractable problem facing the Caribbean. The 2010 Conference of the Caribbean Studies Association invites scholars to explore the complexities of violence and all its implication for the region.

We welcome panel and individual submissions from people across the humanities, arts, social sciences, public policy and civil society organizations.

**Suggested Topics:**

The state's monopoly of violence  
Capitalism and structural violence  
Representing violence  
Domestic and sexual violence  
Violence against children  
Violence and citizenship  
Violence and everyday life  
Transnationalism, diasporas and violence  
Crime, violence and the law  
Violence and the artistic imagination  
Race, ethnic cleavages and political violence  
Violence unleashed on the environment of the Caribbean  
The role of violence in the cultural life of the region

We are seeking scholarly papers from individuals spanning the broadest disciplinary and methodological range whose work focuses upon the Caribbean and its Diaspora. While we consider individual papers, we encourage submissions of entire panel proposals. We also encourage and welcome graduate student submissions.

We are pleased to continue the very successful Film and Performance Track, which began at the 2009 CSA in Jamaica. On the submission form there will be a space for you to check if you want your proposal to be considered by the committee organizing this section of the conference.

All submissions must be made via the online submission form at [www.caribbeanstudiesassociation.org](http://www.caribbeanstudiesassociation.org) . The deadline for submissions is January 22, 2010.

**For information pertaining to the program only, please contact: Program Chair Alissa Trotz at [datrotz@gmail.com](mailto:datrotz@gmail.com)**

**For any information pertaining to registration or membership, please contact [Joy.Cooblal-CSA@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:Joy.Cooblal-CSA@sta.uwi.edu)**

**Caribbean Enlightenment - An Interdisciplinary Caribbean  
Studies Conference**

**Thursday 8th April Saturday 10th April 2010**

**Where: University of Glasgow**

**Notes:**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**Keynote Speakers:**

**J. Michael Dash**, Professor of French, Social and Cultural Analysis,  
New York University

**Charles Forsdick**, University of Liverpool

**Paget Henry**, Professor of Sociology and Africana Studies, Brown  
University

**Nick Nesbitt**, Centre for Modern Thought, University of Aberdeen

This conference seeks to bring together interdisciplinary perspectives on Enlightenment themes, both historical and contemporary, in order to trace the spread of a universalist discourse across the Caribbean. We hope to bring together Anglophone, Francophone and Hispanophone perspectives that explore figurations of the universal within the Caribbean context. Noting the region's national and linguistic divides, this conference will expose the ways in which Enlightenment ideals have been adapted to express the particular experience of the Caribbean peoples. Finally, we pose the question: 'Does the commitment to universalism amount to a totalizing discourse, or can universalism be revisioned?'

Further details and a full call for papers are available at  
[www.gla.ac.uk/caribbeanenlightenment](http://www.gla.ac.uk/caribbeanenlightenment)

Dr Lorna Burns

Department of English Literature

The University of Glasgow

# Historical Roots of Social Exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Thursday 24 and Friday 25 June 2010

Sponsored by the Economic History Society Conferences and Initiatives Fund this intensive two-day workshop seeks to stimulate new research in the historical roots of social exclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean from a broad comparative and historical perspective, highlighting the nature of institutions inherited from pre-Columbian societies as well as British, French, and Iberian colonial empires and the nature and social consequences of the struggle for Independence in the colonies.

Submissions are invited for the following panels:

### PART 1: INHERITED INSTITUTIONS

*What institutional blueprint did the British, French, Portuguese and Spanish empires leave for the formulation of the social contract in the Americas? How inclusive/exclusive were their societies at this time? How inclusive/exclusive were the Pre-Columbian societies, and how did these structures evolve with the arrival of the colonists?*

Panel 1: Papers invited on Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Pre-Columbian societies

### PART 2: HISTORICAL ROOTS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*In which ways did the new constitutions mark a significant break from the Colonial powers? To what extent did they articulate a 'new' social contract? What scope was there for upward mobility, for whom, and how permanent? What were the new social priorities, and how well reflected were they in public expenditure and budgets?*

Panel 2: Papers invited on Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela

Panel 3: Papers invited on Cuba, Central America, Dominican Republic, Haiti

Panel 4: Papers invited on Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru

### PART 3: THE US AND CANADA AS POINTS FOR CONTRAST

Panel 5: Papers invited on the United States and Canada

The Conference will take place in London at the Institute for the Study of the Americas on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 June 2010 (dates to be confirmed). Please send a title, an abstract of 150 words and a 3-5 page summary of the proposed paper to [Ame.Berges@sas.ac.uk](mailto:Ame.Berges@sas.ac.uk) no later than Friday 8 January 2010

**Indo-Caribbean Literature and Culture 2010**  
**Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick**  
**1st-2nd of July 2010**

To mark the foundation of the Indo-Caribbean Studies Association, the Centre for Caribbean Studies at the University of Warwick is hosting its second interdisciplinary conference on Indo-Caribbean Literature and Culture. Indentureship propelled over half-a-million Indians across the kala pani to take root all over the world, negotiating new physical and figurative spaces for themselves and their descendants. The contribution of this widely-distributed Indian population to global culture and literature is substantial, and is particularly pronounced in the case of the Caribbean. Encompassing art, music, cuisine, religion, and more, the Indian presence is indelibly inscribed on the social, cultural, political and physical landscape of the region; emerging from their fascinating history is a wealth of creative writing and scholarly works. The flourishing of Indo-Caribbean literature and creativity over the past twenty years, exemplified by the renown of V. S. Naipaul and reinforced by the work of critically acclaimed authors such as David Dabydeen, Cyril Dabydeen, Mahadai Das, Ramabai Espinet, Roy Heath, Ismith Khan, Shiva Naipaul, Sam Selvon, and many more, has served to draw critical focus towards the unique and diverse elements of Indian life in the Caribbean and elsewhere. The postcolonial intersections of Indo-Caribbean experience provide a generative platform for critical and theoretical discourses, incorporating hybridity, hyphenated identities, neo-colonialism, eco-criticism, coolitude, cross-cultural transfer, gender construction and beyond. This event welcomes papers across the theoretical spectrum of Indo-Caribbean studies, and aims to investigate new avenues of research in the field. What impact have recent developments in postcolonial cultural theory had on our understanding of Indo-Caribbean experience? Conversely, what distinctive contribution does Indo-Caribbean literature make to a broader understanding of postcolonial cultures?

**Topics for consideration might include but are not limited to:** Negotiation of Indo-Caribbean identities Memory, migration and exile Indian women in the Caribbean Politics and labour Gender and sexuality Religion and ritual Ecology and environment Language Survival and revival of visual arts

**Submissions:** Proposals are invited from established and new scholars, including postgraduate researchers. 300-word abstracts should be sent to [L.Gramaglia@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:L.Gramaglia@warwick.ac.uk) and should arrive by 21st December 2009. Acceptance will be notified by 1st February 2010. To register for the conference please contact [M.R.Tumbridge@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:M.R.Tumbridge@warwick.ac.uk) or [Joseph.Jackson@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Joseph.Jackson@warwick.ac.uk).

The Indo-Caribbean Studies Association - <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/icsa>

## BOOK REVIEWS

**P. Allsworth-Jones, *Pre-Columbian Jamaica*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: Michael N. Jagessar, University of Birmingham**

What do we know of very early Jamaica, that is, pre-Columbian Jamaica? So much of our history of Jamaica and the Caribbean is shaped by colonial history that little is known of the region before Columbus accidentally landed on these shores. This volume is a first substantial endeavour to bring to readers, students, scholars and researchers a summary of prehistoric evidence from Jamaica in one single volume. In view of the more contemporary preference for the name Taino, instead of Arawak to name the early inhabitants, the author has opted for “pre-Columbian” inhabitants. While the volume is intended to provide an overall picture on the subject matter, it is best read alongside the accompanying CD-ROM which provides a wide array of crucial and necessary information, including detailed information and documentation on two hundred and seventy one prehistoric sites in Jamaica and material evidence from nineteen of these.

The book is shaped around an introduction, nine chapters and a conclusion. After a brief introduction, chapter 2 covers in summary form all the archaeological work in Jamaica since the initial published essay of J.E. Duerden (1897). In chapter 3, readers are presented with very helpful insights on general frameworks for Caribbean prehistory in order to place into perspective the pre-history of Jamaica. The environment, fauna and flora characteristic of Jamaica and the Caribbean during the period under scrutiny is the focus of chapter 4. Chapter 5 delves into and explains the James Lee Collection and the rationale guiding the methodology employed. Lee’s collection now housed at the University of the West Indies (Mona, Jamaica), the fruit of his archaeological work from 1951-1986, provides the material for this volume. Chapter 6 maps the sites, sums up Lee’s work and offers a quantified assessment of the results. Chapter 7 takes Lee’s findings further by not only describing the main cultural variants that are present on the island and considering their chronology; it also draws on recently excavated materials located in St Mary’s Parish. Petroglyphs and pictographs that exist in Jamaica are described and compared with those found elsewhere in the Caribbean in chapter 8. Chapter 9 offers a detailed description of the excavated sites in Jamaica and what they reveal. The penultimate chapter looks at burials and the remains that have been unearthed. Most of these chapters should be read alongside the CD-ROM which provides necessary additional information. A very helpful overview of the contents of the CD-ROM is provided in the introduction (pages 4-7).

Among the significance of the findings in *Pre-Columbian Jamaica* is that this work not only enables, “Jamaica can take its rightful place as a full part of the Caribbean prehistoric story”, but also locates the findings into the arena of “vigorous scholarly discourse that characterizes the study of the prehistoric past in other parts of the Caribbean”. [p.132] This is not only much needed but provides a basis for continuing work in this area. *Pre-Columbian Jamaica* is also loaded with numerous illustrations, an extensive bibliography and with more than half of the book containing appendices, which include the 1897 essay of J. E. Duerden. This is certainly an invaluable resource for Caribbean archaeologists and researchers in the area of Caribbean Studies. This book will not be an easy read, but it is a necessary one for Caribbean scholars and hopefully it will stir the imagination of writers and theorists to continue thinking outside of determined colonial historical frameworks.

**Carlton Mills (ed), *A History of the Turks & Caicos Islands*. Oxford: Macmillan Caribbean, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: F.S.J. Ledgister, Clark Atlanta University**

The Turks and Caicos Islands come into the news rarely. The territory came to public attention, in the Caribbean and beyond, earlier this year when Premier Michael Misick was removed from office following allegations of corruption, and the colony’s governor was granted the power to suspend the constitution and rule by decree. At a time when the age of empire and colonisation seemed over, the TCI appeared to have reverted to an earlier era of West Indian history.

This volume provides a helpful guide not only to the history of the territory – the title misleads the reader – but to its geography, geology, flora, fauna, sociology, economics, and politics. It is intended as a textbook for students in the territory, and a guide to the general reader living there. It certainly serves those purposes, and provides a basic introduction to the islands written plainly and accessibly, in a mainly conventional manner. It is, clearly, intended as a general textbook on the history and society of the TCI for students in the country’s high schools and community colleges; and it explicitly aims at fostering a sense of national identity on the basis of knowledge of the Turks and Caicos’s particular history, environment, and physiography.

The TCI differs from other British colonies in the Caribbean in a crucial way. Where the story of much of the West Indies since the seventeenth century is about sugar, theirs is about salt - which is what led to British colonisation

of the islands. Because it was until recently a small, marginal, and undeveloped territory east of the Bahamas and north of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, its isolation from most of the rest of the Anglophone Caribbean both geographically and in terms of economic activity has meant that it has been little known except when it has come to broader attention as a result of scandals, such as the one that led to the removal of the premier this year, or that which led to the arrest of Chief Minister Norman Saunders by the American authorities in Miami in 1986. Before the recent, rapid rise to prosperity, largely as a result of tourism, a point made more than once in this volume, but also because of offshore banking, drugs, and the presence of American bases on the territory, the TCI's small population lived by subsistence farming, and by exporting salt, from the seventeenth century on, and more recently cotton, sisal, fish, and lobster. As a result of the American Revolution, it came to house not only the Bermudian salt racers and their slaves who had settled in the islands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but American Loyalists and their slaves who came to the islands following Britain's defeat on the North American mainland at the end of the eighteenth century.

The chapters on the geology, flora, fauna, environmental laws, and fisheries, which form the first part of the book, provide a decent general introduction to the natural history of the islands both for the lay reader and the beginning student. It would have been helpful had the book contained a map of the contemporary TCI as a whole. The only one it has of the islands alone is a historical map showing Taine place names in the islands, which is valuable, but not very helpful when you want to figure out where Salt Cay is located in relation to Providenciales. There are excellent black and white photographic plates to illustrate the book, however, which is some compensation.

The chapters on social and political history are written from a rather traditional viewpoint, with a particular TCI twist. A history of Jamaica or Barbados would not contain a chapter on shipwrecks, but this one does. One chapter presents the argument that Columbus's first landfall in the Americas in 1492 was at Grand Turk. The subsequent chapter marshals the evidence for why this may not have been the case. There is a chapter on the arrival of the American Loyalists, who introduced cotton and may have grown some sugar, and a far-too-short chapter on slavery. The complicated political history of the territory, dependent at different times on the Bahamas, and Jamaica before, finally, becoming a crown colony in its own right in the 1960s is laid out in separate chapters. We are also told the quixotic story of Max Saltsman's abortive quest to annex the TCI to Canada. Where other Caribbean countries expressed their political aspirations in music, this work describes how the TCI's black power movement came

out of a social club, the Jonkanoo Club, owned by J.A.G.S. McCartney, whose activism in the mid-1970s led first to direct conflict with the authorities and then to his becoming the colony's first Chief Minister in 1976.

The final section of the book deals with contemporary social, economic, and political issues, including tourism, the establishment of a Gender Affairs Desk in the Home Affairs ministry, economic development (which at the time of writing looked very positive, but probably looks a lot less so now, dependent as the TCI economy is on tourism and offshore financial services), the current government structure, and future constitutional development.

The general editor of the book, Dr Carlton Mills, was also at the time of writing the territory's minister of education. While a member of a party that supports and advocates independence for the TCI, he is careful to note the fragility of the economic base on which the territory rests, and that any decision about autonomy and independence "requires careful thought, planning, and vision". This book provides a decent basic introduction to the history and geography of the Turks and Caicos Islands at a level suitable for undergraduate students, or general readers interested in learning about the islands.

**Nick Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment*. University of Virginia Press: Charlottesville and London, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: Jennifer Jahn, Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University**

Nick Nesbitt's study of the Haitian Revolution and radical Enlightenment presents an innovative approach to not only the history of the Haitian Revolution, but also the underlying philosophies that both influenced the events of 1791 to 1804 and that, in turn, sprung out from the events of the time. In his introduction, Nesbitt explains that the Enlightenment was not only a European movement that is often seen to have influenced the events in Saint-Domingue of the time, but also a movement that was influenced by the events taking place in France's wealthiest colony in the Caribbean. Nesbitt states that his aim is "to understand the Haitian Revolution, in both its historical singularity and its uniqueness along with its vital relevance to the presence" (5). Rather than simply representing the historical events that constitute the Haitian Revolution, Nesbitt studies the history of an idea, that of universal emancipation.

In chapter one, 'Saint-Dominique and the Singularization of Enlightenment',

Nesbitt lays out the most significant element of the Haitian Revolution, the fact that it founded a society not based on economic freedom or democracy in the first instance, but rather on the most basic of universal human rights: equality. In this, the Haitian Revolution was more radical and more universalizing than both the American and French Revolutions, which ascribed 'equality' to a select group of people (white, male, etc.) whilst curtailing the freedom of many others (slaves, women, Jews, etc.). So whilst the American and French revolutions articulated abstract notions of universal human rights, Haiti actually fully realized these, an action that signifies its radical strand within the Enlightenment political philosophy. The Haitian Revolution must therefore be understood in relation to the American and French Revolutions and its differences must be recognized.

In 'The Idea of 1804', the second chapter, Nesbitt states that Toussaint Louverture, the most famous figure of the Haitian Revolution, was influenced by Robespierre who strove to articulate the Spinozian politics of pure deduction. The thinking transmitted by the European thinkers to Toussaint and the other players in the revolution resonated so much because it was not addressed to the slaves' experiences but to their faculty of reason, which could recognize "the universality of its truth *independently of all experience*" (53). It was, in fact, the 'Declaration of the Rights of Man' that created the possibility of the Haitian Revolution rather than the transformation of France after 1789. The success of the revolution is in part due to the peasant's active role in it, signifying a movement from the bottom up and not just instigated and instituted by its leaders.

The third chapter, 'Penser la Révolution Haïtienne' (Thinking the Haitian Revolution) puts forward that the event itself must be understood as a "radical interjection within a global system of knowledge" (81). Here, Nesbitt discusses the works of a number of influential philosophers, such as Aristotle, Spinoza, Diderot, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel and Hannah Arendt, whose work is not always readily associated with influencing the revolution, or, in turn, of having been influenced by the events taking place in Haiti at the time. This is followed by a discussion of C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins*, in chapter 4, 'Beyond Jacobinism: Hegemony and Universalism in the Haitian Revolution', a work that he lauds for describing the revolution from below. Nesbitt examines the process of becoming subjects, of becoming free, and of the development of the idea of general universalism. This was a process that took place from the first revolts in 1791 to the final defeat of the French army and the declaration of independence on 1 January 1804. In fact, the goal of the first revolt was merely to end the practice of whipping and gain three free days per week and was then transformed into the demand for universal emancipation. The final chapter of the book, 'Toussaint Louverture, the *Moun andeyo*, and the Transcendental Condi-

tions of Political Autonomy' describes in more detail the figure of Louverture. The leader is represented as a product of both the Enlightenment, as can be seen in his letters and speeches, and the Afro-American culture into which he was born.

In his conclusion, Nesbitt looks at how the world remembers Haiti and its revolution and considers its impact on the world then and now. He believes that French and United States of America refusals to recognize Haiti's legitimacy contributed to Haiti's poverty and misery and continues to do so, the only fact generally mentioned about the island. Haitian intellectual engagement with current socio-political issues, both at home and abroad, remains unrecognized by most of the world. Nesbitt's aim, to learn from this historically significant event, is achieved by the end of his study. It leaves the reader not only with an understanding of the historical and political significance of the Haitian Revolution, but furthermore creates an awareness of the still not fully realized goal of universal emancipation seen in today's world.

**Gelien Matthews, *History of the Church of the Nazarene in Trinidad and Tobago*, Barataria, Trinidad: Christian Printers, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: Jerome Teelucksingh, University of the West Indies, Trinidad.**

Gelien Matthews would have been inspired in preparing this comprehensive and scholarly researched work which captures the story of the work done in the numerous districts throughout Trinidad and Tobago since 1926 by the Church of the Nazarene. The book certainly fills a void in the religious literature of Trinidad and Tobago. Undoubtedly the book adds to the emerging sub-discipline of Organizational History.

The historical snapshots provide the reader an insightful look into the history of the Church, starting with its pioneering work by James Ivy Hill, the first American Nazarene Missionary in Trinidad and Tobago, in 1926. The book faithfully records the early challenges, meticulous organization, including its global mission, and then focuses primarily and specifically on the Trinidad mission with its ensuing growth and witness. The story unfolds around personalities- pastors and lay-people who made a difference in the lives of converts to Christ and impacted so tremendously and positively in their communities. The initial chapters record the important, crucial and passionate role of the early pioneer fathers and mothers of the church and specifically the influence of the Nazarene Church's founder- Rev. Phineas Franklin Bresee of Iowa. In Trinidad and Tobago the mission of the Nazarene bridges the rural-urban divide. There are at present churches

throughout the country. It also crosses racial barriers and there is no gender bias in the clergy.

Many people may not be fully aware of the significant role of the Church of the Nazarene in education. Indeed, knowledge and education empowers a people. The Church also promotes Caribbean unity with its focus on education. This is evident in Chapter 3 which records the work of the Caribbean Nazarene College in Santa Cruz. This institution attracts students from Grenada, Guyana, Barbados, Martinique and Suriname. The College's online curriculum via the decentralized Continuing Studies Program and the decision to confer an honorary doctorate on the Rev. Rosa Lee of the Beacon Light Church of the Nazarene in Antigua augur well for unity in the English-speaking Caribbean. One of the pillars of the Church of the Nazarene is the District Advisory Board which began operations in 1962. The internal operations of the Board are developed in Chapter 5. We gain an insight into its outreach programs as its mission grew, including the purchasing and maintenance of properties, education, social concerns, medical and pension plans for pastors- all conducted simultaneously with spiritual growth.

Matthews analyses the crucial work of the Church among our nation's youth from the late 1950s. This mission is so relevant for contemporary society with its rampant crime and violence, so common among our youth. The Nazarene Church is community-oriented in its mission and the Sunday School embraced in its mission, has saved and snatched young people from idleness, delinquency, crime and violence. In this seminal work the history of the Nazarene Church, is told within a social framework and revolves around the people of the church. It educated, developed and expressed talent. The book pays tribute to the women for their contribution to the pastoral and administrative work of the Nazarene Church. Many humble and dedicated women were pastors and made the youth ministry appealing. The longest and final chapter of the book "Local Churches of the Nazarene: Trinidad and Tobago District" offers a compilation of biographies of spiritual leaders and historical sketches of churches.

One of the strengths of this publication is its lucid writing style which enables anyone to read, enjoy and appreciate the mission of the Nazarene Church in Trinidad and Tobago. The book is not merely a treasury of historical facts but will prove to be an inspiration for the 21st century. The work of the Nazarene Church and especially the work among young people in their spiritual and educational development should also be appreciated by everyone in Trinidad and Tobago. The well-written text by Dr. Gelien Matthews is a reminder that the history of Trinidad and Tobago is incomplete without a prominent chapter on the presence of the Nazarene Church

and their contribution to the evolution of Trinidad and Tobago particularly in those critical decades of decolonization and Independence.

**Jerome Teelucksingh, *Caribbean-Flavoured Presbyterianism: Education as a Prescription for Socio-Political Development 1868-2008*. St Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago: The University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: Michael N. Jagessar, University of Birmingham**

This significant volume documents and highlights the educational and missionary efforts of Canadian Presbyterians in Trinidad and Tobago (primarily Trinidad) among the East Indian Indentured population. In this exploration the author attempts to demonstrate change and continuity in Christian missionary work and the ways in which the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago evolved. The significance of Canadian missionary work in education, Teelucksingh contends, is reflected in the fact that “140 years after the mission’s pioneering work, the primary and secondary schools have continued to excel by providing formal and informal education.” [p.xiii]

Located during critical periods in the country’s history, this research draws on tools of history and sociology to explore the interweaving factors (for instance educational and socio-political developments) that came together on a British West Indian colony moving from dependence to self-governance, eventual independence and then to becoming a republic. Within the processes of this complicated history, the author focuses on a few key questions:

What is the relationship between the rollercoaster changes experienced in a colonial society moving towards independent status and the unfolding history of the Presbyterian Church, especially through the optics of education?

What were the historical forces of continuity and change influencing the future of Presbyterian institutions and education and social care?

What were the implications of the so-called “temporary conversion” (in the late nineteenth century) of Hindus and Muslims in order for them to become teachers in a Presbyterian primary school?

Added to the above, the author contends that this volume will do more than explore Presbyterians and education: the work will also “offer revisionist perspectives on certain controversial areas such as the role of the missionaries in conversion and the seemingly sparse Afro-Trinidadian presence in

its schools and churches.”[p.xiv] Further the author sees this work as making a contribution to “Organizational History” as the success of the whole educational project would have failed with organisational acumen and good administration.

To realise the above, the volume is shaped through an introduction, followed by six chapters that cover the period from 1868 to 2007 and then ends with a conclusion of sorts. It is evident from the content of these chapters that much work has been done to document the stories of the Presbyterians and education in Trinidad and Tobago. Here readers and researchers will find a wealth of information. Notwithstanding, there are two observations I wish to note. Firstly, the grand title of Caribbean-flavoured Presbyterianism is misleading as this volume is about Presbyterians in Trinidad and Tobago. There are certainly connections to be made with Guyana and Grenada (among others) for instance, but the “flavouring” will not be the same. Further, one cannot totalise Presbyterianism based on a Canadian influence when there are other kinds of Presbyterianism in the Caribbean - even in Trinidad and Tobago. Indeed, more work is yet to be done on a significant ‘revisionist historiography’ of Caribbean Presbyterianism. Secondly, this volume would have benefited from an introduction to the content of each chapter (in the introduction) and a stronger conclusion that should have drawn the main points together in the context of implications for the future. Here, I would have welcomed greater insights and clarity on the author’s claim that his work offers revisionist perspectives on the role of missionaries in conversion and the significant insight on the Church’s contribution to organisational history.

*Caribbean-Flavoured Presbyterianism* is an important contribution on the work of one Christian tradition in the Caribbean, especially in the area of education. This work should be read alongside other significant works on the history of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (Idris Hamid, for instance). Students, teachers and researchers will find this a well documented and invaluable resource not only to refer to, but to also critically engage with.

**Selwyn Ryan, *Eric Williams: The Myth and the Man* Jamaica: UWI Press, 2009.**

**Reviewed by: Jerome Teelucksingh, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago**

Some would have thought that another biography on Eric Williams was not possible, especially when one considers the impressive historiography existing on the first prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Others may ask

whether it possible to present new findings and interpretations on a topic which seems exhausted? Selwyn Ryan seeks to prove them wrong. However *Eric Williams: The Myth and the Man* is strikingly similar to other biographies which place Williams within the historical framework of Trinidad and Tobago.

Two reviewers, Louis Regis and Bridget Brereton, have commended and praised the efforts of Ryan. Interestingly, both reviews were published in the *Trinidad and Tobago Review*, a publication founded by Lloyd Best, who was one of the strongest critics of Eric Williams. Nonetheless, the public should be ever mindful that the merit of a book is not determined by its size. Thus Ryan's lengthy compilation should not be too eagerly embraced as an outstanding contribution to academia.

One noteworthy aspect of the study is that it emphasizes the difficulty of assessing the political legacy of Eric Williams. An illustration is the reaction of Williams to Black Power in 1970 and the mutiny. Ryan in Chapter 26 provides opinions from Williams' detractors but unfortunately questions still remain unanswered. Was A.N.R. Robinson, a former minister of the People's National Movement, accurate in claiming that Williams sought help from five foreign governments in 1970? Should readers accept Bernard Primus's argument that Williams was afraid of Black Power radicals and trade unions? Ryan mentions that the mutineers were "completely outmanoeuvred by Williams" (p.390). Ryan should have considered the element of luck and the fact that the mutineers were not willing to senselessly kill innocent persons, as two factors which favoured a relatively peaceful end of the mutiny.

The inclusion of anonymous sources certainly undermines the scholarly endeavour and will raise doubts in the minds of readers as to the veracity of statements and conclusions. For instance, the esteemed professor emeritus casually uses words as "Another practitioner", "several commentators" and 'Another view" (p.772). Additionally, the statement, "Some of the men around Williams were aware of his mood swings in a general way" (p.777) is vague and suggests that the prime minister was not expected to have mood changes. Ryan presents testimonies which imply that the prime minister was bipolar and committed 'constructive suicide'. However, these are dubious claims since Williams never underwent a psychiatric evaluation. And, unless Williams was on strong medication, it is difficult to establish such a motive. The display of suspicious, distrustful and paranoid attitudes by Williams cannot be easily dismissed, especially when one considers the era when the CIA had removed Cheddi Jagan and were intent on ridding Cuba of the charismatic Fidel Castro.

Ryan painstakingly attempts to deconstruct the enigma of Williams in Chapter 45, "The Myth of Eric Williams", but sometimes contributes to reinforcing this myth. For instance, Ryan contends, "Indeed, Williams often wanted to hurry history along, so impatient was he to ensure that he accomplished his assigned tasks" (p.761). Such a statement suggests superhuman qualities in attempting to "hurry history along".

In addition to the rehash of historical facts, there are some structural weaknesses which could have been avoided. For instance, in chapters 37 and 40 there is some overlapping since both deal with important aspects of culture - carnival and calypso. Likewise, both Chapter 26 "The Roaring Seventies" and Chapter 30 "Bloody Tuesday and the "Unmixing of Oil and Sugar"" dealt with the same era and could have been merged. Ideology and the direction of the economy are inter-related, thus it seemed odd that Ryan's emphasis on Cuba and the Soviet Union in Chapter 38 was not incorporated in Chapter 32 "The Move to the "Left": Industrial Policy in the Post-1970 Era."

One lesson emanating from *Eric Williams: The Myth and the Man* is that in the post-Williams era, party politics and governance remain virtually unchanged in 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago. These include dictatorial tendencies of the prime minister, continued corruption of public officials, wastage of taxpayers' money on trivial projects, racial and religious discrimination, occasional discussion of constitutional reform, attempts at political union and the pathetic fragmentation among opposition parties.

The author must be commended for utilizing a diverse range of primary and secondary sources, but should have also included viewpoints propounded in the annual Eric Williams Memorial Lectures delivered in Port-of-Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) and Miami (Florida). Despite the shortcomings, the book will be a welcome addition for admirers of the PNM and Eric Williams. It delves into the personal and public challenges of a colourful personality who had a love-hate relationship with the citizenry. Such a study will allow readers to trace the evolution of a young, independent nation.

**Simeon C.R. McIntosh, *Kelsen in the 'Grenada Court': Essays on Revolutionary Legality*. Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2008.  
Reviewed by: F.S.J. Ledgister, Clark Atlanta University.**

Both revolutions in the post-war Caribbean, in Cuba and Grenada, were led by lawyers. That's one reflection this book has led me to. Cuba is absent from this collection of essays on legal theory, but the Grenadian Revolution looms large in it, as does the case of the defendants in the 'Grenada

Case' (the trial of the persons accused of the murders of Maurice Bishop, Jaqueline Creft, Unison Whiteman, and others during the coup d'état of 19 October 1983), and the appeal of Yasin Abu Bakr and others against their imprisonment following the coup attempt in Trinidad and Tobago at the end of July, 1990.

Central to the work is the legal theory of the Austrian-born scholar Hans Kelsen (1881-1973), one of the most important figures in the history of twentieth century legal thought. Kelsen's conception of 'revolutionary legality' provides the launching point for a work that explores important questions at the junction of legal, political, and moral theory. It also deals with cases that continue to haunt the political memory of the Commonwealth Caribbean, even as it cruises around the most problematic question that it raises: what is the legitimacy of the post-colonial state? Admittedly, in the context of the work that is a political question rather than a question relating to the validity of the juridical system. But since the legal validity of the juridical system of Grenada during and after the 1979 Revolution is a central question of the book, it's worth asking why the author, in the context of the Caribbean, doesn't go on to the next obvious point, that of the moral validity of a legal system inherited from colonial masters whose power rested not only on force but on a history of enslavement and bonded labour. If, as the author points out, revolutions and coups are illegal acts, what were slavery and colonization? Obviously, that's well beyond the scope of this particular piece, but it is the kind of work that Caribbean legal theory seems to call for.

McIntosh handles Kelsen, and the array of other major legal theorists such as Hart and Fuller whom he brings to bear on the questions of revolutionary legality and coercion with workmanlike deftness. The array of examples he brings to bear, from Fiji, from Pakistan, from the United States, to illustrate his argument attests to a breadth and a depth of scholarship, which, presented with a lawyerly clarity of thought, serve to illuminate the theoretical argument with great clarity. The introduction to the book deals with the question of revolutionary legality, introduces us to Kelsen's theory, and to the intricacies of the Grenadian case. It also looks at the Fijian coup attempt of May 2000, before concluding with the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council's decision in the Grenada Case. The first essay considers in depth, and with a certain dry wit, via the case of Andy Mitchell and others, the relationship of legitimacy as a concept in political theory, validity as a concept in legal theories, and the force of the doctrine of necessity. This is an important piece for our understanding of the problem of how a court can justify itself. More significantly, it places the question of the validity of the regime outside of the ambit of legal determination. The second essay deals with the problem of "continuity and discontinuity of law" pursuant to a

coup or revolution. It is, in consequence, the part of the book that comes closest to conventional political theory, since McIntosh has to deal with the question of what a state is and what the law and courts are as agencies of the state. Cases from Pakistan, the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, and the Grenadian Revolution are all considered in the light of positivist legal theory and the nature of the state as a sovereign authority which is coterminous with the legal system. The third essay, from which the book takes its title, is a re-examination of the concept of revolutionary legality, focused on the Grenadian case. That re-examination takes us not just through the case and the legal commentary on it, but to Melville's *Billy Budd*, and to the American Fugitive Slave Law and the underlying problems of justice which a court must serve. Or in a lovely phrase that McIntosh quotes to the problem of 'judicial can't'. The final essay considers the appeal of Yasin Abu Bakr and his associates who were arrested after they surrendered following the failure of their attempted overthrow of the government of Trinidad and Tobago in 1990, in spite of having an agreement from the Acting President of the Republic that they could go free. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council upheld the appeal, but McIntosh dissents from this, holding that the 'purported pardon' of the Acting President having served the purpose of rescuing the hostages held by Abu Bakr and his confederates, they should not have profited from their unlawful acts.

This is a worthy effort to apply legal theory to some important Caribbean cases. It deserves to be read by people who are interested in the region, not just in politics and law, though for those not versed in the language of political theory or law it may be a little heavier going than the author intended even though there is little legal jargon. It raises important questions about who and what the law is for.

**Gordon Baker (ed), *No Island Is An Island: the Impact of Globalization on the Commonwealth Caribbean* London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2007.**

**Reviewed by: Jerome Teelucksingh, University of the West Indies, Trinidad.**

The book is a collection of well-written and thought-provoking articles on the Commonwealth Caribbean. The contributors include distinguished academics, policymakers and lawyers from Britain, the United States and the Caribbean. It is written in a reader-friendly manner which would be appealing to both students and academics.

David Jessop in "Globalization and the Caribbean: An Overview" provides insight into the challenges facing the West Indies. Jessop warns of the need to be aware of repercussions of economic liberalization on the Caribbean region. The region has been in recent negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Europe and explored arrangements with the free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and World Trade Organization. Jessop questions the extent in which free trade agreements, imposed on developing economies, would increase regional integration. He argues, "The piecemeal negotiation of free trade agreements is likely to disadvantage the smallest and weakest in the Caribbean and challenge fragile regionalism" (p.9). Whilst Jessop's observations are true, he fails to realize that even if the Anglophone Caribbean were united there would still be an unequal relationship at the negotiating table. There needs to be a negotiating Caribbean which would incorporate French and Spanish speaking West Indian countries.

One of the chapters relevant to the daily life of West Indians is Chapter 2 "Caribbean Agriculture in the New Global Environment" by Elizabeth Thomas-Hope and Adonna Jardine-Comrie. The study examines the agricultural crisis in the Caribbean as it relates to the decreasing world food prices and competition of agricultural foodstuffs. The findings of the authors reveal the lack of foresight of Caribbean farmers who were unprepared for the loss of preferential markets and the influx of cheap agricultural products into their countries. There are some shortcomings in this analysis. Firstly, some of the statistics did not indicate recent trends. For instance Table 2.1 'Contribution of agriculture sector to GDP, 1985-2002 (5)' and Table 2.4 'Agriculture per capita production index (base year 1989/1991) for selected countries (%)' could have provided information for the years 2003 to 2006. Secondly, the neglect of agriculture in Trinidad and Tobago could have been used as an illustration in this chapter. In that country, every year farmers endure heavy losses due to flooding. Also, prime agricultural lands are being used for housing settlements. Nevertheless, the authors must be credited for revealing the interesting links between tourism and agriculture, "Although tourism has the potential to stimulate agriculture, it has frequently competed with agriculture for land and water resources and labour" (p.36). Not surprisingly, the importance of tourism to the Caribbean is evident from the focus of the subsequent chapter.

The potential of tourism is best illustrated in Chapter 3 "Sustainable Caribbean Tourism: Challenges and Growth to 2020." In this chapter, Anthony Bryan is accurate in contending "... tourism in the Caribbean has emerged as an economic lifeline as the preferential export markets for traditional agricultural commodities have declined" (p.45). The challenges facing the billion dollar tourism sector is particularly valuable for ministers of tourism

who would need to take the necessary precautions to ensure social problems as violent crimes are eliminated. Bryan must be commended for including the sub-sections - 'Sex tourism' and 'HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean'. Both deal with critical issues often overlooked in studies on tourism.

The input of foreign capital in the Caribbean is necessary for the region's economic sustainability. This is emphasized in Trevor Michael's "International Business: Opportunities for the Commonwealth Caribbean" and Winston Dookeran's "Foreign Direct Investment: Policy Issues and Recommendations for Caribbean Development". Michael explores the off-shore banking industry. He divides the banking jurisdiction into three areas: old planned approach, new planned approach and the evolved approach. He uses these categories to distinguish banking practices in Bermuda, Bahamas, Cayman Islands, St. Vincent and Dominica. One salient point is the independence which is maintained, "Bermuda has not, however, allowed carefully cultivated external business relationships to compromise its own internal fiscal and judicial integrity" (p.81). Michael mentions the efforts to reduce money-laundering which flourishes in the absence of regulations. As a result of intense scrutiny by security agencies, some criminal masterminds have avoided or curtailed their off-shore banking activities. Many of the illegal gains of criminals have been invested in real estate and tangible items as cars.

Dookeran, in the book's final chapter, convincingly argues that if there is to be Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) there is need for reliable utilities, proper legal systems, a conducive political environment and macroeconomic stability. The author used Trinidad and Tobago as a case study to demonstrate that oil and gas industries have attracted considerable investment from abroad. Dookeran is accurate in believing that increasing crime in Trinidad and Tobago and unequal distribution of wealth within the Caribbean are obstacles to FDI inflows.

Undoubtedly *No Island Is An Island* should be the blueprint in guiding the Caribbean in the 21st century. It is particularly useful as the region recovers from the global recession. The admonitions of some authors should not be viewed as unpatriotic or dismissed pessimism. Their advice provided a dose of reality for Caribbean leaders who often mismanage scarce financial and natural resources. The scholars must be commended for tactfully addressing problems and offering solutions as they seek to guide the Caribbean as a major stakeholder in the world's market.

**Emily Allen Williams (ed) *Beyond the Canebrakes. Caribbean Women Writers in Canada.* Africa World Press, Inc., 2008.**

**Reviewed by: Faith Pullin, University of Edinburgh**

This welcome collection consists of fourteen new essays and two interviews, together with a selected bibliography on each of the Caribbean women writers discussed. The work of nine significant writers is analysed with particular reference to the diasporic experience in Canada. As the editor points out in her introduction, Black immigration to Canada increased dramatically in the 1960s when policy reforms ended preference for European immigrants. Today, Caribbean women writers work in such diverse locations as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Halifax and Nova Scotia.

The editor claims to have commissioned essays that go beyond the expected critiques and which examine the work of Caribbean writers in Canada as undeniably Canadian, 'by virtue of the fact that most began their publishing (if not actual writing) careers in Canada.' The volume is divided into five sections: Evocations of History in the [R]evolutionary Word; Challenging the Stratifications and Limitations of Genre; Identification of the Self through the Engagement of Power; Probing the Possible: Beyond the First level of Discourse; and Talking with the Female Roots of the Dub Poetry Experience. Section 1 deals with Dionne Brand's use of the presence of the ancestor and the slave song, to trace Black resistance to oppression. Keith Mitchell's essay examines the biography of Marie Joseph Angelique, who, in setting fire to the house of her mistress in 1734, also destroyed half of Montreal itself. Stephanie Batcos delineates Olive Senior's method of evocating history, and the final essay in this section treats Marlene NourbeSe Philip's *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks* in terms of the re-emergence of cultural pride through language. Section 2 concentrates on writers with a Jamaican focus who also reach out to a wider constituency. Pamela Mordecai's writing is assessed in terms of her ability to introduce Jamaican linguistic patterns into her work, including both the 'local' and the 'foreign'. Due attention is paid in this section to the wildly original Nalo Hopkinson who deconstructs generic categories to represent the struggle of women to resist subaltern status. In Section 3, critics continue the analysis in terms of identity, focusing on the poetry of Claire Harris while Stephen Morris writes on Postcolonial Poetic sand the Trauma of Slavery in the work of Marlene NourbeSe Philip. In Section 4, the collection turns to the ways in which Caribbean women writers use orality to provide an alternative to racist/sexist discourse. Mildred Mickle presents Lillian Allen as one of the foremost proponents of Dub poetry and this theme is continued in the last section which contains interviews with Allen and Afua Cooper., who consider the importance of Dub poetry in the canon.

Inevitably, these essays vary in their focus and interest; some investigate specific works in depth, while others take a more conceptual stance concerning issues of gender, diaspora, power and identity. Of particular interest are essays such as that by Anna S. Blumenthal and Bernard L. Bray which considers Claire Harris's "Nude on a Pale Staircase" and Michel Foucault's Perspective on Power. None of the essays lack perception and some are highly original. The writers discussed are Lillian Allen, Dionne Brand, Afua Cooper, Claire Harris, Nalo Hopkinson, Pamela Moddecai, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Olive Senior and Makenda Silvera. Emily Williams's contribution to a neglected area of scholarship is to be applauded. *Beyond The Canebrakes* puts Caribbean Canadian women writers firmly on the world map. The volume is an asset to both Caribbean and Canadian literary studies.

**Karina Williamson, *Contrary Voices: Representations of West Indian Slavery, 1657 – 1834*. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: Christer Petley, University of Southampton**

In *Contrary Voices* Karina Williamson brings together a wide array of writing in English about Caribbean slavery by those who witnessed the system at firsthand. Her aim is to highlight 'contrarities in representations of slavery' (p. 1), and the selected excerpts amply illustrate the controversies, contradictions and conflicts that arose between those who sought to describe the realities of slave societies to readers on either side of the Atlantic. Williamson presents us with annotated selections from texts published between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. Many of these highlight the discord that inevitably prevailed between masters and slaves within Caribbean slave societies, and this collection seeks, as far as is possible with the extant sources, to provide a flavour of enslaved people's views on slavery and on slave societies.

The collection begins with a brief introduction, which sets out the rationale for the book. The collection is arranged into five sections, all of which, with one exception, focus on texts related to the Anglophone Caribbean. The first two are defined chronologically and contain short selections of one to twenty pages from prose and verse. Throughout *Contrary Voices*, Williamson introduces each excerpt with a brief account of its author and a description of the publication from which it is drawn. The collection draws mostly from published sources, and the first two sections clearly highlight the fact that much more such material exists for the period between the 1770s and the 1830s than for the crucial but still largely poorly understood

earlier decades of Caribbean slavery. The third section of the book takes excerpts that deal directly with the theme of slave resistance and rebellion, and the fourth section concentrates on texts dealing with the Haitian Revolution. A final section, the richest and most revealing of the book, focuses on songs connected with British Caribbean slavery, most of which were transcribed or described by European authors who had travelled to or lived in the West Indies. This section contains a greater amount of editorial commentary than other parts of the book, which helps to suggest the ways in which accounts of songs can help to shed light on the day-to-day power struggles and on the micro-politics of relations between groups and individuals in slave societies.

In her introduction, Williamson notes that she has 'excluded texts whose sole object is to argue a case' about slavery. This criteria helps to ensure that the collection is focussed on what Williamson calls 'descriptive representations', rather than on the debates over abolition and emancipation *per se*. Nevertheless, it is not a particularly wieldy method of discrimination, because as Williamson notes, 'all texts are ideologically positioned' and descriptive representations often 'shades off into propaganda or special pleading' (p. 3). In fact, it is impossible to draw a line between description and 'propaganda', and the texts in this collection demonstrate how the two can work closely together. Edward Long's *History of Jamaica*, for example, was a strident promotion of Jamaican slaveholders and their practices, and the many editions of Bryan Edwards' *History of the British West Indies* were similarly forthright interventions in British debates over the Atlantic slave system. The excerpts in *Contrary Voices* therefore help to demonstrate how published descriptions of West Indian societies were intertwined in the transatlantic political struggle over the future of slaveholding, particularly by the end of the eighteenth century, an issue which scholars seeking to write about the social and cultural history of the region must constantly bear in mind.

In summary, *Contrary Voices* is a well conceived and carefully edited collection of excerpts that will probably prove most useful to teachers and students of British Caribbean slavery and emancipation. Most of the sources, which include pieces by Long, Edwards, Matthew 'Monk' Lewis, Mary Prince and Robert Wedderburn, are already well known to researchers. Furthermore, most of these published works are widely available in other formats. Nevertheless, there are some less well know sources in the collection. John Marjoribanks *Essay in Verse* on slavery and Philip Freneau's letter to a sugar planter in the interior of Jamaica, to name two examples, are as yet obscure but rich sources that the collection helps to bring to wider attention. Moreover, Williamson's selections and commentaries provide a series of introductions to wide range of well-known and obscure

sources, helping to open up the subjects of slavery and its representations to new students and suggesting a few enticing new avenues for enquiry to more seasoned scholars.

**Kevyn Alan Arthur (ed), *Caribbean Treasure: A Trove of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Barbadian Poetry and Prose*. Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: Natalie Zacek, University of Manchester**

It has, sadly, been until very recently a commonplace among historians of the Anglophone Caribbean, as well as from such celebrated writers of Caribbean origin as V.S. Naipaul, that the islands had over the course of several centuries failed to develop either a sense of local, as opposed to British, identity or an indigenous literary tradition. Yet nearly half a century ago, Kevyn Arthur reports, his research in Caribbean literature caused him to be “struck by the quantity, and often the quality, of original literature, poetry particularly” (p. 11) he found in the region’s eighteenth- and nineteenth-century newspapers. In this volume, the first of a projected trilogy, he presents an extensively annotated transcription of material gleaned from the Anglophone West Indies’ first newspaper, the *Barbados Gazette*, between 1731 and 1738, during which years it was edited by the English-born Samuel Keimer, a Philadelphian associate of Benjamin Franklin, and the man who brought the first printing press into the islands. In 1741, Keimer reprinted many items from the *Gazette* in a compendium entitled *Caribbeana*, a facsimile edition of which appeared in 1979, but which lacked Arthur’s insightful introduction and detailed notes, which do so much to illuminate the context in which the volume’s contents were written, published, and read.

*Caribbean Treasure* contains nearly two hundred items drawn from the *Gazette*, which vary enormously in genre and literary quality. Keimer’s model, and that of his various contributors, seems to have been Joseph Addison and Richard Steele’s *Tatler* and *Spectator*, and the *Gazette* included fairly typical varieties of mid-eighteenth-century *belles lettres*, such as poetic encomia to local women (“To Miss \*\*\*\*\*, on Her Dancing” and “A Midnight Ode to the Absent Chloe”), essays on moral topics (“On an Unwearied and Restless Inclination to Mischief” and “The Punishment of Wicked and Perjur’d Judges”), and a vast number of epigrams, on topics as varied as “Human Life,” “The Parrot,” and “The Hardened Criminal.” But Keimer and his contributors did not shy away from the controversies of their time and place; the *Gazette* included lengthy essays on questions relating to local government, taxation, debt and credit, law and justice, and servitude and slavery, as well as more abstract meditations on questions of personal and communal ideology and behaviour.

What Arthur emphasises in his commentary, and what comes through in the various texts, is a strong sense of local Barbadian identity. Although the contributors frequently draw upon metropolitan literary models, or respond to news from the mother country, in many instances they proclaim a pride in their culture and community, a conviction that, although they cherish their connection to Britain, they are at the same time confident that they have succeeded in creating a flourishing and deeply civilized settlement in which the most laudable aspects of British heritage have been deliberately and appropriately adapted to the realities of life in a tropical, plantation-centred society. As one Barbadian *litterateur* wrote, “the created Settlements grew strong/And greatly vied with those from whom they sprung/Dar’d with their Mother-Isle to compare/Their *Sons* now valiant, and their *Daughters* fair (p. 17; italics in original). Such sentiments serve as a valuable corrective to the conviction, promulgated by eighteenth-century metropolitan commentators and modern scholars alike, that the Anglophone settlements in the Caribbean were typified by both a philistine attitude towards cultural production and a failure to develop any form of creole patriotism comparable to that which emerged in the British colonies on the North American mainland, or within the Spanish settlements in South America.

It is difficult to imagine the casual reader moving through the entire volume of *Caribbean Treasure* from start to finish; the quality of the prose and poetry included is highly variable, and most likely only those who are familiar with and fond of eighteenth-century English *belles lettres* will entirely enjoy these poems, essays, letters, and epigrams on a literary basis. But historians of the Anglophone Caribbean, particularly in the era of “sugar and slavery,” are well advised to consult this volume, as it offers a vivid sense of the *mentalite* of the planter class at the height of its power and prosperity, and particularly of the ways in which these colonists located themselves in relation to often conflicting local and imperial identities. Kevyn Arthur’s eloquent, extensively researched introduction and his meticulous editing and annotation of these texts is a laudable labour of love, and Caribbeanists are well advised to look out for the publication of his next two volumes, one consisting of further literary materials from eighteenth-century Barbados and the other of nineteenth-century Trinidadian literature. Taken together, these volumes are likely not only to bring fascinating but neglected materials within easy access of modern scholars, but also to significantly reshape our understanding of the cultural life of Britain’s West Indian colonies both prior to and following the abolition of slavery.

**Anon, *Marly; or, A Planter's Life in Jamaica*, edited and with a new introduction by Karina Williamson. Oxford: Macmillan, 2005.  
Reviewed by Christer Petley, University of Southampton**

The anonymous author of the plantation novel, *Marly*, sought to 'delineate with truth and fidelity' the condition of Jamaican slave society and to 'detail the actual occurrences which take place on a sugar estate' (pp. 3, 326). It is therefore as much as a social and cultural portrait of early nineteenth century plantation life as a novel. In fact, the story itself is not particularly original, and this is no literary masterpiece. As John Gilmore puts it in his series editors' preface, the 'merits of *Marly* as a novel are perhaps, to put it kindly, limited' (p. vii). Rather, the novel is useful for the light that it can cast on colonial society and culture during the period before emancipation and as an example of an early piece of Caribbean fiction.

The novel focuses on George Marly, a young Scott who goes to seek his fortune in Jamaica. The novel's main story lines are about a love affair between the lowly Marly and the daughter of a wealthy plantation manager and Marly's quest to claim his lost inheritance by recovering the plantation that his father lost to an unscrupulous manager. Arriving on the island, the protagonist finds friendship and protection from a local merchant, who helps him to secure a job as a member of the white managerial staff on a local sugar estate. Marly is then introduced to the brutal world of Jamaican sugar production, doing the work of a plantation 'bookkeeper', which involved monitoring and controlling the work of the property's enslaved workforce. The novel describes the work patterns of the plantation and the daily lives of the white staff and their interactions with enslaved people. In a number of set-piece scenes, it also recounts debates over slavery between white colonists, the tensions and intrigues between groups in local society and the lavish balls of the plantocracy.

In general, the novel casts the plantocracy in a positive light and can be seen as a piece of proslavery propaganda. It contains negative portrayals of enslaved people, who are depicted as being dependent on the benevolent stewardship of white slaveholders. It does not, however, lavish universal praise on white society, criticising the attorneys and cruel overseers and reserving praise for 'improving' plantocrats who showed openness to reform and ameliorating the condition of their enslaved workers. It is therefore characteristic of particular kind of proslavery discourse, which tried to defend slavery by claiming that the institution could be reformed and by claiming that the best of the planters were concerned for the welfare of their workers. This sort of argument became common among elite resident and absentee slaveholders during the period immediately before emancipation, when the novel was first published.

The novel is therefore of interest to historians as an intervention in the debate over slavery and for its insights into the social and cultural life of the island. Its use in this regard is greatly enhanced by an excellent introduction by Karina Williamson, who describes the novel's relationship to eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction writing and places its themes in historical context. Williamson also provides a fascinating discussion of the novel's authorship and provides informative explanatory footnotes to the text. This opens this rich source up to a new generation of readers, and *Marly* will surely find an important place on a variety of student reading lists as well as allowing scholars to shed some fresh light on the debates and social changes associated with the transition from slavery to freedom in the British Caribbean.

**Edward Jenkins. Edited and with a new introduction by David Dabydeen, *Lutchmee and Dilloo: A Study of West Indian Life*. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 2007.**

**Reviewed by: Alison Mc Letchie, University of South Carolina.**

A careful reader of this novel will be intrigued by three aspects: the description of the landscape of Guyana; the characters of the book (particularly the two main characters), and the detailed understanding the author has of 19th century West Indian plantation life. In this book, Jenkins introduces the reader to the cruelty and harshness of plantation life. The irony of situating this romantic novel in one of the most beautiful places in the world is not lost. Indentureship proved to be almost as ruthless as the slavery which it replaced in the Caribbean and, like slavery, was just as dehumanizing on both the indentured and the master. However, readers should be warned, that Jenkins' writing reflects the language and many of the cultural biases of his day; do not expect a political correct or culturally sensitive script. Clearly, he is championing the cause of the indentured, and this seems to lead him to make many of the characters in the book into caricatures: over-simplified, simple-minded, one-dimensional and stereotypical.

The romances described in the book are themselves less Jane Austin and more Harlequin/Mills and Boon, but I would contend they are merely a tool used by Jenkins to underscore the humanity and frailty of the characters. Once on display, it is easier for the reader to sympathize with the characters and contrast their romance with the viciousness of plantation life. This book is an example of activist literature, written to support a particular cause close to Jenkins' heart. Throughout the novel it is clear, however, that the author is not necessarily an enlightened gentleman of his time.

While he understands and works to illustrate the indentured system, he also uses many of the stereotypes in place during the 19th century to describe non-whites which were thought to justify their treatment at the hands of whites. The European characters in the book are also stereotyped, particularly the magistrate and the Portuguese shopkeeper.

In *Lutchmee and Dilloo* Jenkins attempts to do what few in his day did advocate for the indentured and expose the corruption and inhumanity of 19th century West Indian plantation life. The reader will appreciate the work done by Jenkins but must also keep in mind that Jenkins is a product of his time, gender and culture. This book is a reflection of these biases

**Edgar Mittelholzer, *Corentyne Thunder*, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2009.**

**Reviewed by: Suzanne Scafe, London South Bank University**

Edgar Mittelholzer has been described as the first Caribbean writer to 'journey into exile' in order to earn his living as a writer of fiction. His first work, *Creole Chips* (1938) was self published and sold from door to door, so legend has it, in New Amsterdam, Berbice County, in what was then British Guiana. After twelve years and a series of rejections *Corentyne Thunder* was finally accepted for publication in England in 1941. Although his fiction did not immediately reach a Caribbean audience, after their publication by Heinemann in the 1970s, his early novels did become popular and were well-received by Caribbean critics. In the last twenty years, however, as Juanita Cox points out in her introduction to this edition, his work has suffered critical neglect, due in part to the hostile reception of his later novels and to the reputation he acquired as a 'problem author', whose increasingly dogmatic and often unpalatable views found their way into his later fiction.

*Corentyne Thunder* is a well-told and engaging account of Ramgolall and his four surviving children, each of whom are used to represent different aspects of early twentieth-century rural life among the Guyanese East Indian community. The narratives of the lives of Ramgolall and his children are all deftly interwoven, highlighting the contrast in wealth and more importantly in cultural values, between the illiterate father, whose life is defined by his few acres of land, his small herd of cows and the cycles of cane and rice growing, and his two successful older children. In acquiring wealth and status they have also become more creolised, converting to Christianity and adopting Christian names and English cultural practices. Some of the most effective scenes in the novel are those that portray this clash of cultures through the interaction between different members of Ramgolall's

family. On their visit to the fiancée of his only son Baijan, Ramgolall and his daughters are overwhelmed by the large sitting room, crowded with furniture and 'thick rugs' and its dark, shining floor that Beena had already marked with her shoeless 'toeprints' (158). They are introduced to the piano, played badly by the daughter and fiancée Elizabeth, and to a baffling array of cutlery and crockery. For Baijan and Elizabeth's wedding, they are given European style clothes: high heeled shiny leather shoes for the girls, causing them to fall over, a suit and a shirt with a collar and tie that Ramgolall takes off, heedless of the 'muffled sniggers' from those behind him in the church. In these scenes and through the characters of Sosee, Ramgolall's eldest daughter, her common-law husband Big Man Weldon, and the oldest of their seven children, Geoffry, the author critiques the aspirations of this new class of rurally based business men and landowners.

At the same time he is careful not to idealise Ramgolall, whose miserliness and limited vision inhibits the progress of his two youngest daughters and contributes to his estrangement from the older children. There are repeated contrasts between Ramgolall's son-in-law and patriarch, Big Man Weldon, and his own inadequate attempts to maintain authority over his children. When Kattree embarks on a relationship with Geoffry, the children of the two families are brought into contact with each other and again in these encounters, the cultural distance between the families is magnified. He fears the worst for Kattree and Geoffry but articulates that fear only in terms of its cost to him: 'He [Geoffry] would not send money to keep Kattree's baby and that would mean that he, Ramgolall, poor man as he was, would have to provide for the baby' (203). The relationship between the two lovers – his grandson and his daughter – is used to convey the novel's dominant themes and concerns. Geoffry, the conflicted and talented son of an almost white father and an Indian mother is, critics have noted, both a reflection of Mittelholzer himself and a prototype of the alienated protagonist of much, later Caribbean fiction. He is torn between a fascination with the land, expressed in his desire for Kattree and the need to escape, to fulfil his dreams and to give expression to his talent and ambitions. Kattree, on the other hand *is* the land: she is simple, generous and undemanding. When he speaks, she often does not understand him: it is as if, she feels, he is talking to her 'jumbie', the shadow of herself, not the person she is. In response, she waits silently for him to finish: however, Mittelholzer's readers, who understand the words and the cultural references she does not, are able to judge him more harshly and to see more clearly than she does, his selfish exploitation of her body.

Whereas in Mittelholzer's later novels, it is characters like Geoffry who dominate, in this novel Beena and Kattree become central to the narrative's progression and provide an important counterpoint to Geoffry's angst, his

'almost irreconcilable inner division of consciousness'. Kattree will keep the baby she has dreamt of having, the product of her sexual awakening, and is determined that she will 'get clothes made for him and send him to school every day so that when he was grown up he would be able to read and write and talk well like his father' (223). In the struggle to provide Jannee with a good defence lawyer, her sister Beena is forced into contact with the knowledgeable Jaigan, from whom she learns not only about the legal system but also about a world beyond the village and her father's small holding: despite the problematic nature of her involvement, she also learns something about her own courage and ingenuity. As with most of Mittelholzer's fiction, however, it is the landscape which dominates: the wind sweeping across the vast Corentyne savannah, the lightning, thunder and the ever-changing sky. The repeated call of the goat-sucker bird, 'who-you?' serves to remind the characters of their insignificance in relation to the powerful forces of Nature.

**Andrew Salkey, *Escape to an Autumn Pavement*, Leeds, Peepal Tree Press, 2009**

**Reviewed by: David Clover. Commonwealth Studies Library, University of London Research Library Services**

Peepal Street Press have released a new edition of Andrew Salkey's novel, first published in 1960, with an introduction by Thomas Glave. *Escape to an Autumn Pavement* narrates a slice of the life of Johnnie Sobert, a Jamaican now resident in London working as a barman in a Soho club. Against the background of bedsitter Hampstead and bohemian Soho, Johnnie attempts to be a self-described 'nigger with coolth', yet the book explores his uncertainties and indecision, as he reveals himself to be divided between Black and White, middle and working class, with heterosexual and homosexual desires, and identities as exiled Jamaican and incipient Black Londoner.

In his Introduction Thomas Glave describes Andrew Salkey as one of the most arresting and original of the mid-century Caribbean writers who moved to Britain. Glave states that Salkey's exploration of sexuality and the possible homosexuality of his protagonist as bold. Yet *Escape to an Autumn Pavement* needs to be considered alongside other works published in Britain and indeed the United States, in the 1950s and 1960s. Such work, which includes Mary Renault's *The Charioteer*, Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar*, and James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, as well as the lesser known work of James Courage can be typified as presenting situations where a protagonist refuses to admit sexual attraction or identity, or in acknowledging homosexuality finds that this identity is considered repugnant to society at large. Salkey's novel is no different – Johnnie's flawed rejection

tion of his unsatisfactory affair with his landlady, Fiona, and his moving in with his gay friend Dick, is notable more for what remains unstated in Salkey's work. While Dick's desire for Johnnie is made explicit, any reciprocal interest, desire or love on Johnnie's part can only be assumed as it is never made explicit or conscious. In many ways this makes *Escape to an Autumn Pavement* a difficult work to reclaim as part of the queer canon.

Salkey describes a London that is familiar yet reminds us that the past is indeed a foreign country. He captures and observes many aspects of the period when London became noticeably multi-cultural with wit, humour and a deep sensitivity. Johnnie encounters casual racism, questions his sense of 'class' identity, and with both anger and restlessness tries to claim a self-identity as both Jamaican and London, yet rejecting both. Salkey captures the disappointment many migrants experienced, encountering a London which as Johnnie's co-worker Biddie describes fails to share West Indian expectations:

"Didn't you come over with too many expectations, Johnnie? After all, we are never aware of being a mother to you all. Maybe some Whitehall goofs made you out there feel the mother thing and believe in it. But not so with us in this country. Everyday English people couldn't care less. They themselves are in need of mothering just as much as you are."

*Escape to an Autumn Pavement* is of course expertly written, with crisp prose, finely honed language, a strong narrative and fascinating characters. Its value lies too in the honest way it describes a time in British and Caribbean social histories, that hints at the complexity of individual lives in a period of great change. This is a worthy new edition and indeed a modern classic.

**Wilson Harris, *Heartland*. Leeds, UK: Peepal Press Ltd. 2009.  
Reviewed by: Majid Amini, Virginia State University**

Imagine yourself caught between the Cartesian scepticism of 'unreliable senses ... capable of playing exceptional tricks' (p. 25) and the desire for a Kantian transcendentalism that after all there must be things and beings 'within the storehouse of the heartland' (p. 38) against the existentialist backdrop that the only thing that counts is the existence 'now' (p. 40). This is the predicament of Zechariah Stevenson, the protagonist of Wilson Harris' *Heartland*. The novel was initially published as the first part of a trilogy in 1964 and is being republished now with a new and enticingly enigmatic preface by the author.

The story opens with an evocatively anthropomorphic description of a morning in the heartland – nay, the “psyche-land” – forest of Guyana. The author’s anthropomorphism of nature is ironically intended to be as real as a scientific realist is wont to emphasise the reality of her recondite theoretical and unobservable terms. Harris’ nature in its splendour of beauties and the scandal of its beastliness represents not only the formative force in the genesis and genius of humanity but also the intractable imprint of the human subconscious and unconscious. Nature is the mirror of the self, and the self is the reflection of nature. In fact, it is this psychological Hegelian dialectic that drives Stevenson to explore his being – a being that verges between the solipsism of ‘standing alone in this forest of a world’ (p. 28) like an ‘island of consciousness’ (p. 23) and panpsychism where there is ‘a phenomenon of all-inclusive agency ... pointing to a community of conscious fulfilment in existence’ (p. 25). It is a duality of ‘island and mainland’ (p. 23) corresponding to a duality of ‘fantasy and reality’ (p. 24) that Stevenson encounters in the explorations of his elusive, if not illusive, self. It seems that Harris’ Stevenson is too smitten with the scepticism of René Descartes’ *First Meditation* to take John Donne’s *Meditation XVII* seriously that ‘no man is an island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main’.

The reader finds Stevenson as a recently recruited *watchman* for a company in the sparsely populated Kamaria falls in the Guyanese interior, following an inadvertent involvement in some financial embezzlement that leads to his wealthy father’s mysterious suicide in order to forsake the son from ignominy and imprisonment. We see Stevenson taking refuge in the solitude of the forest to find himself. Yet, he craves for the company of others to carve out his selfhood. However, Harris keeps the story sparse in characters, though very sumptuous in its symbolism and scenery. The first character that Stevenson comes across in the novel is Kaiser – ‘the strangest, most haunting or haunted creation of all things and beings’ (p. 24) – who is a long-standing lorry driver responsible for bringing cargo for the pork-knockers scattered around the territory. Like his paradoxical appearance, Kaiser complains about the paradoxical nature of technology when he cannot use his hunting gun since ‘the engine of this damned lorry scaring away mankind’s good game. What on earth can we do?’ (p. 25) However, what Stevenson finds antithetical and irritating about Kaiser is the latter’s belief in bringing ‘every crumb of fulfilment’ one could for others and that humans need each other ‘like skin and bone. Man need man’ (pp. 30-31). But, for Stevenson, humans are in perpetual ‘antagonism of relatedness’, something that undergirds ‘the open and closed nature of the community of the world like the shutters of a camera or the disposition of eye and lid’ (p. 34).

In the cosmic setting of selves, Stevenson and Kaiser are the watchers. But, who are the watched? At this juncture, Harris introduces daSilva a – half-Portugese, half-Amerindian – legendary pork-knocker with a shady past involving a tale of murder when his ‘captain and crew, engine and boat vanish’ and daSilva scrambling himself ‘in a cave beside the dead trunk of a man’ (p. 52). Yet, daSilva depicts the contradictory ‘court of conscience’ (p. 54) with the ego being the judge, the judged and the reporter. He invites Stevenson to learn ‘to read’ (p. 50) the ‘mystery’ of all ‘injustice’ (p. 53) and of the self, thus making us realise that it is our virtuous duty to ‘take the condemned bait forever out of our mouths’ (p. 51). Though, paradoxically, he perishes in pursuit of his stolen skimpy supplies!

Despite the demise of daSilva, the watch is perpetuated in its creation through Petra, an Amerindian woman ‘far gone with child’ – a child that may be daSilva’s or his lost captain’s. She is a woman that is ‘the heart as well as the heartlessness of the new world’ (p. 72) who is expelled by her tribe for her indiscretion with a “non-native” to Kartabo Point where one finds ‘the beginnings of a new legendary continental offspring born of many races’ (p. 75). Indeed, Petra is the epitome of every ‘mask of civilization ... along the way from brutal tribe to the dreaming constellation of humanity, from animal servitude to bearing the burden of the world’s need for love’ (p. 73). But, what is ironic about Petra’s pregnancy is nature’s wreaking havoc on the ‘fictions of past and future’ where identities are collided into the ‘selfsame stroke’ (p. 77).

With the birth of Petra’s child, a new, though dark, dawn is heralded and we find Stevenson disappearing into the innermost recesses of nature – or, is it consciousness? – where ‘earth waits for the continual voyager’ (p. 103). And, it goes without saying that anyone interested in the philosophical fabric of thoughts in the Caribbean will certainly find Harris’ *Heartland* a rich tapestry of perennial problems and paradoxes of human existence.

**Zee Edgell. *The Festival of San Joaquin*. Hong Kong: Macmillan Caribbean Writers, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: Katherine Miranda, University of Puerto Rico**

Macmillan Caribbean’s republication of Zee Edgell’s *The Festival of San Joaquin* (2008) comes over a decade after its original publication in 1997. Winner of the Fawcett Society Book Prize for her first novel, *Beka Lamb* (1982), and the author of *In Times Like These* (1991) and *Time and the River* (2007), Edgell was educated as a journalist, played an active role in Belizean government and women’s organizations, and is currently a profes-

sor in the English Department at Kent State University, Ohio. *Festival* is an important contribution to the Caribbean literary canon: its focus on the underrepresented rural Belizean mestizo community (to which Edgell, as a black Creole, does not ethnically or racially belong) and its treatment of domestic violence and the individual, communal and judicial responses to it allow for a (re)assessment of women's socio-political status in the region through the fictional first-person narrative of one woman. While many of the novel's themes tie into broad Caribbean literary tropes –such as the struggles for familial, cultural, and national sovereignty– making many of its concerns applicable to the region more broadly, *Festival* also offers unique insights into the nuances of specific gender and class constraints within Belizean mestizo society and the ways they limit one woman's individual choices.

Set in 1990, the novel begins the day Luz Marina, a mestiza from the rural mountain village of San Joaquín, is released from prison on three-year probation. Fifteen months after her arrest for killing her common-law marriage husband Salvador in self-defense, Luz Marina returns to her home town to piece her life back together and reclaim her three children. Now in the custody of their wealthy grandmother, Doña Catalina, Luz Marina must contend with her mother-in-law's bitter determination to keep her son's killer away from the family. Through flashbacks, Edgell unravels the complexities behind a seemingly Cinderella-like plot: an adolescent Luz Marina is hired as a maid in the Casal home when she inadvertently saves Dona Catalina's life, becomes a trusted confidante, falls in love with Salvador, moves in with him against Doña Catalina's wishes, hopefully awaits a never-realized promise of official marriage, and is victimized by his frequent physical and emotional abuse until the night of his death when she inadvertently kills him protecting herself from his violence.

Contextualizing the Mayan heritage of mestizo culture, a subplot revolves around the Belizean Environmental Action Group that is fighting wealthy landowners (including Doña Catalina and Salvador's brother, Andrés) who wish to sell huge tracts of forest to foreign interests that will burn and clear the land for citrus farming. Luz Marina's attempts to re-establish herself in San Joaquin highlight the prejudices she faces as a poor woman shunned for retaliating against her husband's abuse, and a series of events trace her failed struggles to establish a new life. First, she is fired from the office of Don Pablo, the wealthy son of a family friend, when she unwittingly leaks information about his corrupt business dealings with American land expropriators. Later, she is dismissed from her gardening job in Andrés' hotel when Doña Catalina discovers he has proposed to marry her (he has been in love with her since her adolescence in the Casal home). Although at times overextended (Andrés' willingness to abandon his family for Luz Ma-

rina seems improbable at best), Edgell constructs these plot events to stress her protagonist's inability to make her own decisions. Always conscious of what she wants, decisions are nevertheless made before Luz Marina can act, as happens when she decides to refuse Andres' offer but is fired and thrown off the hotel property before she can reject him herself. The intersections of Luz Marina's victimization, defeated agency, self-loathing, and guilt reflect her society's narrow allowances for her growth and renewal, and the ways she is psychologically affected by these constraints. Herein lies the nub of Edgell's societal critique and perhaps the strongest value of this woman-centered literary project: to expose the ways that class and gender conspire to privilege an elite minority and contain a working-class majority.

Edgell has described Luz Marina as "political with a small -p rather than a capital -P," a character trait that reveals itself through her indirect struggles to merge personal and communal battles, subversive and indirect communications, and both conscious and unconscious actions. *Festival* is ultimately ambiguous in its conclusion regarding this Caribbean woman's self-determination – while the court finally reunites Luz Marina with her children, she nevertheless has "no answers ready yet... so I am silent" (186). Edgell explains that "the book is not meant as a solution but to explore what happens to a woman when everything she has wanted and worked for is taken away by something she herself has done." The republication of this novel now thus urges the question: does this position foment inaction in the face of systematic repression or justifiably represent a real lack of agency? A decade later, should Luz Marina still be silent? Given Caribbean women's still unstable socio-political status in communities across the region and alarming domestic violence statistics, this question is as important now as it was ten years ago, making *Festival* today, as then, still relevant.

**Thomas Glave (ed) *Our Caribbean. A Gathering of Lesbian and Gay Writing from the Antilles* Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: David Clover, Commonwealth Studies Library, University of London Research Library Services**

Recent years have seen a flowering of queer writing emerging into public view from the Caribbean region and Caribbean writing. *Our Caribbean* presents one of the first anthologies of both this and the not to be forgotten earlier writing.

Author and activist Thomas Glave has gathered a selection of short stories, excerpts from novels, essays, memoir, and poetry by both internationally

celebrated writers such as Reinaldo Arenas, Audre Lorde, Michelle Cliff, and Dionne Brand, and lesser well-known authors and poets, hailing from the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Panama, Puerto Rico, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. One of the strengths of this collection is that it includes work from writers based in the Caribbean and from the Caribbean diasporas, and work from the Dutch-speaking, Hispanic (in translation) and Anglophone Caribbean.

The collection is arranged alphabetically by author. This presents some odd juxtapositions, as the reader jumps to and from time and place, and I thought a chronological arrangement would have allowed a better sense of the development of queer writing and of how themes across the individual pieces emerge and gain strength across time.

As a collection of works *Our Caribbean* forms a conversation or discourse about same-sex sexuality in the Caribbean. It explores themes that are celebratory, mournful, filled with anger and political urgency, and that explore desire, love and lust. Individual pieces address exile, migration, religion, family, race and class. Elsewhere, Michelle Cliff in her book *If I Could Write this in Fire*, discusses feelings of ambivalence within a queer Caribbean identity, experiencing both solidarity with her nation, and anger at the homophobia commonly expressed within it. Home for many of the writers in *Our Caribbean* is both a place of alienation and identification.

Particular contributions that attracted me included Aldo Alvarez's charming and comic depiction of a Puerto Rican realtor, attempting to engage unsuccessfully with barriers of class, and tripping over in these attempts as her homophobia is exposed; Wesley E A Chrichlow's insightful and personal essay "History, (Re)Memory, Testimony, and Biomythography: Charting a Buller Man's Trinidadian Part"; and Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes travel notes of a visit to Havana. Makeda Silvera's "Man Royals and Sodomites" uses memoir to reveal and make visible Black lesbian pasts, celebrating strong women whose stories had been silenced.

Glave's anthology serves as a timely introduction to queer Caribbean writing, and provides a welcome taste of a number of writers who I then wanted to explore and discover in more depth. As a collection it assists in breaking the silence of queer Caribbean lives, but only of course within the confines of literary readers. In celebrating the diversity of queer Caribbean writers (and we should note that many others could have been included) Glave reveals not only similar experiences but also much about difference, in lived lives, in forms of writing and in the relationship of sexuality and writing. This work and the individual contributors deserve reading by a wider audience.

**Geoffrey Philp, *Who's Your Daddy and other stories*. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2009.**

**Reviewed by: Yolanda Martinez, University of Birmingham**

Geoffrey Philp's most recent collection of short stories *Who's Your Daddy and other stories* documents the experiences of the Jamaican immigrant community in contemporary Miami, at times intertwined with their lives in the Jamaican past. The twenty stories that form the collection bring together an apparently unconnected array of multilayered characters: a dreadlock vampire, a closeted homosexual football player, a 'rolling calf', unconventional priests, prostitutes and drug addicts, and a 'talking-fridge' are some of the characters in the collection that make the complexity of life and human relationships humorous and thrilling; moreover, their personal and peculiar stories underlie a commonality of contemporary issues such as the need for the revaluation of familial and matrimonial values, class divisions and racial discrimination, gender stereotypes and roles, tainted sexual and love relationships, poverty, drugs and violence.

These themes openly denounce the impact that social pressures, racial and class stigmatisation, and sexual orientation have upon the individual. Stories such as "How do you tell?" and "First Love" address the struggle for self affirmation and self acceptance vis-à-vis society, respectively: a boy debates whether to disclose his Russian identity to his traditional American father for fear of being rejected, accused of treason and terrorism, even of being killed; similarly, an in-the-closet football player struggles to come to terms with his identity and joins his macho team members in beating up his secret lover Patrick in an effort to live up to the American conservative values of his heterosexual football teammates. Other stories such as "Third Time", "Fattie, Fattie" and "Bobby Bijani and the Rolling Calf" lend importance to the fallacy of marriage as a sacred institution. In "Third Time" Alvaro Guzman's unfaithfulness becomes his employee's opportunity to move up the social ladder; while in "Fattie, Fattie" an opportunist accident makes Kwesi Sekou's sexual infatuation with Rita a forgettable episode and marks the turn of a promising new era with his wife Linda; "Bobby Bijani and the Rolling Calf", together with "My Jamaican Touch" in which the narrator shares a deep emotional relationship with the family 'talking-fridge', is the story in which the presence of magical realism adds to the web of comedy, intrigue and deceit. Haunted by a 'rolling calf' by night, Bobby Bijani confesses his darkest secrets—from stealing toilet paper and paper clips at work to thieving his brother's inheritance—but the 'rolling calf' does not disappear until his wife Audrey admits her affair with Bobby's half-brother Alex.

A more dramatic representation of the trials and tribulations of life is portrayed in the stories “Coward Men Keep Sound Bonds”, “A Jamaican Halloween Story” and “Joseph’s Dream” in which the innocence and success of a past life and hope for a better future are shattered by a merciless world of drugs, prostitution and blackmail. Death and love also meet in “Who’s your daddy?”, the short story that gives the title to the collection. Racial and class discrimination and an impossible love become the trigger that sends Michael to juvenile prison. The deep affection between fathers and children are recurrent topics in “Sunday Morning, Coming Down” and “Beeline against Babylon” on a journey to church and during a game of dominos, respectively. “Cry to Me”, instead, portrays both sides of love and hate by an overprotective father who kills his daughter’s abusive ex-boyfriend. Fatherless relationships are also present in the collection in “A Survivor’s Tale”, in which a son impatiently awaits the death of his father before his twenty-first birthday so he can inherit his father’s fortune, and in “Four Seasons”. Alejandro, challenged by his daughter who has married “*el negro*” and by his son Alejo who wants to study art and whom Alejandro suspects is having an affair with his son-in-law, shoots “*el negro*” to death in an attempt to reclaim his patriarchal authority.

The stigmatisation of the Rastafarian movement and all stereotypes associated with it such as drugs, dreadlocks, music, Bob Marley and poverty are represented in stories such as “I Want to Disturb my Neighbour” and “Sister Faye and the Dreadlock Vampire”. Whilst the image of the Rasta is positively represented in the impersonation of Jesus in “The Day Jesus Christ Came to Mount Airy”, in “I Want to Disturb My Neighbour”, Courtneigh finds himself trapped between the road to redemption by studying the Bible and swearing allegiance to Selassie. In “Sister Faye and the Dreadlock Vampire” Walter is sent away by his mother to live with Sister Faye, who can rub off some of her godly ways on him (144), before he becomes a low-class Jamaican ragamuffin (28). The stories of the collection, narrated in Jamaican Patois and standard English, address a variety of contemporary issues which not being exclusive to the Jamaican immigrant community, reach out to other communities in the Diaspora who are faced with racism, class segregation and sexual bigotry.

**Patricia Powell, *The Fullness of Everything*, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2009**

**Reviewed by: Maria van Enckevort, University of St. Martin**

Patricia Powell’s fourth novel “The Fullness of Everything” is about the struggle between fathers, brothers, and sons, and their redemption, achieved through explosive rage, magical healing, and a little help from an

outside child and half-sister Rosa.

The novel consists of three parts; the first part relates Winston's story. Part two recounts the life of his brother Septimus and his struggle to establish a loving relationship with his second wife and his son Hanif from a previous marriage. It also tells about Septimus' relation with his father, who he resembled in looks and who considered him his favourite child, a position he was scared to jeopardize if he would stand up to him in order to protect his mother and older brother. Part three entitled 'The Family' describes the healing that finally takes place through the intervention of Rosa, who has a special gift. Rosa not only communicates with the dead, she can also perceive opportunities for redemption where others are blinded by pain and hateful memories.

As a child Winston Rowe had been physically abused by his father. When he left for the United States to study he vowed never to come back and after twenty-five years Winston is completely estranged from his family in Jamaica. He has made a new life for himself as a tenured professor of History; he has a lover, Marie Jose, and a close friend, Silas. But his desire to found a family has never been realized, though he has tried several times. He wants a family badly, for he needs to feel at home in the world, he wants to belong. Alas, Marie Jose, who has just been miraculously cured from cancer, cannot and does not want to provide him with this.

When a telegram arrives informing him about his father's impending death, Winston sees this as an opportunity to make peace with his family. For he feels that "if he couldn't make peace with his first family, then there was no way in hell things were going to work with the second one, that over and over again he'd only be acting out the same damn foolishness." (11) Afraid to go alone Winston begs Marie Jose to come with him but realizes this is a mistake as soon as they arrive in Jamaica. According to Septimus, who is an undertaker, the old man – Mass Sam – is not dying and going to outlive them all. The telegram was a ruse to get him to come back home. Winston realizes that nothing has really changed. His father refuses to talk to him and his mother is still making excuses for her husband. When he finds out that his father has taken in his outside child – nine-year-old Rosa – Winston flies into a rage and knocks down Septimus and accuses him of never standing up to the father in order to protect their mother. This incidence further widens the rift between the two brothers, who seem to be unable to move beyond the hurt of their childhood and express the love they feel for each other. Their parents' marriage was not a happy one; each came from a different 'tribe' and from different social backgrounds. This seemed to have been a bone of contention between the two of them as well as Mass Sam's philandering: besides Rosa he has at least two other outside chil-

dren.

Unable to establish contact with his father, Winston bonds with Rosa who asks to take her with him back to the States, but first he needs to find her mother. Winston succeeds but also informs Rosa that Mass Sam is her father and not the grandfather as he told her. When his father finds out he flies into a rage “I’m going to fucking kill you”, attacks him and subsequently suffers a heart attack. After Mass Sam’s death things move fast. Rosa’s papers for the States are processed and she leaves with Winston, who believes that Rosa is his opportunity to establish a family, even if he has to do it without a woman, for Marie Jose is not happy with his decision and refuses to put up with it. The mother refurbishes the house and seemingly wants to forget her husband and everything he stood for, while Septimus feels lonely and is left pondering what to do with his life. He finally decides to visit his brother in the United States together with his son Hanif.

It is in the United States that Septimus learns that “a man can’t just move through the world fucking and striking down things he don’t understand” and that “a man has to have reason, a man has to have compassion, a man has to learn care. (209)” Thanks to Rosa both brothers put a stop to the perpetual violence inflicted, again and again against own flesh and blood and establish a loving relationship.

**Dorothea Smartt, *Ship Shape*, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2009**  
**Reviewed by: Suzanne Scafe, London South Bank University**

*Ship Shape* is Dorothea Smartt’s second volume of poetry. Her first, also published by Peepal Tree Press, included the Medusa series of poems and Smartt’s critically acclaimed performance poem ‘Medusa? Medusa Black!’, which uses the image of chemically treated ‘black’ hair as a metonym for racial and sexual oppression and for the exploration of self-hatred, as expressed in the lines, ‘Dye it,/remembrances of Africa fast-fadin’/in the blond highlights,/ turn us back on ourselves’.

Although Kamau Brathwaite remarks that this more recent collection marks a ‘cool[ing]-down from her tierce – her fierce ‘Medusa Poems’’, many of these poems extend some of the themes of diasporic community and identity that characterised her earlier collection. There is a shift, however, in *Ship Shape*, from the more performative orality of the Medusa series, to a more self-conscious experimentation with poetic form, evident in poems such as ‘Her Cinquain Chain’. The central sequence of poems in this collection re-envision the life and history Sambo, a young African who died within a few days of having been brought to Lancaster in the 1820s. He

was buried, according to the *Londsdale Magazine* (1822), 'within twenty yards of the sea shore' at Sunderland Point. In the poems 'Samboo's Grave' he is renamed Bilal and re-identified as a West African Fulani, devout and ambitious. His story is interwoven into the narratives of the Quaker, slave-owning families of eighteenth-century Lancaster. In 'the captain's wife's story', she imagines her husband's slave ship 'moored in blood,/ dispersing merchandise into the Lune for our local/grocers' trade in slaves...'. The poem points to her implication in her husband's trade, despite her revulsion:

*His hands and eyes hold me with love, the same  
hands that strip the Negro of his flesh,  
prise open, dig the enslaved's wounds,  
stroking them with briny waters for discipline.*

In this collection Smartt uses of a wide range of oral forms. In the moving 'blues under the ocean' the poem's syncopated rhythm is used to effect the sway of the ship, Bilal's own despair, his 'blues', and the blue of the vast sky and ocean:

*His heart's a ton of lead,  
his eyes are playing dead.  
The moon's the eye of the sky  
seeing him blue.*

A very different rhythmic sequence is created in the poem 'ballad of the ship inn', a biting portrait of Bilal's objectification by the community of Sunderland Point, where he becomes a 'little curio', a 'sight as rare as gold'. In the last series of poems, 'just a part', Smartt plays extends Bilal's own disconnection and loss while at the same time reconnecting her subject to his descendants in contemporary Black Britain, in attempt to interrupt the cycle of dispossession begun with his captivity and forced migration. The opening poem is set in busy Old Street station and is a timely celebration of 'young Black boys/Black angels' with their 'Aubergine Afros': other poems are vignettes representing the connections forged despite journeys of separation and the inevitable loss of family ties. Many of the poems use a personal tone, which works well to convey their intense and often moving experiences. 'litany of survivals i' describes an attempt to clear the house of 'Cousin Iris' following her death: the list of household items, hoarded but never used, speak of a yearning, unfulfilled, to return 'home': '...decades/of shopping that never made it back home;/packs of panties, bulk rolls of j-cloths,/boxes of soap powder, bottles of cleaning fluids'. 'front room angel' is an inventive revision of Michael McMillan's installation, *The West Indian Front Room*, that has at its centre, a young girl desperately seeking a lost bracelet under what she hopes is the beneficent gaze of a plastic Christmas angel.

These poems are evidence of Smartt's talent as a poet and wordsmith. From the imagined terrains of Islamic West Africa and the Middle Passage to the lived experiences of contemporary London, Dorothea Smartt has produced poems that are fine examples of poetic craft and that sound their truth.

**Jennifer Rahim, *Approaching Sabbaths*, Leeds: Peepal Press, 2009.  
Reviewed by: Michael N. Jagessar, University of Birmingham**

In deciding to review *Approaching Sabbaths*, I was aware that I will read these verses through the optics of a Caribbean male theologian who is keenly interested in theological themes in Caribbean literature. Sometime ago I came across a very thoughtful essay by Jennifer Rahim on the relationship between the Psalms and Earl Lovelace's *The Wine of Astonishment*; and as such I was very much looking forward to reading this volume with a title that has theological implications. I wondered whether Rahim will be transgressing the narrow boundaries of theological/religious notions as she plumbs the depths of ordinary lives and its "knowledge of mysteries unbaptised" (p.72) to unearth the richness of sacramentality in the everydayness of Trinidad narratives, washed in "waters blessed with mercy salt" (p.101). I have not been disappointed, as in her "flood of words" (p.11) she punctures the narrow preoccupation of "nailing truth and toasting salvation" (p.77) associated in some religious quarters.

*Approaching Sabbaths* is her third collection of poems. Poetry comes naturally to Rahim. She notes: "poems have been raining on me for years" (p.82) pouring in her room like a sea. A writer of short fiction and criticism, Rahim presently serves as a Senior Lecturer at the Liberal Arts Department, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad & Tobago.

*Approaching Sabbaths* presents readers with real life insights into life and living in Trinidad. Lives "twisted like neglected fields of cane" (p.21) with its constant struggle "to fight free from being held under" (p.17) provide Rahim with metaphors that offer vistas into notions of hope, resurrection and freedom. Thus, in "Lady Lazarus in the Sun" we are reminded that "the business of rising from the grave like stubborn sun" (p.28) is not a theological dictum; it is a lived daily experience. The need to constantly overcome is captured by Rahim in these lines: "I do this rising business like I wash my body/sun my history/air my wounds/ take off my death again". (p.31) Those who live, work and struggle in communities and neighbourhoods that the rest of society may wish to give up on will certainly identify with the senti-

ments penned in lines, such as: “Stay long enough in any place and its suffering/ will lay aside the masks you put on its face when you first came.” (p.65) Drawing on concrete and layered insights, the author deftly and creatively weaves her thoughts, line after line flowing seamlessly, as she draws on the experiences of family, friends, neighbours and everything around her.

Rahim’s is certainly a fresh, perceptive, deeply reflective and counter-cultural voice in Caribbean prose. Indeed, ordinary resurrections and sacramental moments are terms that capture for me the timely poems in this volume aimed at bridging “over both sides of heaven” (p.57). For in the overarching context of the Caribbean with its narratives of subjugation (both past and present), Rahim has demonstrated a unique capacity, “hovering between worlds” (p.11) to release what may seem ordinary: embodying insights that are special and will remain etched on the imagination. Here are insights, while contextually located, capture the essence of freedom, resurrection and hope for marginalised people everywhere. I sense that the key to Rahim’s art is her ability to transgress narrow boundaries of religious affiliation for instance, especially in a region, where the gods are too large for human proclivities to want to lock down the Divine. There is she rightly opines: “no comfort in blaming gods for omission” (p.18). Though one may wish to suggest that it is very cathartic to rant after the Divine!

Among the collection of poems, I am drawn especially to “For Seeds that Wither” which reads (and sounds) like a powerful intercessory prayer that every gathered religious community would do well to use and contemplate on. It is “a prayer for all the little ones/that sex bandit rob of their innocence” (p.34) and “a chant to break the back/of the jumbie who busy building/fences to keep lines clearly drawn.” (p.34) Moreover, it is a prayer of collective remembering in which forgiveness is sought “for seeds that wither and die/before they get a chance at life” (p.35).

Here is a Caribbean voice, who has perfected the art of crafting perceptive lines to capture and unearth, through fresh metaphors, the complexities of and contradictions of relationships immediate and around her. While history, place and time (that is Trinidad and the Caribbean) may be characterised by traumatic experiences, one can catch glimpses of salvific moments brought to life in these verses. “Stories,” as Rahim rightly discerns, “tell no lies” (p.119). *Approaching Sabbaths* is required reading.

**Ian McDonald *Selected Poems*, Introduction by Edward Baugh. London: Macmillan Caribbean, 2008.**

**Reviewed by: F.S.J. Ledgister, Clark Atlanta University**

Ian McDonald's poetry is one of the true delights of Anglophone Caribbean verse. From his first published poem, the deservedly much anthologised *Jaffo the Calypsonian*, to the last poem in this collection, *What it Was Like Once Forever*, written at the age of seventy-five, his over half-a-century of contribution to West Indian poetry is summarised here to be enjoyed and savoured again and again, as it truly merits. The judicious introduction by Edward Baugh points out that at the beginning of his career as a writer, the Trinidad-born Guyanese poet, had "struck a new and distinctive chord in West Indian poetry" with *Jaffo the Calypsonian*. Baugh also takes note of McDonald's social conscience, his acute observation of character, his awe at nature, and the quality of his lyricism.

I am struck by McDonald's powers of observation: again and again, we are given descriptions of such clarity, earthiness, and humanity, that the economy with which he states them comes as a surprise. At the same time, we can see his ability as a poet develop over the years, from the first poems written in his twenties, to the latest written in his seventies. The clarity of description in a poem like *The Legend of Mangamuch and La Cour Harpe* about a stick-fight in which "as men will tell you, they fought longer than forever" foreshadows the short, but compelling narratives of the *Mercy Ward* poems, written when he was in his forties and fully mature as a poet.

Stick-fighting, clearly, intrigued the young McDonald. There are two poems about the sport, the second, simply called *The Stick-Fighters*, laments it's passing, and by implication the passing of Trinidad's French Creole language (Macmillan's typesetters rendered "mettez" in the poem as "mettex", something that should be corrected in the next edition):

*On Carnival day, Jour Ouvert: The colour of it, the jacket-men in scarlet sleeves*

*And their big-hipped women carrying rum and roasted breadfruit and cassava cakes.*

*The fighter's challenge then: "Zingay Talala mettez la main asu moi!"*

*And the tough-skinned batoniers urged by the stick-cry "Quaray! Quaray!" Proud men.*

My favourite poem of McDonald's, since I first read it in a magazine back in the 1970s, is the plainly titled narrative *Drunk*, about a man who having wasted his potential is reduced to beggary, but who yet has a spark of the divine about him. It is that spark of the divine that McDonald keeps on seeing in his fellow human beings, most particularly in his fellow West Indians.

In this case, it is a connection to nature, to the beauty of the birds of Guyana, which leaves the poet awestruck:

*My drunken visitor has gone,  
His begging bowl is full with bread.  
I sit in silence in my home,  
Sober in this quiet town,  
The peace of Sunday settles down.  
He walks away, his back hunched up,  
The grey hairs sparkle in his beard,  
The sunset on him burns and glows.  
I see him through the mist of years:  
He goes to chase the gold-winged hawks,  
His eyes ablaze for humming-birds.*

*The spurbirds circle around his head,  
The corn-birds land upon his arm,  
And drunken in their sun-filled games,  
The river-swallows dance for him.*

There is no large step from this to the *Mercy Ward* poems, character portraits about dying patients, and a nurse, in the paupers' ward of the public hospital in Georgetown. It might be the school-teacher "Meticulous in all he ever did," or normally biddable "old-stager Mangru" who acknowledged a royal visit with "the loudest fart you ever, ever heard," or "The young man in row 6, bed 22" who discharged himself via suicide. Or it might be that, as a result of a power-cut, and a delay in "the old generator" coming on:

*That once,  
Such beauty  
In this sad place,  
The glimmering  
Of candle-flies.*

There are few overtly political poems in this book though many deal with issues of social inequality, some with great sharpness, as in *The Weather in Shanty Town*, which points out that rich and poor do not experience the weather in the same way: "The rain is piss in shanty town, it brings no grace of silver." In *State of the Nation*, McDonald sardonically comments "Men are urged to be prouder, and are probably so" before asking "What has happened? why are knives pulled in the street?" In *A White Man Considers the Situation*, written in the late 1980s, he confronts his condition as a white West Indian, "a tourist in my own land", a land where there may no longer be a place for him:

*There is no way back, no forward way;  
My heart grows clenched from inner grief.*

*Almost certainly I will have to go from here.  
The laagers of the world build higher, black and white  
And no one is to blame except my brother, me.  
No one is to blame except my brother.*

Fortunately, he remained. To visit transitory islands in the Essequibo and read Proust, as he records in the poem *Dream Island*, declaring triumphantly “No one will ever do what I have done.” To tell yet more tales of characters seen, including the fascinating “*Hangman*” Cory. To meet eccentric foreigners in the interior of Guyana. To celebrate his own family. In one of the later poems of the collection he describes the event which led him to become a poet in *Spinster Ganteaume and the Birth of Poetry*, in a narrative reminiscent of García Márquez. The book concludes with a declaration of undying love and happiness. This is a book that deserves to be read not just by students of West Indian literature, but by anyone who loves poetry, anyone who loves the English language, and anyone who loves the people of the Caribbean and wants to see them with the eyes of someone who loves them and knows them deeply and fiercely.

**Esther Phillips, *The Stone Gatherer*. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2009.  
Reviewed by: F.S.J. Ledgister, Clark Atlanta University.**

Esther Phillips’s lyric poetry is noteworthy for its quality of quiet observation. It is a poetry of note-taking in the corner, of carefully watched and hoarded moments given back to us on the page by a writer who never ceases to be amused by the life she sees, even as she notes its pains both great and small. We cannot doubt the poet’s affection for her family, those whom she loves, her students, and the other subjects of her verse, but we have to attend to her humour and her wit at the same time. At times, Phillips strains for the portentous, as in the opening poem of this collection, “Seer”, with its conventional images of African magic, music, and wildlife. But the much more personal, and more intensely human poems that follow, are much cleaner in tone and, in their evocation of memory, provide a more honest connection to the past.

Memory is important to Phillips, and the way she uses language to evoke it is striking. In the vernacular poem “Violet”, there is a wonderfully Proustian image:

*how so much memory  
could rush from one chattel-house  
window, could fill up a SUV quick  
with oil-leaf smell, and Vicks  
and candle-grease.*

We are transported in the poem to a Barbadian morning traffic-jam and in that traffic-jam “when SUV must humble/like any old smoke-/farting van” even further back to childhood, and the lessons taught in childhood by old women. The vernacular is also a vehicle for wit, as when Phillips seeks to mollify a “famous writer” whose expensive Grundig shortwave radio has been stolen while in her keeping. She urges him to recall that “is you who praise Caliban/fuh tiefin words from European”. Phillips concludes, triumphantly, “It is cultural emancipation/love, is culture in transition.” Wit and humour are more likely to be expressed in standard English, with punning titles like “Night Errant”, or the poem “Milo” about the rather odd paths by which love can be expressed.

Phillips’s poetry is highly allusive. There are references to Whitman, Yeats, the Bible, Shakespeare, and a quotation from Wordsworth as epigraph to one poem. Another Wordsworth, Wordsworth McAndrew, is evoked by the poem “Higue”. Unlike McAndrew’s famous poem, “Old Higue”, Phillips female creature of the night is a tormented being, and indeed, the poet herself:

*Higue poet! Calling words like flame  
Through the night air, probing deep under the skin  
Baring her wounds to the salt of words.*

In standard English, furthermore, rather than in Creole.

Phillips, though, is not an inhabitant of the dark, but on the evidence of this collection a quite devout Christian. Several poems are filled with Christian imagery. One, “The Sceptic”, suggests that an unbeliever’s toil of repairing a house is a Christ-like endeavour possessing a redemptive quality. “Guilt”, is about the relationship of human love and the love due to God. Human love, she indicates in the poem “Nexus” is the product of a divine hand. Her love poems, alas, seem to fall a bit short of the divine. The short poem “Passion, which includes the quirky line “self-help’s a contravention”, ends up somewhere between clumsy and humorous. Unfortunately far closer to the former than to the latter. Another love poem, “And Yet Again” is better in its depiction of feeling, but comes a cropper when Phillips can find nothing better to say than the trite “it is the soul desiring its other self”. Phillips is on surer ground in other poems, when she talks about young women whom she has taught and their relationships with women of earlier generations such as herself. The poem, “Lesson” about three young women attending her grandmother’s funeral, and her thoughts about the world in which they live, is both poignant and powerful. The images are clear and clean, and the observation honest and unforced.

When she allows herself to observe we are given vignettes of deeply felt reality described with real humanity and sensitivity, and with a wit that manages to be simultaneously sophisticated and earthy. When she seeks to emote on purpose, the result is not always as successful. On balance, however, Phillips is a fine poet with a keen eye, and a strong sense of what it means and has meant to be a woman in the Caribbean.

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