

persona creativa en el contexto de la Jamaica del siglo 18. Ese contexto quizás resulte más interesante que el biografiado mismo.

Si nos preguntamos por qué Jamaica no entra en el vórtice revolucionario que arropa las colonias no tan distantes en el continente norteamericano, la biografía de Lindsay nos sugiere que no importa el descontento de los plantadores británicos en Jamaica comparado a la aprehensión que tienen de sublevaciones y fugas de sus esclavos. En última instancia la capacidad de manejar sus propios asuntos interesaba menos que garantizar su continuado dominio sobre sus dotaciones. El mundo esclavista caribeño se movía de manera distinta al continente, y ahí quizás sería provechoso trazar el paralelo con Cuba.

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Literary Expressions of African Spirituality, edited by Carol P. Marsh-Lockett and Elizabeth J. West, is a brilliant collection of well written and well-connected essays, a welcome addition to the tiny corpus of critical texts that examine African and African Diaspora spiritualities as reading paradigms of African and African Diaspora literatures. The editors in their introduction provide a panoramic understanding of the book's overall theme in the stylistic and theoretical varieties for different readers. The dense philosophical, cultural, and literary theories of Melvin B. Rahming, James A. Manigault-Bryant, Roberto Strongman, and Daryl Dickson-Carr contrast and complement the rest of the essays not so theoretically overloaded. The book opens with John C. Hawley's "The Gods who Speak in Many Voices and in None: African Novelists on Indigenous and Colonial Religion" (pp. 15-33). Drawing on the works of African novelists, including early writers such as Amos Tutuola to contemporary novelists such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Hawley recapitulates the debates about how African traditional religions, Islam, and Christianity shape the literary traditions of African writers, who are caught in the battle for the survival of African cosmology and cosmogony against the colonial hostile assaults of Euro-Christian

and Arab-Islamic cultures to contemporary Western driven ideology of cultural globalization. Hawley stipulates that African writers provide mediational paradigms through the evocation of African spiritual elements that reject differentiation between material and spiritual realities, and hence become sites of resistance to colonial Arab and European cultural historiographies.

Following this, Melvin B. Rahming in “Reading Spirit: Cosmological Consideration in Garfield Linton’s *Voodomation: A Book of Foretelling*” (pp. 35-61) crafts a rigorous methodology of philosophical examination of these spiritual elements through his critical theory of spirit; that is the symbiosis relations between the material condition of being and spiritual activities. He reads Linton’s narrative multivocality in *Voodomation...* as sets of contradictory unities of all things in the universe, reflecting ancient African cosmology captured in Kametic/Egyptian cosmogony, presently erupting as magical. Rahming explicates the organic unity of the stories as ritualized coherence of the fractured historical consciousness of Africans in Diaspora, through the links to Kametic/Egyptian concepts of the cosmos. James A. Manigault-Bryant in “From “Pythian Madness” to an “Inner-Ethic of Self-Sacrifice”: The Spirits of Africa and Modernity in Du Bois’s Late Writing” (pp. 63-79) examines William E.B. Du Bois’ reflexive praxes in sociological theory to uncover the corrosiveness of the phenotypically locked and essentialized black personhood, and to battle the racist constructions of the social predicated on normative whiteness and black otherness, projected as cosmic arrangements (p. 69). Du Bois’s thoughts, posits Manigault-Bryant, speculate that America’s redemption is encoded in Black spirituality in corporative complementarity of all things, and in a spirit-centeredness of past and present. These cartographies of spirit-centeredness and the personal-social corollaries explicate the significance of spiritual symbiosis ritualized in two historical and metaphysical representations of the Xhosa in South Africa. In Eric Still “Rituals of Remembrance in Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness*” (pp. 81-98), ritual advocates an African cosmology of adaptive pluralism, of contradictory remembrances as critical mediations of history in pre-and post-apartheid South African.

Retaining the African worldviews as a symbiosis of the material and the spirit, Roberto Strongman’s “The Body of Vodou: Corporeality and the Location of Gender in Afro-Diasporic Religion” (pp. 99-117) challenges the phallogocentric interpretations of African spiritualities against the evidence of multiple, trans-gender, and trans-corporeal realities of the individual in the androgynous personhoods of African deities, and priesthood. He appeals to various African-centered philosophers such to interrogate and dismantle the interpretation of African spirituality ritualized in Vodou ceremonies through patriarchal heteronormativity.

Surprisingly, he invokes Akan metaphysics while evading any references to Yoruba and Fon religions, the main foundations of Haitian Vodou hermeneutics. Trans-gender and trans-corporeality generates a conceptual framing of the human self as uncontrollable, uncontainable, multiple, and deterritorialized in relation to African and African Diaspora narratives as expounded in Kameelah L. Martin's "Hoodoo Ladies and High Conjurers: New Directions for an Old Archetype" (pp. 119-144). Martin's socio-historical purview of African conjure women/men demonstrates a historical gradualism of elevation from negative representations to celebrations as icons of spiritual, social and cultural retainers of African American worlds. The essay reveals reasons for the early negativity by linking Hoodoo women/men to slave rebellions, and ritualizing a competing African worldview to dominant European-American morality. Artress Bethany White's essay, "From Africa to America by Way of the Caribbean: *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* and *A Mercy*" (pp. 145-160) qualifies Maryse Condé's and Toni Morrison's novels as programmatically engaging elements of African derived multiple and syncretic spirituality, postcolonial, Caribbean, African American black feminist revisionary narratology, and cultural historicism to combat dominant mono-dimensional moral, and racist slave narratives. White sees Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*, as a narrative support system of female healing practices, to heal the psychosomatic ravages of sexploitation and alienation that alienates self and body, spirit and culture, examined earlier by Roberto Strongman and James A. Manigault-Bryant.

Ingenuously, the editors return the focus of the essays to a Diasporic location often described as the most culturally closest to Africa, Haiti, in Beauty Bragg's essay, "Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*: Historicizing the Colonial Woman" (pp. 163-184). Bragg's essay echoes Rahming's rhetoric of decentering to argue that Danticat appropriates Erzulie and *marasa*, two culture heroines as archetypal female figures, to question locational rigidity of phallogocentric Haitian narratives, and literally promote a Vodou hermeneutic, both transnational and trans-class in liminal spaces, that is simultaneously empowering and disempowering to women. Danticat's narrative methodology, stipulates Bragg, creates safe spaces to conceptualize and execute rituals of female resistance to and healing from the traumas of sexual and physical abuse. Daryl Dickson-Carr provides the answer to my inquiry about the recognition of Yoruba pantheon in these readings in "Looking for Olódùmarè: Ishmael Reed and the Recovery of Yoruba" (pp. 185-196). Through spirit centered reading of Reed's aggregation of Eshu/Elegbara, the Yoruba trickster deity of the cross-roads, to usher in narrative ambiguity, satire, multivocality, multi-identification, and to develop a critical appraisal of the rhetoric of African reconnection in *Mumbo Jumbo* and *Japanese by*

Spring, Dickson-Carr's stipulates that Reed displays the non-totalitarian nature of Yoruba gods and religion, and by extension advocates a non-deterministic spiritual plurality and multiple interpretations of life. Nonetheless, Reed says Dickson-Carr worries about the applicability of his propositions to culturally alienated and double-minded African Americans suffering from pathological fear of a reconnection to Africa.

George Bess Montgomery's examination of the film industry's representation of Yoruba deities in "Testing and Changing: Esu and Oya: 'Making it Do What it Do' in *The Best Man*" (pp. 197-214) is revealing. Montgomery's quarrel with the cinema world is that it evokes and invokes Yoruba deities and ritual music but refuses to acknowledge these Yoruba sources because of the negrophobia afflicted critical mass of movie goers. Mario Chandler's materialist essay, "From Cuban Utopianism to Haitian Messianism: Spiritual Provocations of Collective Catalyst in Jacques Roumain's *Masters of the Dew*" (pp. 215-227) discusses Roumain's materialist evocation of African spiritual concepts of collective destiny to craft a messianic narrative that collapses Vodou, Christianity, and Marxist Cuban utopianism to set up a narrative of intricate multiple relationships of religion, politics, and economics. Chandler however fails to develop any further the cosmology of Vodou spirituality in connection with economic and social sustainability, evidenced in the *coumbitè*, an African system of collective self-help. Thus he is silent on the loss of harmony/balance between the cosmic world of the African in *Fonds Rouge* and the socio-economic and natural environments caused by fratricide, though he agrees that another human sacrifice restores that balance and harmony.

The intertextuality of reading which each essay brings correlates with the incisive arrangement of the essays and the three part division of the book: Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. One would have loved to see some material coverage of the African Diaspora in Europe, and Latin America to give the book that truly pan-global representation it aspires to. True, throughout the book, very little is mentioned about other genres such as poetry and drama, though these also provide rich sources of understanding African spirituality. Nonetheless, the theoretical postulates provide new ways of responding to African and African Diaspora literatures. This is a great and welcome addition to African and African Diaspora literary studies.