

Lizette Cabrera Salcedo. 2010. *De los bueyes al vapor: caminos de la tecnología en Puerto Rico y el Caribe*. San Juan: La Editorial, Universidad de Puerto Rico. 497 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8477-1131-4.

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With this thoroughly researched, carefully argued history of technology of nineteenth century Puerto Rico, Lizette Cabrera Salcedo has mostly succeeded in challenging the notion that the Caribbean island was technologically and scientifically stagnant until the U.S. occupation in 1898. In the century-and-a-half preceding that fateful date, the author demonstrates, a small but dynamic group of Puerto Rican scientists, surveyors, engineers, and planter-inventors collaborated with a mostly supportive Iberian metropole to modernize the production of sugar—by far the island’s most important export commodity. Requiring irrigation projects, hydrological and geological surveys, soil analysis, and broad engineering acumen, as well as the more familiar struggles of modernizing activities in the sugar mill itself, Puerto Rico’s “creole model of economic development” put the island squarely in the currents of the Industrial Revolution, broadly construed.

The framing of the book is interesting: Cabrera uses the multi-century history of a particular human invention (the three-cylinder mill used to squeeze sweet juice out of raw sugarcane) as a useful trope through which to explain Puerto Rican economic and social history. Changes in the relationship between colony and metropole, slavery and capitalism, island and mainland are related to the contraption’s ongoing redesign both in terms of its shape and size and in terms of the materials used to construct it. Most important to Cabrera are changes over time in terms of the motive force that was used to turn the cylinders: from oxen to steam engines, as the book’s title implies (with a minor but important parenthesis for waterpower). In its use of an object (at once commodity and machine) as metaphor for colonial and postcolonial history, *De los bueyes al vapor* reminds of the memorable narrative strategy used in Fernando Ortiz’s classic *Contrapunteo cubano* (2002).

The question of who invented, or improved, this all-important mechanism, as well as other sugar-related technologies, occupies much of the author’s attention. In the early chapters, which offer a fascinating global tour of sugar manufacture since ancient times, Cabrera corrects

scholars who have missed the major contribution of Luso- and Hispanic-American predecessors to the British, Dutch and French Caribbean sugar islands in the seventeenth-century. She thus compellingly recasts the European “wars beyond the line” as conflicts over sugar: those who lacked it (or the wherewithal to produce it) attacked those who had it. She also offers a tantalizing footnote about the hitherto unexplored role of inter-imperial contraband trade in early modern technology transfer in the Caribbean (p. 79, note 57).

When she moves to the eighteenth century, Cabrera continues to give the reader a rich, pan-Caribbean picture of sugar technology, expanding geographically on the important recent work of Mercedes García (2007), which similarly seeks to challenge the notion that there wasn’t much going on in the Spanish-American sugar industry until after 1790. If the takeoff of French, English and Dutch sugar exports in the early seventeenth-century was indebted to the know-how of Spanish colonials, the roles were reversed in the mid-eighteenth century. The Spanish government’s willingness to allow the immigration of foreign experts, as well as the duty-free importation of foreign hardware, would turn out to have important effects. Cabrera brings to life the business-minded scientists who capitalized on the Bourbonist support of freer trade, as well as the educational, cultural, scientific Atlantic worlds of which they were part. Juan Ramos, a native of Puerto Rico who traveled widely in support of his sugar-related inventions, or the ecologically-prescient geographer Francisco Valls are fascinating characters who have received too little attention in a Caribbean historiography overwhelmingly preoccupied with masters and slaves.

The “who invented it?” conundrum, long the overriding concern of traditional historians of technology such as Lynn White, is turned in this book to nationalist ends, used to exhume an indigenous history of technical ingenuity and insight. Cabrera’s defense of Puerto Rican inventiveness takes on a strident nationalist tone in the footnotes, which will be strong medicine for some readers. Of Richard Dunn’s hypothesis that seventeenth-century English sugar planters learned little from Hispanic settlers, Cabrera says, “Suffice it to say that prejudice and lack of knowledge should not be the criteria for the formation of the best historical notions and conclusions” (p. 77, note 37). For the record, she is hardly more forgiving of Puerto Rican scholars. She dismisses one of Juana Gil-Bermejo’s claims as “a simplistic formulation, reflecting a lack of exhaustive research” (p. 92, note 4). Of more concern to this reviewer is that Cabrera’s search for hometown heroes (an important task, especially in the context of a historiography that has consistently accused the Puerto Rican sugar industry of backwardness) can sometimes oversimplify the complicated transnational histories of many of the innovations

the author wants to call either Puerto Rican or foreign. For example, the “vacuum pan” method credited to Paris-based manufacturer Derosne and Cail was actually the outcome of collaboration among European engineers and planters and plantation managers in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Martinique and elsewhere, who together conducted trial runs of early versions of the machine, suggesting improvements based on the ordeal of an actual sugar harvest. Without these colonial colleagues, Derosne (who spent time working in all these places) would have had much more trouble adapting the machine to the strict timelines and sensitive chemistry of sugar-making in the colonies.

More focused than Manuel Moreno Fragnals’s capacious *histoire totale* of the Cuban sugar economy, *De los bueyes al vapor* is a history of technology that leaves the reader to make connections between the logistics and the hardware of sugar production and what Moreno would call “the socio-economic complex” that arose around it (Moreno 1978). As Cabrera acknowledges in her introduction, macro-economic and micro-economic dimensions of the Puerto Rican sugar industry will have to wait for a future volume. While this reviewer would have appreciated a more cohesive socio-economic context within which to understand Cabrera’s masterful analyses of sugar science, the book already weighs in at 500 pages and has given us much to discuss.

Cabrera fills a major gap in the historiography of slavery in the Americas, a literature which has premised much on a supposed technological backwardness without serious investigation of the technologies, or the knowledges, being developed in slave societies. Especially in her sustained analysis of water-control infrastructure for the purpose both of driving machinery and irrigating cane fields (especially in the dry south half of the island), as well as in her insistence that minor, incremental, experience-based improvements to existing machinery could have very important efficiency improvements, Cabrera opens up new terrain that should occupy more scholarly attention than it has. When we unpack and take a close look at the machines themselves, the author proves, we discover much that surprises us about the societies who made them and used them.

Like other good histories of technology, this book insists that complicated logistical and financial problems attended any change in technology. Her example of the choice planters made between a mill powered by animal, water, or steam, is exemplary. While the water flowing downhill from the island’s central cordillera was in a sense a free source of power, to actually harness it required major earth-moving projects, the building of dams, races, and of course precise calculations of the volume of water needed both per second and over a year in order to run the mill. These projects called forth expertise in the latest hydrological methods for

measuring water flow, as well as some creative financing by the richest planters of the island. Designing, purchasing, manufacturing, and maintaining a large water wheel, complicated in its own right, was only the beginning. The wheel also had to be supplied with water, and harnessed efficiently to the mill, all of which proved challenging.

A steam engine, meanwhile, in theory a wonder machine able to solve all problems, brought complications of its own. First of all, the use of steam engines was predicated upon nearby fuel sources to heat the boilers, as well as a dependable supply of replacement parts, and a critical mass of artisan know-how to keep the engines running. Furthermore, the adoption of the steam engine transformed but did not reduce the need for human muscle. Grinding cane much faster than the ox-driven sugar mills of yore, more slaves were needed to undertake the arduous task of cutting cane in the fields. In turn, more oxen were needed to bring the carts full of sugar cane to the mill. These oxen had to eat, so land that might have been used to grow cane had to be dedicated to growing feed crops. The author does an admirable job of explaining how such ancillary factors, often overlooked, shaped the investment decisions of planters and the government.

At important moments, however, Cabrera retreats from the nitty-gritty history of technology. When it comes time to explain how a particular technology functioned she sometimes quotes long blocks of text from her primary sources, as opposed to explaining these machines in simple terms to the reader (see especially pp. 402-404). There are also particularities of steam engine and waterwheel design that Cabrera ignores, at some peril to her own arguments. Most of the steam engines used on Puerto Rican plantations appear to be (I am judging from the images Cabrera includes) low-pressure, single upright cylinder, stationary engines of the “grasshopper” type. One of the oldest steam engine designs around, many machinists throughout the Atlantic world thought of this bulky contraption as backwards, inefficient, and mostly good for pumping water. By 1861, the date one of Puerto Rico’s most well-known steam engines was erected on the Hacienda la Esperanza, there were dozens of other designs available. Were these alternatives considered by the engineers who ended up buying the grasshopper engines? Did they stick with the older design for practical reasons? Were these cheaper than the latest models? What kind of benefits did this type of engine design bring to the specific task of grinding sugar cane? Closer attention to such questions would have opened up new vistas on nineteenth century technology history in the colonial world.

There was just as much ferment and debate in the world of water-power design. In spite of improvements to stationary steam engines, water provided the majority of motive power to U.S. industry until very

late in the nineteenth-century. There were several major waterwheel designs, as well as the water-turbine, to choose from. While Cabrera discusses the importance of Puerto Rican planters harnessing the power of water for the sugar industry, she does not tell us what kind of wheels were used. An 1876 drawing of the waterwheel to be used on the Hacienda Adela by Cipriano Blondet clearly shows an overshot breast wheel. While large breast wheels were still very much in use, the overshot design had fallen out of favor since the bottom of the wheel rotated against the current of the waterway. If the water was low, this was not a problem. But if rains raised the water level to submerge part of the wheel, the wheel would be fighting the current, and hence sacrifice much of its power in doing so. This is why the vast majority of large, industrial breastwheels were of the undershot variety by 1876. Why was this not an issue on the Hacienda Adela? And more importantly, would entertaining these detailed technological questions about steam engine and waterwheel design create problems for the book's central argument about the modernity of science and technology in nineteenth century Puerto Rico?¹

My only other complaint is that there is next to nothing in this lengthy book on slavery, anti-slavery, the slave trade, or the fascinating question of the role that particular enslaved workers played in the development or the incorporation of new technologies. Which means that labor history (how workers experienced ongoing technological change, what it meant for them, and most simply, how some of these contraptions actually worked in practice), is consigned to the edges of the frame.²

One can only hope that some of the questions raised in this admiring reader's review will be answered in the eagerly awaited second volume.

Notes

- ¹ For clear explications of these at-first-glance puzzling questions of machine design, see Louis Hunter, *A History of Industrial Power in the United States, 1780-1930*, 3 vols., (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1979-1991).
- ² See Philip Scranton, "None-too-Porous Boundaries: Labor History and the History of Technology," *Technology and Culture* 29, vol. 4 (1988), pp. 722-743.

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J.R. McNeill. 2010. *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 0521459109.

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• Fiebre amarilla y malaria! La obesidad, el síndrome metabólico, la diabetes y la arteriosclerosis son enfermedades que se asocian cada vez más al azúcar. Estas asociaciones, si bien importantes, ya han dejado de ser noticia, al ser mencionadas con frecuencia en las revistas de divulgación médica. Ahora bien, relacionar el azúcar a la malaria y la fiebre amarilla y a sus vectores, los mosquitos, iese es una noticia! Con mayor precisión, asociarlos a la caña de azúcar y a las plantaciones azucareras en la cuenca e islas del Caribe es una novedad. Más aun, se postula que el efecto de estos mosquitos y las enfermedades transmitidas por ellos fue decisivo en las pugnas imperiales y revolucionarias de la época colonial caribeña entre el 1620 y el 1914 hasta ganarles el título a estas potencias de ser “imperios de mosquitos”. Esta es la imaginativa tesis de John Robert McNeill, autor de esta obra.

McNeill es un conocido historiador ambiental, investigador y catedrático de la Universidad de Georgetown, en el Departamento de Historia y la Walsh School of Foreign Service. Su obra trata sobre historia ambiental del Caribe, la historia de la enfermedad, la historia de las revoluciones americanas y de la lucha de los imperios europeos por el control de las riquezas de América en el Gran Caribe, desde Chesapeake hasta el Noreste de Brasil, entre 1620 al 1914.

McNeill, quien al igual que su padre —el igualmente distinguido historiador William McNeill—, ha sido premiado con el premio Toynbee por sus “contribuciones académicas y públicas a la humanidad”, ha llevado a cabo esta considerable labor con una pericia y profundidad

tal que ya *Mosquito Empires* es una obra reconocida y premiada con el premio Albert J. Beveridge de la Asociación Americana de la Historia. La bibliografía de esta obra es extensa. El texto está acompañado por doce mapas que ilustran la localización de las batallas entre las tropas y con los mosquitos.

La investigación es meticulosa. De hecho, en los momentos en los cuales el que reseña no podía aguantar el impulso incontrolable de hacer diagnósticos y llegaba a uno diferente al propuesto por el autor, se encontraba con que McNeill se le había adelantado proponiendo otras explicaciones y resumiendo las interpretaciones de otros autores. En la descripción de los ciclos de vida de los mosquitos y las particularidades de las enfermedades que ocasionan, McNeill demuestra su erudición y conocimiento de la disciplina de la ecología y sus implicaciones médicas que acompañan su imaginación y conocimiento de la historia.

El autor comienza su obra con una breve explicación de su tesis. Ésta es que el creciente número de plantaciones de caña de azúcar en el Caribe y la importación de esclavos asociada a éstas produjeron cambios ecológicos que favorecieron el crecimiento de la población de mosquitos vectores del virus de la fiebre amarilla y de los parásitos causantes de la malaria. Este cambio ecológico favoreció la multiplicación de los mosquitos, los cuales tuvieron un efecto formidable en el desenlace de las guerras entre los imperios europeos atlánticos por el control del territorio y las riquezas en el Gran Caribe y, por lo tanto, en la política y en el balance de poder entre los poderes atlánticos. De aquí el epíteto de mosquitos imperiales.

El fenómeno ecológico que sirvió de defensa al imperio español entre el 1640 y el 1770, favoreció también a los revolucionarios norteamericanos, a Toussaint Louverture y otros en Haití, a Bolívar y sus colaboradores en Venezuela y Colombia y a los revolucionarios cubanos en su gesta patriótica, ya que tenían como aliados a estos mosquitos que McNeill en estos casos llama “mosquitos revolucionarios”. Finalmente, el descubrimiento de que los mosquitos eran vectores de la fiebre amarilla y la malaria, el descifrar los detalles de los ciclos de vida de los vectores y parásitos y de la capacidad de los seres humanos de servir de portadores de la enfermedad junto a la comprensión del fenómeno de inmunidad diferencial, permitió la reducción en número e importancia de estos mosquitos, la erradicación de estas enfermedades en ciudades populosas de América y en la zona del Canal de Panamá, terminando así ese histórico rol de los mosquitos caribeños.

El autor aclara que su tesis no es novel en algunos aspectos y presenta versos de Lord Byron que así lo atestiguan.¹ Ya Tucídides hace 2500 años y muchos otros destacaron la importancia de las epidemias en la historia humana.² El énfasis del argumento de McNeill recae en la

importancia de la inmunidad diferencial y en los cambios ecológicos que dieron lugar a la gran influencia de estos mosquitos y estas enfermedades en la geografía política caribeña.

En el desarrollo de su tesis, McNeill pretende demostrar la influencia que los cambios ambientales pueden tener sobre los asuntos políticos (vea McNeill 1976; Watts 1997; Sontag 2001; Delaporte 1991). Nos demuestra las diferencias en los resultados de las intervenciones bélicas imperiales antes y después del 1690 y el efecto de las enfermedades en la capacidad de la corona española de mantener la mayor parte de su imperio. La fiebre amarilla y la malaria defendían el territorio y eran aliadas de sus residentes y gobernantes si estos habían estado en el área por tiempo suficiente para crear inmunidad a la fiebre amarilla o resistencia al paludismo.

Las enfermedades se prestan a ser usadas como figuras y metáforas y están acompañadas de ellas. Susan Sontag identificó metáforas asociadas al cáncer, el SIDA, la tuberculosis y la locura y su obra ha estimulado a muchos a continuar identificando enfermedades asociadas a otras metáforas. Estas incluyen a la fiebre amarilla que también ha sido llamada “la enfermedad patriótica”, “la enfermedad de los marineros” y el “vómito negro”, por su acometida a los invasores extranjeros desprovistos de inmunidad, el ataque a los marineros en los viajes transatlánticos y el color del vómito de sangre digerida casi sinónimo entonces de la infección con el virus (Sontag 2001).

En *Mosquito Empires* se percibe a los mosquitos, vectores de la fiebre amarilla y la malaria, como actores principales y actores históricos con una labor cuasi patriótica relacionada a la inmunidad diferencial de la fiebre amarilla y a la resistencia a la malaria de los que han vivido por algún tiempo en zonas palúdicas como los criollos, los esclavos africanos y las tropas ya aclimatadas. En este libro los mosquitos son defensores y aliados de los pobladores por largo tiempo y enemigos terribles de los invasores y los pobladores recientes. Los mosquitos podían influir sobre quién sobrevivía y quién podía asentarse en el territorio. Después de la mitad del siglo XVII, debido a la atrición por enfermedad, era casi imposible que tropas invasoras ganaran batallas a los españoles y permanecieran en el área después de haber estado allí más de cuatro semanas. Los escoceses tuvieron que abandonar Darién y la visión de crear allí a Caledonia con una pérdida de 2,000 de los 2,500 colonizadores de 1698 a 1699. Los franceses tuvieron que abandonar Cartagena después de haberla conquistado y saqueado en el 1741. En Kouru, en la Guayana francesa, perdieron 11,000 de los 12,000 colonizadores en 1763-1767. Después de 1770, los resultados producidos por estos cambios ecológicos sirvieron a las tropas revolucionarias de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, Haití, Venezuela, Colombia y Cuba en sus encuentros

con tropas recién llegadas de Europa para prevalecer en sus guerras de independencia. En Haití, por ejemplo, murieron más de 40,000 soldados franceses de las tropas del general Leclerc en la guerra de independencia. McNeill sostiene que el imperio español sobrevivió el embate de sus enemigos gracias a la fiebre amarilla y a la malaria, principalmente la primera. Los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica tuvieron una suerte similar a la española gracias a la malaria y sus ataques a los británicos.

El resto del libro está dividido en tres partes; la primera, de dos capítulos, ambienta al lector sobre los temas e intereses de los imperios del océano Atlántico, la ecología caribeña, las fiebres y médicos letales de la época. McNeill percibe el tratamiento médico de la época con igual riesgo que las fiebres y mucho más peligroso que cualquier medida terapéutica doméstica.

La segunda parte comienza con un capítulo sobre los “Mosquitos Imperiales” seguida por otro titulado “Fiebre Amarilla Rampante y Ambición Británica Repelida”, que relatan cómo la fiebre amarilla y posiblemente la malaria y/o el dengue, ayudaron a impedir que las tropas británicas se quedaran con La Habana, Santiago de Cuba, Cartagena y la Centroamérica. McNeill subraya que las pérdidas de tropas durante la guerra de la revolución norteamericana en las campañas de Nueva York, Nueva Jersey y Pensilvania, fueron menores a las ocurridas en el sitio de la actual Nicaragua en la América Central.

La próxima parte titulada “Mosquitos Revolucionarios” comienza con un capítulo con imágenes del boxeo llamado Lord Cornwallis (*Cornwallis*) versus *anófeles quadrimaculatus* (un mosquito vector de la malaria), 1780-1781, que trata de la revolución de los esclavos cimarrones de Surinam y de la revolución en el sur de los Estados Unidos. Éstas terminaron con grandes pérdidas de hombres y la última con la derrota de las tropas inglesas en Yorktown en el 1781 por los enjambres de *anófeles quadrimaculatus* y las tropas del ejército continental americano.

El próximo capítulo trata de “Fiebres Revolucionarias, 1790-1809: Haití, Nueva Granada y Cuba” que describe la importancia de los cambios ecológicos y de estos mosquitos revolucionarios en las campañas de Saint-Domingue, Colombia y Cuba y finalmente termina con el capítulo llamado “Conclusión: Vector y Virus Derrotados 1880-1914”, donde resume la historia, muchas veces contada, de la importancia de las enfermedades tropicales en el fracaso del proyecto francés del Canal de Panamá, los importantes descubrimientos de Carlos Finlay en Cuba, de Walter Reed sobre los mosquitos vectores, y de la extraordinaria labor higienista de Gorgas en Panamá, para terminar con la influencia de los mosquitos y las enfermedades en la geopolítica del Gran Caribe.

En resumen, los apasionados de las historias ecológicas y políticas del Caribe encontrarán este libro estimulante, ameno, bien documentado

y muy educativo, al igual que aquellos interesados en la Historia de la medicina y la de la salud pública.

Notas

- ¹ “The Destruction of Sennacharib”, versos 1-3 de Lord Byron.
- ² Tucídides comentó sobre la importancia de una epidemia en Atenas sobre la guerra del Peloponeso. La peste se ha visto como uno de los eventos precursores del capitalismo y afectó seriamente la relación entre siervos y señores. La viruela fue el mejor aliado de Hernán Cortés en Tenochtitlán y la fiebre amarilla ayudó a derrotar las fuerzas francesas en Haití.

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Lanny Thompson. 2010. *Imperial Archipelago: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. 282 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8248-3488-3.

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I *Imperial Archipelago* studies what Thompson denominates as the “U.S. Imperial archipelago” or “the island territories under U.S. military and political dominion after 1898, namely Cuba, Guam, Hawai’i,

the Philippines and Puerto Rico” (p. 1). Thompson takes a deceptively simple question as the point of departure of his study: why were some territories annexed (Hawai’i) while others became independent (Cuba and the Philippines) or territories of the U.S. (Puerto Rico, Guam)? How can we explain the different political status obtained by each one of these islands in the context of the U.S. imperial archipelago? The main contention of this book is that through discourse and visual analysis of the available documentation it is possible to discern the particular political strategy followed by the United States to conceive their relationship with these countries.

This book continues Thompson’s interest in visual studies in the context of colonial historical studies that is illustrated so well in his previous book *Nuestra Isla y su gente: La construcción del “otro” puertorriqueño en Our Islands and Their People* (1995). *Imperial Archipelago* is a more developed project that is composed of one introduction, six chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography. The Introduction locates the project of the book in the context of the historical development of nations in Caribbean, Atlantic, South Asian, American and Latin American frameworks, as well as in historical and postcolonial studies. Thompson’s work converses with postcolonial studies, particularly with Edward Said’s foundational definition of “colonial discourse” as “those representations, comprised of symbols, meanings and propositions, that create subject peoples and justify imperial rule over them” (p. 3). Yet in this book the author proposes a necessary contextualization and historical grounding for colonial discourse analysis, as well as studies of the representation of imperial domination.

The first chapter argues that the different historical contexts, political debates, cultures and inhabitants found in each one of these dependencies elicited a different response from the U.S. Thompson then proposes two modalities of rule used by the U.S. to confront the situation of each one of these countries: “dichotomous representation of difference” vs. “hierarchical differentiation.” The first one constructed the natives of these islands as alien people, generally inferior to the imperial rulers, and thus appropriate for imperial domination. The second strategy elaborates distinctions among subject peoples, establishing which countries were superior to others and in terms of what. This chapter ends by identifying the corpus used to conduct the comparative study of the different archipelagic overseas possessions, which includes photographs from travelogue books, graphic and verbal representations of the peoples and landscapes found in the U.S. imperial archipelago, and finally legal debates about the political future of these islands in the context of the U.S. imperial expansion. Most of the primary materials consulted in this study were produced between 1899 and 1906, and the book ends with an

excellent bibliography of primary and secondary materials.

Chapter 2 analyzes the representation of women from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hawai'i and the Philippines, using photographs as the main source of analysis. Thompson uses the masculinization of the U.S. and the feminization of the insular colonies as a point of departure for the visual analysis proposed in the rest of the chapter. He then compares the representation of Puerto Rican, Cuban, Hawaiian and Philippine women and men and links it to the political outcome of each one of these countries in their relationship with the U.S. For example, Puerto Rican women are depicted as mostly of mixed race and attractive, and willing to work, while Cuban women are represented as virtuous, beautiful and heroic. The Hawaiian women are depicted as "beautiful, passionate, uninhibited, happy, hospitable and kind" (p. 66) yet they often can have defiant poses and attitudes. Finally, Philippine women are represented differently depending on their social background; educated women are wonderfully beautiful while poor women are ugly and resentful. Interestingly enough, Philippine women are often described as aloof and unreadable, most probably relying on what Homi Bhabha has described as the stereotypical construction of the colonial other, and that Edward Said has linked to "Orientalists" stereotypes. Thompson uses the representation of each gender as a synecdoche of the imperial conceptualization of each one of these insular possessions, so Cuban and Philippine women are deemed capable of self-government and independence, Hawaiian women are conceived as assimilable to the United States, and Puerto Rican women and men seem to be in need of imperial supervision.

The third chapter addresses the process of racialization of colonial difference by analyzing descriptions of Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Hawaiians and Filipinos in terms of race. In each one of the cases, race is used to express the particular anxieties and plans that the U.S. had with each insular possession. Cuba, for example had a white upper class that deemed capable of governing the country and its low class darker sectors. Puerto Rico, on the other hand, had an educated white class closely controlled by the Spanish, and as a result the local population was poor, uneducated and unfamiliar with the principles of self-government. In the case of Hawai'i, Thompson mentions the photographic campaigns produced by Hawaiian monarchs to justify their capability to become independent. Finally, the Philippines are represented not as a homogeneous nation, but as an incomprehensible, volatile and unpredictable set of tribes, races and religious communities.

Chapter 4 then analyzes the different projects of Americanization that were designed to deal with each one of these insular possessions. Given that the U.S. had to civilize and educate the "infantilized" populations of each one of these countries without settling in any of these

insular territories, the process of Americanization was achieved using three basic strategies: capital investment in Cuba, public education and assimilation in Puerto Rico, and political tutelage in the Philippines. Thompson develops and supports each one of these arguments by close-reading several images of Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Filipinos included in *Our Islands and Their People* (1899), *Our New Possessions* (1898) and *National Geographic* (1900).

The fifth chapter examines how legal scholars, colonial administrators, the U.S. Congress and the Supreme Court conceived the context of the insular possessions, and how they answered to the question about how to rule the U.S. Imperial Archipelago. By close-reading the argumentations in favor or against the annexation of Hawai'i, or the discussion about the legal and political context of the insular cases, Thompson deconstructs the complex legal discourse devised by the United States to justify its control and rule over its insular possessions. The complexity of the legal definition of the "unincorporated territories," as well as the systematic exclusion of the Philippines from the U.S. government, legal system and even its citizenship, are all crucial clues to understand the differences in the political outcome of each country. This is the strongest chapter of this book, because it includes direct quotes from the legal documents and the actual debates in Congress about the anomalous situation of these insular possessions in the context of the imperial expansion of the United States.

Chapter 6 focuses particularly on the case of Guam, and it studies how this region, defined primarily as a naval station, is eventually conceived as a community using the metaphor of the ship, which is less than an established country yet it possesses some kind of organization. This case is included in the book to document the anomalous condition of an "unorganized territory" that serves as a counterpoint to the case of Cuba, Hawai'i, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The book closes with a brief conclusion that compares the 5 cases studied and that offers a narrative for each one of the political statuses attained by each country.

Very recently, some historians have become interested in proposing a series of questions that articulate what they denominate as the "imperial archipelago" (Morillo Alicea 2005, and Thompson himself) or the "inter-Atlantic paradigm of colonization" (Stevens Arroyo 1992). The main contribution of this book is that it engages in what I have denominated as a *Archipelago studies*, since their scholarship engages in comparative studies of the political and historical trajectory of archipelagoes within the imperial and global world-systems. Thompson focuses on the study of the U.S. insular possessions, but his project could easily be expanded to include other imperial systems. The second contribution of the book is that it is clearly an interdisciplinary project, in which

postcolonial studies converse with cultural and historical studies. Of particular interest is Thompson's focus on visual analysis, a key contribution of his previous work to the field of Colonial Caribbean studies. Finally, the book includes several reproductions of images from a diverse range of sources, making this an engaging and compelling reading of the colonial archipelagic archive.

Imperial Archipelago is an important contribution to the study of the late nineteenth century colonial period in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawai'i, Guam and the Philippines. It is also a challenging disciplinary proposal that explores the productive intersections of Caribbean and American studies using discursive analysis from cultural studies with solid archival work. Most importantly, Thompson teaches us how to "see" colonialism in the insular possessions, and how to actively engage with historical documents and images to discuss the complex process of colonization and imperial expansion in the Atlantic and Pacific archipelagoes as a particular case that merits a closer analysis within Latin American, American and Caribbean postcolonial studies.

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Gillian McGillivray. 2009. *Blazing Cane: Sugar Communities, Class, and State Formation in Cuba, 1868-1959*. Durham: Duke University Press. 416 pp. ISBN: 9780822345244.

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As Gillian McGillivray points out in her study of late colonial and Republican-era Cuba, a comrade-in-arms of Fidel Castro once wrote, “Revolution in Cuba means burning sugarcane—it did in 1868, 1895, and 1930-33, and it did for us” (p. 264). Indeed, from colonial times through the 1959 Revolution, setting cane alight was often a profoundly revolutionary act designed to help overthrow a political and social order dependent on a single product. Similarly, in a number of short-lived rebellions following Cuban independence, insurgents used the mere threat of cane burning to demand a share of the island’s sugar wealth. But cane fire could also be a practical measure used in more subtle negotiations; because burnt cane loses its sugar content if not ground immediately, workers occasionally torched sugar fields in order to ensure employment and cane farmers did so to guarantee that local mills purchase their product. This full range of sugar’s economic, political, and social significance for the Cuban nation is the foundation of McGillivray’s expertly researched *Blazing Cane*.

Although scholars often take for granted Cuba’s dependency on sugar, none has so aptly centered sugar production, mill towns, and the social classes associated with cane cultivation in the history of Cuban state formation from colonial times through the 1959 Revolution. Anchored in two sugarmill communities, the Tuinucú mill in the central province of Santa Clara owned and run by the Rionda family and the massive Chaparra and Delicias mills in northern Oriente owned by the Cuban American Sugar Company (Cubanaco), *Blazing Cane* shifts seamlessly between local, regional, and national scopes. In an analysis rooted in this wide breadth of perspective and exhaustive archival investigation, McGillivray demonstrates that cane farmers (*colonos*) and sugar workers helped push the Cuban state through a series of increasingly inclusive social compacts, from colonialism (lasting until 1895) to rule based on patronage (1899-1933) and finally to populism (1933-1959).

In her first two chapters, McGillivray details the familiar “colonial compact,” in which western planters accepted Spanish rule in exchange for Spain’s promise to protect slave-based sugar production, and that

compact's revolutionary destruction. Although renegotiated during Cuba's first two independence wars, it was when the agreement's terms were annihilated—slavery was over and Spain could no longer protect sugar—that tides turned in nationalists' favor. An excellent third chapter details how, despite Cuba's "extreme level of revolutionary mobilization" during thirty years of independence struggle, U.S. military authorities and investors, upon intervention, managed to squeeze Cubans out of their national resources, limit Cuban sovereignty, reverse the revolution's goals, and push Cuban elites into the role of "middleman" to foreign capital (p. 64).

In her innovative approach to Cuban history, McGillivray extends this social-contract analysis through Cuba's Republican years. Her fourth and fifth chapters cover the "patrons' compact," arguing that early twentieth-century American capitalists and veteran Cuban generals, or *caudillos*, maintained social order and profited tremendously by bringing "progress" and "modernity" to mill communities. Although not entirely without resistance, workers in company towns accepted a high degree of social control in exchange for modern benefits like sanitation services, schools, and hospitals. Matrons, in particular, distributed favors and the Rionda women, who took charge of charity work at Tuinucú, were formally recognized for part in bringing about peaceful "social relations" (p. 133).

McGillivray does not claim that shifts between compacts were tidy; rather, she deftly points readers to moments of rupture, highlighting Cuba's zigzags between exclusive dictatorship and revolution. In her coverage of General Gerardo Machado's 1925 successful presidential bid, for instance, McGillivray demonstrates that the last *caudillo* president's election campaign created a brief "populist moment" by leveraging rising nationalist sentiment and promising "roads, water, and schools" (p. 152). At Chaparra and Delicias, empowered workers and colonos seized the opportunity and staged successful strikes, detailed in Chapter 6. Machado's need to woo nonelite voters faded, however, and his presidency became a dictatorship. By the early 1930s, political oppression and depression-era cuts in jobs, pay, and services finally pushed the patrons' compact to its limits, culminating in the Revolution of 1933, the subject of Chapter 7. Fed up with asking for individual favors, workers demanded protective state legislation and Ramón Grau San Martín's short-lived government obliged, issuing labor reforms and even briefly nationalizing Cubanaco's holdings. McGillivray maintains that this unprecedented level of state intervention in the relationship between capital and labor marked the dawn Cuba's populist period.

In her final chapter, the least reliant on original research, McGillivray argues that 1933 ushered in a period of alternating "authoritarian

populism” and “democratic populism” (p. 228). Beginning in 1934, the regime of General Fulgencio Batista combined violence and corporatism to forcibly incorporate more Cubans into the state. For their part, workers opted to join official unions and engage the state from within. Despite what McGillivray calls her “more positive assessment of populism” (p. 7), she rightly points out that, with the state claiming—but failing—to become social welfare providers, companies like Cubanaco were free to abandon philanthropy projects, leaving the countryside largely without essential services and exacerbating the rural-urban disparities that would eventually help propel Castro into power. According to McGillivray, Cold-War state repression emptied “Cuba’s populist compact of much of its substance” (p. 228) and, when populism was a mere shell of its former self, state unions bastions of corruption, and Batista’s repression at its worst, Castro and his July 26 movement took power.

Blazing Cane is a welcome contribution to several fields of scholarly inquiry. Historians of Cuba and Latin America alike will appreciate McGillivray’s international contextualization, reminding readers that caudillismo and populism were experienced across the Americas. While some scholars may wish for greater detail on Batista’s regime, a period which largely remains inaccessible to scholars, McGillivray brings the Cuban story into dialogue with a rich historiography of mid twentieth-century Latin American dictatorship and populism, starring the likes of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, and Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua. McGillivray’s case for Cuban conformity to wider patterns is strongest when she points to specific moments of transnational exchange, such as Batista’s visit to Mexico under Cárdenas where the Cuban dictator witnessed a model of democratic populism in action.

Blazing Cane gives colonos a much-deserved place in Cuban history. Arguing against the common assumption that the 1959 Revolution succeeded in part because Cuba lacked a middle class, McGillivray makes a compelling argument for the important role played by colonos as a strong, self-identified middling social sector. Additionally, she complicates the argument, standard since Ramiro Guerra y Sánchez’s 1927 *Sugar and Society in the Caribbean*, that independent cane farmers in western Cuba epitomized the thriving heart of Cuban nationalism while colonos in the east, dependent on monopolistic American sugar companies, were seen as victims of eastern Cuba’s rapid proletarianization and American imperialist expansion. In contrast, McGillivray demonstrates that eastern colonos, although certainly bound to the company, were often at the vanguard of nationalist political movements.

In addition to challenging the east-west dichotomy ubiquitous in the historiography of Cuban sugar production, McGillivray throws

into disarray scholarly tendencies to label sugarmills either Cuban or American owned. The Tuinucú mill, for example, was incorporated in the United States, owned by Spaniards, and run by a New York-educated Spanish subject whose family was based in Matanzas, Cuba. Even the massive Chaparra mill, alternatively hailed and decried as a quintessential example of American-dominated sugar production, was actually experienced on the ground as quite Cuban-American, with the caudillo general and future Cuban President Mario García Menocal overseeing its early development, contracting fellow veterans to farm the land, and hiring Cubans in a range of positions.

With *Blazing Cane*, McGillivray joins a cohort of scholars whose work uncovers the ways that popular groups in Cuba utilized inclusive nationalist rhetoric emanating from the top in order to secure very concrete political and economic gains on the ground. Although, unlike others working in this vein, such as Ada Ferrer and Alejandro de la Fuente, race is not a central component of her story. McGillivray successfully demonstrates that mobilizations of colonos and sugar worker, increasingly unified as social classes, made significant demands on the Cuban state and helped push it towards broad-based politics over the course of the twentieth century. This well written monograph will serve as an excellent teaching tool, allowing students to envision the stories of women and men living in sugar communities, their profound impact on Cuba's national history, and the international context in which they acted.

Ismael García-Colón. 2009. *Land Reform in Puerto Rico: Modernizing the Colonial State, 1941-1969*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida. 163 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8130-3363-1.

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El proceso de modernización de Puerto Rico que inició en la década del cuarenta ha sido tema de investigación de historiadores y científicos sociales. Los trabajos realizados por investigadores locales y extranjeros han destacados los diferentes aspectos del proceso:

la historia de la reforma agraria, los asuntos políticos y el surgimiento del populismo en Puerto Rico. Ahora bien, el proceso correspondiente con la base, es decir, los agregados/parceleros no había sido tomado en consideración. Es esto lo innovador de *The Land Reform in Puerto Rico: Modernizing the Colonial State, 1941-1969*.

Para lograr dar voz a los individuos que vivieron los cambios ocurridos en la isla a partir de la reforma de tierras, Ismael García Colón recurre a centrar su investigación en los residentes de las Parcelas Gándaras. El libro, como idea central, examina cómo el gobierno colonial de Puerto Rico transformó la vida de las familias de agregados entre 1940 y 1960, a partir del establecimiento de la ley de tierras en el 1941. El propósito de la ley era la repartición de terrenos a familias sin tierras, para que pudieran construir su hogar. Utilizando el concepto de hegemonía, el libro explica la posición del subalterno y su interacción con el proceso de repartición de tierras, de planificación de una sociedad urbana/industrial y la movilización de los agregados a estas comunidades conocidas como parcelas. Para lograr este objetivo, García Colón estudia el origen, establecimiento y desarrollo de las Parcelas Gándaras en Cidra.

Los resultados de la investigación complementan trabajos anteriores, ya que el libro centra su atención en mostrar los roles de los parceleros en la construcción de sus comunidades. Por lo tanto, logra demostrar que la clase subalterna fue un agente activo en los procesos modernizantes en Puerto Rico, aunque su transición fue una accidentada por lo rápido del cambio. Sin embargo, esto no significa que se deje a un lado cómo otros grupos formaron parte de la implantación de la reforma de tierras. Lo interesante del libro está en que logra una historia multi-sectorial, en donde muestra las interacciones, acuerdos y conflictos entre estos grupos.

El título *The Land Reform in Puerto Rico: Modernizing the Colonial State, 1941-1969*, corresponde al contenido de la investigación, en un sentido general, ya que el trabajo, como objetivo principal, busca analizar la reforma de tierra. Pero en lo que respecta a los objetivos específicos (es decir, el estudio de los parceleros), en el título no se hace mención. Se perdió así la oportunidad de reconocer de forma más explícita a la clase subalterna, lo cual era uno de los propósitos del libro. Además, el periodo histórico que se destaca en el título me parece un poco extenso, ya que el grueso de los datos recopilados es del 1940-1952. Claramente, del 1953 a inicios de la década de los sesenta, el libro muestra muy buena información, pero más allá de esta fecha solo se hace un breve acercamiento al tema.

Las fuentes utilizadas fueron las más apropiadas para lograr esta investigación. El éxito del libro es precisamente el balance logrado entre las fuentes primarias orales y documentales. Los extractos de las

entrevistas realizadas a los parceleros sirven para corroborar o desmentir las fuentes documentales. Además, facilitan el conocer sus condiciones reales y el impacto ocasionado desde 1941 en su forma de vida. En cambio, las fuentes documentales utilizadas son útiles para conocer la perspectiva gubernamental y de qué manera fue utilizada la reforma de tierras por el (PPD) con el fin de lograr establecerse como el partido principal desde la década del cuarenta hasta los años sesenta.

El libro se estructura en ocho (8) capítulos, incluyendo introducción y conclusión. Las mismas se subdividen en temas facilitando sus lecturas. Los capítulos del libro están ordenados en forma cronológica. Esta estructura del libro ayuda a seguir de forma clara y ordenada las distintas situaciones que surgían en las comunidades, a partir de las políticas implantadas por el gobierno. Por lo tanto, en el proceso de lectura se interactúa con la historia de las Parcelas Gándaras, el Puerto Rico rural y desde el punto de vista de los grupos hegemónicos y subalternos.

La narración utilizada por el autor es una didáctica, ya que escribe de forma clara y precisa. En adición, su excelente dominio del tema permite que sus explicaciones y descripciones faciliten la comprensión del texto y su propósito. Ismael García Colón narra bajo el paradigma interpretativista y desde una perspectiva teórica del materialismo histórico, siguiendo una línea gramsciana.

Como principal aportación al conocimiento social, el libro logra reconocer la importancia de la cultura subalterna, ayudando a entender mejor la historia social puertorriqueña del periodo cubierto. Siguiendo esta línea, el autor logra una aportación al área metodológica y técnica. García Colón realiza una investigación interdisciplinaria, ya que combina la historia social con la antropología. Como resultado de la fusión de estas disciplinas, según el autor, surge el nacimiento de la antropología histórica, definida como el estudio de la formación del sujeto social (p. 9). En lo que se refiere a los métodos y técnicas de investigación, el autor combina historia oral, etnografía, entrevistas, observación participante y revisión de archivos. El trabajo de campo realizado rompe con los entendidos de la antropología clásica, ya que García Colón es miembro de esta comunidad (*insider*). Esto hace de esta investigación parte de la antropología contemporánea, en donde el “nativo” puede investigar sus comunidades sin perjudicar sus resultados.

El autor enfatiza la condición material de los agregados/parceleros, además la transición de estos de una sociedad rural a una sociedad urbana. El interés en conocer la condición del subalterno y la formación del estado utilizando el concepto hegemonía, es debido a que el autor pertenece al grupo de antropólogos e historiadores que investigan influenciados por los escritos gramscianos. García Colón muestra dominio de los conceptos, los cuales explica muy bien en la introducción y

logra su aplicación en los capítulos investigativos.

García Colón sugiere más investigaciones sobre el rol del subalterno en el proceso de industrialización y los cambios modernizantes ocurridos entre las décadas del 1940-1960 en Puerto Rico. Además, faltan investigaciones sobre las nuevas generaciones de residentes de las parcelas y así hacer una comparación sobre su rol en la actualidad y las condiciones materiales de vida.

El libro *The Land Reform in Puerto Rico: Modernizing the Colonial State, 1941-1969*, debe ser de interés para estudiantes y académicos que desean conocer o investigar el periodo histórico de 1940 al 1960 en Puerto Rico. Además permite conocer un marco metodológico/técnico en la investigación histórico/social muy útil e innovador con la posibilidad de aplicarse a nuevos trabajos investigativos. En especial, en el estudio del el rol del subalterno en el proceso de cambio de Puerto Rico a una sociedad urbana y moderna.

William F. Keegan. 2007. *Taíno Indian Myth and Practice: The Arrival of the Stranger King*. Florida Museum of Natural History Ripley P. Bullen Series. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 230 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8130-3038-8.

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Durante las pasadas dos décadas, uno de los aspectos que ha recibido mayor atención en la arqueología del Caribe lo ha sido el estudio sistemático de las dinámicas de interacción establecidas entre los habitantes aborígenes de las islas y los colonizadores europeos que arribaron a la región a finales del siglo XV. Los estudios realizados han demostrado que aunque las relaciones indo-europeas se entablaron de muy diversas maneras, muchas de éstas se articularon sobre la base de formas de interacción aborígenes. Ejemplos de esto pueden ser el *guaytiao* (intercambio de referentes de linaje y/o parentesco) que se dio entre Agüeybaná y Juan Ponce de León y el importe del tan preciado material indígena conocido como *tumbaga* o *guanín* (i.e., oro de baja ley) del área istmo-colombiana por los europeos para intercambiarlo por oro puro con las sociedades aborígenes de las Antillas Mayores, haciendo

así uso de cadenas de intercambio y sistemas de valores adscritos a este tipo de material desde tiempos remotos.

La vasta mayoría de los estudios en torno a estas interacciones que se han enfocado en actores particulares ha sido sustentada sobre el registro escrito derivado de fuentes etnohistóricas. En contraste, los análisis de las dinámicas envueltas en estos encuentros han sido realizados sobre la base del estudio de la cultura material, y se han limitado a reconstrucciones de gentes sin rostro ya que la arqueología no ha logrado identificar personajes particulares que puedan ser correlacionados con los actores documentados en las crónicas europeas. Por lo tanto, las investigaciones arqueológicas en torno a esta situación de contacto, colonización y resistencia se han enfocado tanto en desentramar las diversas formas que utilizaron los europeos para manipular y/o desarticular las estructuras sociales indígenas como las que a su vez emplearon los habitantes pretéritos de las islas para resistir y negociar los términos en los que se daban las relaciones con los europeos.

Con el ánimo de tender un puente entre las perspectivas etnohistóricas y arqueológicas, el libro de William F. Keegan explora el caso de Caonabó, uno de los caciques de mayor prominencia en La Española. La tesis principal de la obra es que Caonabó fue un cacique lucayo cuyos orígenes se pueden trazar al yacimiento conocido como MC-6 en las Bahamas y que este carácter foráneo fue lo que facilitó su ascenso al poder a nivel pan-regional en La Española mediante la manipulación de los elementos míticos asociados con su linaje. De esta forma, el autor utiliza las evidencias arqueológicas y etnohistóricas para situar la cuna de este cacique en un yacimiento específico, algo que previamente se había intentado con muy poco éxito en la arqueología antillana, así como para evaluar las dinámicas políticas que Caonabó entabló con los inmigrantes europeos durante su resistencia, captura y muerte.

En el capítulo introductorio el autor establece la perspectiva teórica sobre la que se estructuran los argumentos presentados. El enfoque teórico desarrollado por el investigador se enmarca claramente dentro del enfoque post-procesualista de la arqueología, en la cual se destaca el tono reflexivo en la relación entre el autor y su obra y se subraya el carácter poroso de las fronteras entre el sujeto y el objeto. De hecho, el autor no solo presenta el texto en primera persona y con una narrativa dialógica, sino que un elemento puntal en este trabajo es la percepción de Shaun Sullivan, mentor de Keegan, y del mismo autor como otros “reyes foráneos” en sus entornos de acción arqueológica en las Bahamas.

Como punta de lanza de la perspectiva teórica de la obra, se discute la visión en torno la definición del concepto de “cultura”, la cual el autor estructura sobre la base de las ideas esbozadas en el libro *The Jungles of Randomness* de Ivar Peterson en torno a la teoría del caos, al definirla

como un “sistema complejo y auto-definible que opera en n-dimensiones hiperespaciales las cuales se articulan mutuamente”, elaborando así sus ideas introducidas en el artículo “Islands of Chaos” (Keegan 2004). Este acercamiento a la cultura como un ente dinámico y complejo, en constante estado de construcción, da al traste marcadamente con las perspectivas normativas y esencialistas que han dominado la arqueología de la región.

Como plataforma para abordar el caso particular de Caonabó y la forma en la que pudo haber logrado acaparar su posición social, el autor recurre al mito del rey foráneo (“Stranger King”) ya utilizado por Marshall Sahlins, entre otros, para tratar situaciones similares en los cacicazgos de Polinesia. Tras realizar una discusión en torno a los nuevos acercamientos a la arqueología antillana los cuales enfatizan el carácter polivalente de las sociedades indígenas de la región al momento del contacto indoeuropeo y la importancia de las sociedades pre-arahuacas en el desarrollo de las manifestaciones culturales tardías en las islas, el autor se embarca en una discusión sobre relaciones de parentesco en el Caribe insular. Esta discusión, en la que resalta sus perspectivas ya conocidas en torno al carácter avunculocal de las sociedades de las Antillas Mayores y las Bahamas, sirve como base para establecer la importancia de la recontextualización geográfica de los agentes como elemento cardinal para reclamar la presencia de linajes míticos que se trazan a lugares más allá de horizonte y, de tal forma, legitimar los discursos empleados para la ostentación y consolidación del poder por aquéllos que reclaman dicha descendencia en las sociedades precoloniales del periodo de contacto.

Empero, la evidencia presentada por el autor para argumentar que el yacimiento MC-6 fue el contexto desde donde llegó Caonabó a La Española es uno de los puntos más debatibles porque los indicadores arqueológicos utilizados no contienen la suficiente resolución como para poder atar a este cacique con tal yacimiento arqueológico. Estudios de traceología como, por ejemplo, de isótopos estables (e.g, estroncio) o ADN antiguo podrían arrojar luz en torno a este particular pero, en ausencia de los restos óseos del mismo Caonabó, no se puede establecer con certeza la correlación entre MC-6 y este personaje histórico. Aunque el autor plantea que su obra puede ser percibida como una novela basada en un hecho real (i.e., *a non-fiction novel*), las historias esbozadas dentro del marco de la arqueología están circunscritas a la evidencia material, lo que hace necesario tener datos adicionales para poder establecer claramente la relación entre la cuna ancestral de Caonabó y este yacimiento.

Como se destacara anteriormente, uno de los elementos más salientes del libro lo es el posicionamiento de Shaun Sullivan y, eventualmente, del mismo William Keegan como reyes foráneos, reproduciendo de tal forma el referido mito en el contexto antillano contemporáneo. La

noción avatariana insertada en este es una propuesta que merece ser analizada críticamente debido a las narrativas centristas que pueden estar subyacentes en esta proposición.

Aparte de estos elementos, el libro de Keegan constituye una importante contribución a la arqueología antillana ya que nos invita a rebasar el conteo de ceramios que ha caracterizado el quehacer arqueológico en las Antillas y demuestra la necesidad de aunar diversas fuentes de información con el propósito de construir historias polivalentes, que puedan a su vez ser reinterpretadas desde diversas perspectivas. El carácter permeable de la perspectiva presentada por Keegan en esta obra se desvía de las argumentaciones monolíticas que tienden a tener los textos de arqueología antillana, destacándose así este libro como el primero escrito en las islas utilizando esta perspectiva teórica y estilo narrativo. Esperamos que los interesados en la historia precolonial y en los momentos iniciales del contacto indo-europeo en el Caribe se animen a leer esta obra la cual ofrece una ruta, aunque caótica, para un entendimiento más íntegro de las múltiples dinámicas que se dieron en los primeros estratos de la secuencia histórico-cultural de las islas.

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Global Intrigues: The Era of the Spanish-American War and the Rise of the United States to World Power, written by Juan R. Torruella, is a short, concise and well documented summary of the geopolitical situation and the views and sympathies of the major economic powers exploiting the resources of the world during the latter part of the 19th century. It also encompasses, as specified in the title, the intrigues

in which the major non-belligerent powers engaged before, during and immediately after the Spanish-American War. The thrust of the book is the manner in which the United States slowly forced itself into the exclusive club of the major world powers at the end of the 19th century and entered the realm of world domineering states through an event which, to most people in that country, was a minor or insignificant event. At the end of the century some of the existing empires were on the rise, as was the case of Germany, Japan and the United States. At the peak were the British, the French, and the Portuguese. Russia was at its height, but its expansion was just in Asia, while the others, the Ottoman, Chinese, Austro-Hungarian and Spanish Empires were in decline or in decay. All, to a larger or minor extent, participated in an attempt to prevent the outbreak of the hostilities. Some, like Germany and Japan, stood on the sidelines during the War trying to obtain some advantage of the outcome. And, again, to a larger or lesser extent, they all exercised some influence during the peace negotiations.

The first half of the first chapter of the book is devoted to a brief description of the major powers, their strength, weaknesses and spheres of influence. The second half is dedicated to the growth of the United States and its development of a “Darwinian [type of] imperialism—a combination of geopolitics, religious righteousness and just plain commercial entrepreneurship—to justify its territorial aggrandizement and the conquering, subjugation and absorption of other people” (p. 28). At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States is sufficiently strong to pick a fight with a decaying power in what appears to be an insignificant war of a localized nature. However, its impact would be felt beyond the small theater of war, for it not only extended its effect to the participants on a short term basis but it also resulted in a long lasting geopolitical impact throughout the world.

The European nations were uneasy with the expanding role being played by the United States, with the exception of Britain; their sympathies were with Spain. France and Germany, for example, viewed the United States as insolent or as an “American Menace” or “The American Peril.” The Latin American countries, fully aware of the propensity of the United States to use force to promote its national interest, particularly, after the Mexican War, remained officially and cautiously neutral before, during and after the war. That caution or fear of the giant from the North was openly justified as demonstrated by the continuous interventions and unjustifiable use of force during the twentieth century.

When referring to the Spanish-American War, many people think of the sinking of the Maine or the noble mission of freeing the Cuban people from Spanish oppression, but most people forget the Philippines. This was an essential part of the war effort. Why would the United States

want to grab a small group of islands on the other side of the Pacific? The acquisition of the Philippines provided an “imposing strategy advantage” in protecting the interest of the United States on the other side of the world (p. 164). This military presidio on the fringe of mainland China was a stepping stone to all Asian markets, since its conquest changed the geopolitical map of the entire Pacific region. It also set the stage for the grievances from Japan and the devastating event of forty years later. If the war with Spain in Cuba and Puerto Rico was short, with very few casualties, it was the opposite in the Philippines. The humanitarian efforts in the Philippines was converted into a “pacification” war which lasted three years, causing several thousand casualties to the U.S. military and losses to the Filipinos running into tens of thousands. In addition, large areas of the Philippines and its economy would be destroyed.

The book concludes with an Epilogue which makes a worthwhile comparison which the author recognizes as “somewhat perilous.” Notwithstanding that assertion, the comparative analysis between the Spanish-American War and the war in Iraq is well taken. As stated by the author: “There are several remarkable points of coincidence not only in the conflicts themselves, but also in the attitudes and actions of the non-belligerent in both encounters, as well as in the personalities involved, particularly on the American side.” Both wars were commenced on supposedly “moral and humanistic grounds.” On both, the immediate provocation—the sinking of the *Maine* in one and the weapons of mass destruction on the other—resulted in unfruitful or rather fictitious grounds. In both wars, the United States “...ultimately damaged its image as the standard bearer of fairness and respect for international law. In the latter, the damage “may be irreparable and long lasting” (pp. 173-174).

Global Intrigues makes fascinating reading. Its documentation is extensive and well reviewed. For scholars and students of history it is basically mandatory reading.

Steven Gregory. 2007. *The Devil behind the Mirror: Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic*. Berkeley: University California Press. 285 pp. ISBN: 9780520249295.

Karin Weyland. 2006. *Negociando la aldea global con un pie "aquí" otro "allá": La diáspora femenina dominicana y la transculturalidad como alternativa descolonizadora*. Santo Domingo: Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo. 319 pp. ISBN: 9993425648.

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Over the last two decades of the twentieth century the politics of international development dramatically remade the relationship between the Dominican Republic and the world economy. This shift began in the midst of the Latin American debt crisis. Under pressure from the IMF and the United States government (both committed fully to neoliberal economic theory) Dominican governments entered into a series of structural adjustment agreements, including drastic cuts in public spending, financial reforms, lower barriers to imports, and eventually privatization of utilities and state industries. With support from Washington, Dominican governments also began a shift away from a heavy focus on agricultural exports towards export processing and tourism. Since the middle of the 1990s, the process of structural adjustment and neoliberal reform has been largely subsumed into a broader boom in international trade, communications, and financial transactions (supported by the same neoliberal politics) known as globalization. As the Dominican state withdrew from spending on education, health care, and price supports, Dominicans turned to the informal sector and international migration in order to survive. Yet Dominicans, even those precariously perched on the informal margins of the new economy, had increasing contact with a flood of goods and images generated by the global boom—a promise of material well being that in no way matched the limited economic opportunities afforded by the new economy. Meanwhile, the political and subsistence crises in neighboring Haiti led to a major flow of migration of Haitians into the Dominican Republic. Haitians had long been part of Dominican society in border and sugar regions. Now they became part of an increasingly multicultural society in cities and in the new tourism and export-processing enclaves. As

Dominican governments sought to maintain legitimacy in an era of austerity, they made Haitians into targets of official xenophobia, racism, and human rights violations.

The two books under review seek to document and analyze the social and cultural consequences of neoliberalism and globalization in the Dominican Republic. They share a deeply humane concern for the effects of structural adjustment policies and globalization on local communities and individuals in the Dominican Republic and an interest in the creative responses of those communities to these new circumstances. In *Negociando la aldea global*, Karin Weyland, a sociologist who has lived and worked in Santo Domingo, offers primarily a work of theoretical synthesis, drawing together ideas about globalization from Octavio Ianni, Saskia Sassen, Néstor García Canclini, and Manuel Castells with the classic accounts of transnationalism by Glick Schiller, Basch, Blanc-Szanton, Portes, and others. Blending this theory with a survey of secondary literature and coverage in Santo Domingo newspapers, Weyland argues that contemporary international migration, which she calls “transnationalism from below,” constitutes a distinctly new practice of border crossing and should be seen as a creative response to the repressive “from above” forms of globalization. Her research subjects are Dominican women migrants who settled in New York City during the 1980s and 1990s. These women, she argues, used family and kinship ties to get visas, to share childcare across national boundaries, to start businesses, and most importantly to move from a context of informal and household labor (or factory labor in export processing zones) to factory labor in New York sweatshops. Though she notes the struggles and injustices migrant women face as workers, women, and racialized minorities in the U.S., she also hears in their accounts a consistent thread of improvement. They have more freedom in their households, better wages, even better status back home as a result of migration. Since these women faced entrenched barriers to social mobility and personal freedom in the Dominican Republic, migration is more than a simple strategy for survival, she argues. It constitutes “resistance” to globalization from above. Drawing on feminist scholarship on transnationalism, she also goes a step further, describing the “histories” and “metaphors” of migration recounted by her interviewees as “strategies of decolonization.” Women’s experiences of migration were a politics, she argues, though not necessarily a self-conscious one. “The crumbling of frontiers, not only at the level of geography but also of class and gender, form part of the new system of values of the women migrants” (p. 187).

Weyland’s basic contention that the mobility of capital and globalized culture is the problem to which international migration and new transcultural identities are a solution is exactly the view of globaliza-

tion that anthropologist and Columbia University professor Steven Gregory hopes to complicate. In *The Devil Behind the Mirror*, a sparkling ethnography of the town of Boca Chica (a tourist enclave that is also near to an export processing zone), Gregory argues that the literature on globalization “from above” is often overly focused on the ease of movement through space of capital. “Globalization,” he argues, is “less a description of the existing world system than a set of contested claims about how it *should* be structured in relation to nation states and their peoples” (p. 216). To support this argument he describes, at length, a conflict between a company seeking to build a container port within view of Boca Chica’s tourist complex, and the organization of hotel owners who seek to block the project. Even in the context of neoliberal ascendancy, capitalists in industries favored by new global arrangements (those organizing global supply chains and those marketing international leisure travel) are forced to compete with one another to court public opinion and secure alliances with the state. Gregory concludes, “however diminished the capacity of nation-states to govern their economies, the state remains a key political field structuring the specific manner in which global flows of capital, people, and media are materialized in space...” (p. 216). Although it may seem predictable that the port project won the day (mega-global-capital trumps merely largish capital), Gregory argues that the fact that this global behemoth had to invest *any* time or energy to garnering public opinion in Boca Chica complicates the notion of globalization as distant, coherent, and fully independent of national or local politics.

Gregory is also skeptical of accounts of mobility “from below,” especially the frequent treatment of Dominicans as the “archetypal transnational subjects” (p. 6). Gregory demonstrates that the shift from sugar to tourism in Boca Chica was not about the faster and faster movement of people through space (as some would have it), but rather about controlling and defining space in ways that left many local residents “unable to move and ‘fixed’ in space” (p. 8). He points to the ways that resorts and hotel owners, in concert with the tourism police and other arms of the state, sought to divide Boca Chica and a nearby town into a “tourist zone” and a “community.” The idea guiding this division was that creating an appropriate “cultural atmosphere” to attract and entertain foreign tourists required extreme care in hiring practices (preference for people from the capital and with lighter skin) as well as removing suspect local people from the public beach and public streets of their own town. National identity documents served in large measure as the legal mechanism for restricting the movement of community members in the tourist zone. Hotels and restaurants, as well as nearby export assembly factories, excluded those without official papers from formal

employment (even the preferred categories of sex work) thus excluding them from the ostensible benefits of the neoliberal economy. Many local residents had no access to identity documents, including almost all of the sizeable Haitian population, many Dominicans of Haitian ancestry, and many poor Dominicans regardless of ancestry. Meanwhile, tourist police cleared streets and beaches of vendors, hair braiders, sex workers (or those suspected of sex work), and the operators of motorcycle taxis through regular sweeps. Again, the pretext for removal was the lack of identity papers or requisite vendors licenses. Thus, in the new economy of globalization, those with the “weakest claims to citizenship,” that is, whose power to claim their citizenship was undermined by practices of racism, xenophobia, and social exclusion, “tended to be criminalized and marginalized, spatially as well as economically” (p. 48).

This account of spatial segregation and its relationship to citizenship is dramatic and convincing. Yet Gregory’s account shows that the tourist and export processing economies in Boca Chica were also marked by significant mobility “from below.” He includes wonderful stories of border crossings by Haitians, both into the Dominican Republic and into the few niches of the tourism economy open to them. Other key informants and collaborators come from the Dominican countryside or from the capital, attracted by the hope of work in tourism or assembly plants. What is more, many key characters in his ethnographies are returned from years or decades living abroad. Zapata, a man returned from “exile” in New York, owns a tourist hotel in Boca Chica. Several members of a neighborhood association are migrants returned from factory work in New York. One of the most captivating vignettes in the book is an account of Gregory’s interactions with a Haitian born, New York raised, Rasta identified tour guide. Other characters have returned or been deported from the United States or Europe or are in the process of getting papers in order to move overseas. In short, Gregory’s fieldwork in Boca Chica might well be taken as evidence that mobility is in fact a central aspect of popular practices and especially popular imaginaries in the context of globalization. To recognize the importance of this mobility is not to suggest that globalization has done away with borders or restrictions on movement. To the contrary, mobility on both a local and an international scale is a form of power precisely because of the significant barriers that states and capitalists still erect to free movement. The ability to move is an important resource because citizens of different nation states face different kinds of impediments and because, within nation states, color, class, gender, and foreign birth further constrict the ability to move.

Gregory resists the arguments of scholars like Weyland, that international migration serves as an outlet for people who would otherwise be constricted by the new economy. This is not just because his research site

was a shantytown populated by people unable to escape, and therefore pessimistic about migration, and hers was an immigrant neighborhood populated entirely by people who managed to find a way out, happy to recount their own successes. There was no shortage of idealized accounts of migration in Boca Chica during Gregory's fieldwork. The dominant local understanding of migration, however, was that local women hoped eventually to marry a foreign tourist in order to return with them to Europe or the U.S. That is, in a town dominated by sex tourism, the stories people told about international migration had a distinctive, and distinctively unattractive, spin. Sex tourism, Gregory shows in two wonderful but harrowing chapters, is not just about sex acts. It is about performances of domination constructed by groups of male tourists using Dominican women as props, "a surprisingly narrow set of ritualized spectacles through which men fantasized the nonbeing of women and, in turn, imagined themselves to be all powerful subjects" (p. 149). In this performance of power, male sex tourists often imagined that Dominican women were passive, unspoiled by western feminism, and therefore ideal for roles as traditional wives (as well as sexual exploitation). Just as foreign men imagined that Dominican women were grateful for their companionship in Boca Chica, many imagined that Dominican women longed for nothing more than "rescue" through marriage and emigration. Migration, as generally understood to operate in Boca Chica, Gregory argues, was not a popular strategy at all, but rather another element of a repugnant colonial fantasy. According to Gregory, "few sex workers shared the domestic fantasies of male tourists" because they understood the risk that migrating with a tourist might relegate them to a status as "virtual prisoners" of their husbands, forced into unwelcome domestic roles and dependent on the men for economic sustenance and legal status. Thus "the dream of emigrating with a foreign man was not uppermost in the minds of all, or even most" (p. 159).

This is a dynamic that is highly specific to tourist towns and likely had little influence on the decisions of Weyland's informants to migrate or the conditions they faced in New York. One might therefore read the two texts as contrasting, localized views of globalization that complement rather than contradict one another (especially given the actual prevalence of migration, usually not of the type imagined by sex tourists, in Gregory's account). It is surely possible that *both* the mobility (albeit often conditional) of more than a million Dominicans living abroad *and* widespread experiences of immobility, eviction, failed migration, and deportation in Dominican cities and towns are important, even emblematic, consequences of globalization in the Dominican Republic. Facile celebrations of transnationalism are infuriating in all the ways Gregory shows, but accounts that recognize the ways that migration

constitutes a popular response to neoliberalism need not be facile. Unfortunately, Weyland's emphasis on transnationalism as resistance and decolonization, while eloquent, is undermined by the relative lack of space dedicated to migrant women's stories and ideas. The reader does not get to know very much about what the women Weyland interviewed did and thought, so it is difficult to judge whether their actions were transnational, feminist, and decolonizing, or not. This is too bad, because Weyland is a prolific researcher with a unique trajectory of fieldwork and engagement. She spent several years in the early 1990s doing interviews with women at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. She was a participant observer in women's social service and community organizing agencies in Washington Heights. And she participated in extensive community-based research in marginal neighborhoods in Santo Domingo. The book is therefore based on an archive of extensive field notes, interviews, and photographs. It is unfortunate that this unique body of data is not more prominent in the text.

Weyland does mix some research material in with her theoretical discussion. She includes one chapter based on six life stories of women migrants. Yet she makes little effort to draw out and analyze the "histories" and "metaphors" that the women express in telling about their own lives or to show how they relate to (or complicate) her portrayal of transnationalism. Says one of her informants, "what I like about Washington Heights is that here we are all middle class" (p. 168). Weyland need not dismiss migrant women's stories of their own advancement as falsehoods (as many commentators in the Dominican Republic have done) to note that these stories are self-representations, and warrant critical analysis. What does it mean, for instance, that women working in sweatshops and using various forms of public assistance describe themselves as "all middle class"? The aspiration to be middle class may well be a serious challenge to previously fixed class, ethnic, and racial hierarchies in Santo Domingo and New York. But it might also be read (along with the larger migrant project) as pursuit of higher status within existing class, global, and family hierarchies. The histories and metaphors employed by migrant women may, as Weyland claims, represent both resistance to globalization and a decolonizing alternative, but much more descriptive and analytical work would be required to present a convincing case. Weyland's section on the remarkable community work and social activism of the Dominican Women's Development Center in Washington Heights is the evidence that most clearly substantiates her claims. Here she begins to show the transformation of migrant consciousness through social struggles and the emergence of transnational feminist alliances. I found myself wishing that she had dedicated an entire chapter to the stories, work, and ideas of these women rather than a mere eight pages.

In particular, she might have traced interactions between the feminism and social critique of these, mostly professional, women and the migrant success stories of her other informants.

In the end, the pairing of these two texts is perhaps a bit unfair to Weyland. *The Devil Behind the Mirror* deservedly won the Anthony Leeds Prize in Urban Anthropology and the Gordon K. & Sybil Lewis Memorial Award for Caribbean Scholarship. Gregory's skill as an ethnographer, including his ability to introduce and analyze his relationships with research assistants and informants, is breathtaking. Indeed it is possible to disagree with some of Gregory's conclusions on substance because he is so generous with his raw material. For instance, he includes a description of a party orchestrated, outside of the tourist zone, for the benefit of a group of German female tourists, by several local men who dressed as Rastas and affected Jamaican English. The tourist police bust the party and return the women to the tourist zone, where they can be safely separated from the Rastas. Gregory argues that hybrid, afro-diasporic cultural forms such as reggae and hip hop, deployed by these men, can be understood simply as "resistance" to local racial and spatial exclusions, without considering their commercial aspects. Yet in his description of the events he offers enough evidence for a reader to come to other conclusions. The men tell their German acquaintances that this party is the "real" Dominican Republic. This is possibly a political claim that their neighborhood and community have value, as Gregory suggests. But might it also be an alternate form of tourist performance? Might it be shaped not just by the assertion of hybrid identities, but also by a pattern of exchanges with a subset of tourists looking for a different kind of exotic experience, excursions to spaces beyond the walls of the resort, radical and authentic yet eminently familiar in their cultural references? Might dread locks, pot, and peaceful phrases like "one love" serve in such a construction in Boca Chica as they do in tourist areas of Jamaica? By contrast, Weyland's arguments are hard to measure against her material. Yet different books do different things. *Negociando la aldea global*, drawing together a wide range of theoretical material, and a survey of discussions of migration in the Santo Domingo press, will certainly be of interest to both a Dominican public and an international one. Whatever conclusions one draws about the promise of transnational migration and politics as decolonizing and democratic forces, Weyland's most basic contention is convincing indeed. The lives, ideas, work, and struggle of women migrants are crucially important to understanding contemporary society in the U.S. and Latin America. Dr. Weyland has dedicated two decades to listening to those women. I look forward to future publications that will place them more fully in the foreground.

Sonjah Stanley Niaah. 2010. *DanceHall: From Slavery to Ghetto*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press. 238 pp. ISBN: 0776630415.

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An examination of “reggae’s progeny,” Sonjah Stanley Niaah’s interdisciplinary study addresses dancehall as a musical genre, performance space, aesthetic style and philosophical ethos, examining the phenomenon through its myriad socio-cultural implications. Stanley Niaah delves into dancehall’s contemporary performance practices in Kingston and across the globe, conceptualizing its inception in the physical spaces of Jamaica’s dance halls during the latter half of the twentieth century when recorded music played on sound systems began to dominate formal and informal social events. Unlike recent cultural studies scholarship that examines the ways elements of popular music may reflect, challenge, contest and/or otherwise interact with socio-cultural and national categories (see Rivera, Marshall, and Pacini Hernández 2009), *Dancehall’s* theoretical framework does quite the opposite. Rather than interpreting aspects of Jamaican culture or identity through dancehall, Stanley Niaah reads dancehall *as* contemporary Jamaican culture and identity. Through her theoretical “performance geography” framework, the author maps dancehall’s complex systems of practice and spaces of production and consumption to emphasize its everyday place in the lives of inner-city Kingston youth and the ways it reflects contemporary Jamaican social reality. The study underscores how localized dancehall practices and experiences also reflect the continued impoverishment and marginalization of Afro-Caribbean communities across the region, the centrality of resistance in Black Atlantic cultural expressions and the global impact of Jamaican culture, and complicates research focused solely on musical elements or critiques of dancehall’s “slackness.”

Each chapter examines an aspect of dancehall performance, material and spatial conditions and social practices. “Performing Geography in Kingston’s Dancehall Spaces” maps and classifies the locations and uses of dancehall venues to historicize their contemporary use within a tradition of working-class appropriation of public space for celebration and discusses the state policing of commercialized, official and unofficial dancehall events. In “Ritual Space, Celebratory Space,” Stanley

Niaah uses a broad theoretical interpretation of ritual that touches on Victor Turner's *communitas* to argue that dancehall practices bridge the popular, performative and celebratory in what the author terms "sacred geographies." Outlining the names, times, themes, types and purposes of one-time and recurring dancehall events such as Passa Passa, Bembe Thursdays and British link-ups, this chapter intimates a complex matrix of rules and codes where the sacred and secular coalesce through "transcendence of social structure that brings the participant under the authority of the community" (p. 90). "Geographies of Embodiment – Dance, Status, Style" examines the role of the dancer (including interviews with Gerald "Bogle" Levy and Stacey, Dancehall Queen 1999), the economic and social rewards of dancing, the popularization and chronology of specific dance moves and the role of gender and women in the dancehall space and defines dance as a "sixth sense" of embodied elocution. The chapter "Performing Boundarylessness" argues that dancehall practices transcend class, temporal and spatial boundaries both within and outside of Jamaica. It explores Buju Banton's international tours, the sound system Stone Love and selector Tony Matterhorn, international appearances of dancehall queens, the popularity of dancehall in Japan and the video recording of dancehall events. The final chapter, "A Common Transnational Space," examines the common genealogies of Jamaican dancehall, South African kwaito and Puerto Rican reggaetón as black performance genres that are largely "shaped in the margins" (p. 188) of the ghetto, criticized for vulgarity, use informal and/or public spaces to perform, rely on dance and movement for popularity, and are produced in small recording studios. Stanley Niaah insists on the common liminality or "in-between" spaces of these phenomena—created in the margins but mainstreamed, popularly supported but rigorously policed by state authorities.

DanceHall is thus a detailed survey of contemporary dancehall practices. What the book's title proposes is ironically what the work does not do, however, and Stanley Niaah's tracing of continuities from "slave ship" to "ghetto" are largely unsubstantiated. For example, Stanley Niaah claims current Kingston dancehall events that warm up between 1:00 and 5:00 am are "reminiscent of secret slave meetings on the plantation when Massa was asleep" (p. 95); the close relationships of dancehall crews (groups of dancers, DJs and or music selectors) are similar to "the shipmate bonds of the enslaved" (p. 97); the prominence and role of dancehall queens invoke "the status and symbolism of great African queens and queen mothers" (p. 137); and the explosion of the limbo dance in 1994 and 2007 is akin to a "reliving" of the ritual as it was performed in the confines of a slave ship (p. 20). No evidence is given that specific dancehall events are purposefully held in the wee hours to avoid

brutal state repression as under colonial slavery, what shipmate bonds on slave ships were actually like, which great African queens symbolized what status or that limbo performers in 2007 actually had a slave ship ritual in mind or of limbo performance on slave ships for that matter. While these correlations may indeed hold weight—and scholarship on the Middle Passage and related fields has explored aspects of these practices—Niaah Stanley’s study does not evidence them. These unfounded connections weaken the stronger theoretical base of the study, which more persuasively and successfully insists on the broader importance of dancehall practices within Black Atlantic experience and their relationship to persistent, institutionalized inequalities within Jamaican society.

DanceHall’s broad theoretical intentions contribute to contemporary scholarship by validating study of the ways popular culture and social practices importantly interact, and Stanley Niaah blows open the door to a phenomenon largely stigmatized by a master narrative of “slackness” and vulgarity. The most refreshing and insightful aspects of the book are the in-depth vignettes, chronologies and typologies of contemporary dancehall events, venues, dance moves and artistes which anchor the work. These research tools provide useful “geographies” through which future scholars may continue to map dancehall’s performance spaces. The field is huge, and there is much more cloth to cut. Further research on dancehall in areas the author only briefly touches on merit entire studies in their own right: homosexuality, musicology, state repression and the policing of dancehall, intersections with other popular music genres, to name only a few. Stanley Niaah’s foray here is brave, detailed and invested, and future studies will be indebted to her.

Reference

- Rivera, Raquel Z., Wayne Marshall, and Deborah Pacini Hernández, eds. 2009. *Reggaeton*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Rubén Dávila Santiago. 2005. *El Mall: Del Mundo al Paraíso*. San Juan: Ediciones Callejón. 441 pp. ISBN: 1881748332.

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La crisis económica que ha estado enfrentando el capitalismo en los pasados años nos lleva a reflexionar sobre el futuro de todas las actividades que han emergido y definido nuestra sociedad. Entre éstas resaltan los centros comerciales, mejor conocidos en Puerto Rico como los “shopping centers”. Los mismos concretizan y perpetúan la naturaleza del nuevo orden económico mundial.

El centro comercial encuadrado, resumido en el título de este texto como “El Mall”, es un icono urbano representativo del éxito corporativo e individual dentro de todo proceso evolutivo de la “aldea global”. La misma representa la concretización de toda una ideología matizada sobre las bases de justicia, derecho y democracia de las fuerzas del mercado. El *mall*, a fin de cuentas, es entendido como uno de los centros gravitacionales de toda una nueva geografía global. Esta visión no es reciente y viene re-articulándose desde los primeros modelos de ecología humana elaborados en la Universidad de Chicago hace más de 90 años y que han continuado reformulándose hasta hoy día en modelos aplicados a las mega-ciudades y centros urbanos de umbral internacional.

El Mall: Del Mundo al Paraíso es una reflexión y crítica publicada por el Dr. Rubén Dávila Santiago. Aunque no es propiamente una publicación reciente, su tema adquiere mayor relieve en este momento en donde los centros comerciales, particularmente los *malls* aparentan sobrevivir y reproducirse a pesar de la crisis económica que ha enfrentado la sociedad puertorriqueña en los pasados años. ¿Cómo es posible esta contradicción?, ¿Por qué los centros comerciales se reproducen y expanden durante este periodo de marcada contracción económica?, ¿Hasta cuándo continuará este patrón complejo, confuso y contradictorio? son algunas de las interrogantes que afloran en nuestras discusiones cuando observamos un “mall” lleno cualquier día, a cualquier hora y en cualquier lugar de la isla.

Históricamente, los asuntos relacionados con los centros comerciales y las transacciones de oferta y demanda alrededor de los mismos se han limitado a compilaciones estadísticas y a discusiones exclusivas

del razonamiento positivista. Los debates sobre la capacidad del consumidor, particularidades del mercado local y la existencia de centros comerciales han sido manejados en términos de pietaje, cantidad de visitantes/compradores, gastos (ventas/costos por pies cuadrado) y localizaciones/ubicaciones (absolutas y relativas) de facilidades. En fin, el consumo es visto y comprendido como una función exclusiva del ingreso. Esta dimensión, descrita por Neil Wrigley y Michelle Lowe en *Reading Retail* (2002) como parte de una visión ortodoxa, tiende a excluir al ser humano como un producto manejable y protagónico en donde su conducta como consumidor es definida por fuerzas que trascienden la economía clásica. Desde las ciencias sociales existen otras ópticas para entender el consumo sus manifestaciones espaciales como el *mall*. Entre éstos, sobresalen los trabajos del antropólogo Paco Underhill en *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping* (2000) y *Call of the Mall: The Geography of Shopping* (2005). Underhill posiciona al ser humano como un recipiente abierto a los alcances de la publicidad y el mercadeo. Desde esta perspectiva, la necesidad y urgencia por consumir se convierte en una industria y por ende, en una finalidad. En el caso particular de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, es importante comenzar a estudiar los centros comerciales dentro de esta línea de razonamiento.

Dávila Santiago comienza por alertar al lector sobre la línea de discusión de su trabajo. Aclara que el mismo no es un relato histórico sobre los centros comerciales en Puerto Rico sino que utiliza esta experiencia urbana para exponer una mirada no económica al fenómeno. Una vez expone su punto de alerta, el autor enfoca los capítulos en proveer una visión teórica amplia sobre las bases de construcción de las sociedades de consumo dentro del crisol neoliberal. Se hace énfasis continuo en la relevancia del andamiaje mediático en la creación de necesidades y la construcción y anhelo de una sociedad utópica. Esta primera parte podría ser extenuante para lectores que trabajan este tema desde el tradicional razonamiento cuantitativo. Las referencias directas e indirectas a Carl Marx, Michel Foucault y Jean Baudrillard son extensas y se toma como referencia el modelo de desarrollo norteamericano de la posguerra. Los conceptos y experiencias utilizadas por el autor generaron la necesidad de insertar anotaciones marginales a lo largo de los capítulos. En este sentido, la lectura queda interrumpida continuamente por las extensas anotaciones, las cuales son necesarias para el entendimiento comprensivo de la lectura.

La argumentación de Dávila Santiago sobre las sociedades de consumo y sus centros principales (*Mall*) asume un tono mayor en el capítulo "Del Arca de Noé a la Ciudad de Dios". Este es el capítulo central de la publicación. El autor asocia el mundo artificial y paradisiaco como una alternativa escapista del mundo real de los consumidores. Dentro

de este argumento, los ambientes lúdicos y de fantasías dentro de los centros comerciales son comparados a los procesos de *Disneysificación* y *Las Vegasización* que se ha popularizado dentro de las sociedades de consumo. Físicamente, Dávila Santiago asocia el *mall* con el parecido exterior al arca bíblica. Esta asociación emana de los principios arquitectónicos de establecer dentro del centro comercial un mundo diferente y superior al mundo exterior. Dentro de esta analogía, la magia y la fantasía en el interior del centro comercial sirve como “lugar sedativo, de refugio emocional y espiritual que tiene la virtud de calmar y sosegar... ofrece un espacio de esparcimiento, de distancia, de evasión con relación al mundo exterior” (p. 139). La asociación persistente con eventos y elementos religiosos, particularmente del Cristianismo, puede ser mal interpretada por los lectores tradicionales y fundamentalistas.

Una vez el autor deja claro su posición metafórica sobre los centros comerciales, comienza con un recuento histórico sobre los *shopping centers* en los Estados Unidos y en Puerto Rico. Esta historia está acompañada con una descripción de los diferentes conceptos comerciales que han aflorado en los pasados cien años y sus atributos y particularidades. Muchos de los conceptos comerciales descritos están presentes y constituyen hitos y nodos geográficos dentro de la estructura urbana puertorriqueña. Más allá de centro comercial encuadrado (*mall*), otros conceptos presentes son los centros comerciales lineales, los *power centers*, los *category killers* y los *lifestyle centers*. Dentro de esta diversidad, la discusión sobre la representatividad del *mall* en la mente del consumidor se concentra aparentemente en Plaza Las Américas de la siguiente manera: “Lugar sedativo, de refugio emocional y espiritual que tiene la virtud de calmar o sosegar. Plaza ofrece un espacio de esparcimiento, de distancia, de evasión con relación al mundo exterior” (p. 139).

La descripción sobre la evolución de los *shopping centers* está acompañada de una serie de posibles simbolismos de estos centros desde la segunda mitad del siglo XX en los Estados Unidos (y posiblemente Puerto Rico). El *shopping center* es manejado en el libro como un refugio y espacio terapéutico ante las presiones que emanaron durante la carrera armamentista nuclear. Esta visión de Dávila Santiago resulta ser contrastar con los propósitos iniciales de Victor Gruen; arquitecto originador de los mega *malls* en los Estados Unidos. En esta línea de argumentación, Dávila Santiago lleva al lector a asociar la popularidad de este tipo de comercio planificado con la proyección mediática de un mundo ideal que se ha cementado en la mentalidad norteamericana a través del cine y la televisión.

El posicionamiento del *mall* como espacio social dentro del quehacer diario en nuestra sociedad nos ha llevado, a juicio del autor, a un punto de subducción entre el derecho individual y la propiedad privada.

En la medida que las funciones de las plazas de recreo y plazas de mercado se han relocalizado en los espacios comunes dentro de los centros comerciales (y el centro comercial adquiere funciones similares a una ciudad), la fricción e idealismo se hacen más evidentes.

Han pasado varios años desde la publicación *El Mall: Del Mundo al Paraíso*. Sin embargo, el tiempo transcurrido sirve como preámbulo para entender en su totalidad las tesis de Dávila Santiago. La publicación surgió posterior al periodo de construcción, expansión y mejoras permanentes de centros comerciales en Puerto Rico (1993-2003). Sin embargo, desde el 2005, la economía puertorriqueña ha estado sumergida en una crisis estructural que ha afectado a la mayor parte de las actividades de producción y consumo. A pesar de los indicadores negativos, los centros comerciales continúan aflorando dentro del paisaje geográfico local. Evidentemente, el escenario comercial actual no puede ser entendido exclusivamente desde la economía tradicional.

La discusión pública sobre la construcción de mega *malls* más grandes que Plaza Las Américas nos lleva a buscar un razonamiento lógico desde otras ciencias sociales. Dentro de este contexto, el análisis expuesto en *El Mall: Del Mundo al Paraíso* constituye una mirada refrescante para entender la estructura social puertorriqueña del nuevo milenio.

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