

# INTERNATIONAL THIRD WORLD STUDIES

# JOURNAL & REVIEW

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# THIRD WORLD STUDIES JOURNAL AND REVIEW

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## FOREWORD

This issue of the *ITWSJ&R* deals with topics concerning the displacement of people in Guatemala, the writing of the African novelist Ahmadou Kourouma, and the problems associated with majoritarianism.

Jo Ann DiGeorgio-Lutz and Aaron Hale's essay, "Internal Displacement in Guatemala," is an investigation that attempts to fill the gap in the literature concerning the analysis of internal displacement in post-civil war Guatemalan society. It is based on fieldwork in several marginalized communities within Guatemala City, environs that were inhabited by numbers of conflict induced internally displaced persons (IDPs). It was generally thought that the end of the civil war in December 1966 also brought an end to internal displacement within the country. However, displacement did not cease following the peace; rather, it continues at a different level and for a variety of reasons. In examining the post conflict return and resettlement of indigenous Maya who were displaced, DiGeorgio-Lutz and Hale conclude that the relationship between the label IDP and how an individual's self-identity is a troubling one that suggests that Guatemala's internal displacement problem has not been resolved by the 1994 Accord on Resettlement, and the subsequent 1996 peace agreement. They end with the thought that a long lasting peace in that Central American country will not be achieved until the issue of internal displacement is settled for all its citizens.

In "History, Political Discourse, and Narrative Strategies in the African Novel: Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah n'est pas obligé*," Paschal B. Kyiiripuo Kyoore focuses on Ahmadou Kourouma's novel *Allah n'est pas oblige* and shows that this novel fits the definition of a "historical novel" because Kourouma uses authentic historical names, places, and events as the raw material for his fictional creation. Kourouma makes use of historical "causality" in the same way that a historian does in compiling a historical work. However, the author of *Allah n'est pas oblige* evokes historical personalities in order to lampoon them, and to criticize dictatorship and those responsible for the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Kyoore makes it clear that Kourouma uses a variety of narrative devices to speak against injustice on behalf of the voiceless.

Peter Emerson's contribution, "Majoritarianism, A Cause of Conflict: The Rights and Wrongs of Self-Determination," sets the stage by briefly laying out the tragic history of recent attempts to implement a majoritarian interpretation of the right of self-determination. He makes a strong case against the West's obsession with majority rule as the only legitimate form of democracy, and concludes that many situations of decision making are best served by some sort of a multi-option preference vote. The suggestion is that recent history might have been different if majoritarianism was replaced with a procedure that displayed a greater multiplicity.

The Book Review section concludes this issue with 11 book reviews. Rory J. Conces reviews Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir of Books* (Random House, 2004); Thomas C. Buchanan reviews Selwyn H.H. Carrington's *The Sugar Industry and Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775–1810* (University Press of Florida, 2002); David T. Jervis reviews Gliomee Hermann's *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (University of Virginia Press, 2003) and Fran Lisa Buntman's *Robben Island and Prisoner Resistance to Apartheid* (Cambridge University Press, 2004); Ali Kamali reviews Peter L. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington's *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Moshe Gershovich reviews David Schenker's *Dancing with Saddam: The Strategic Tango of Jordanian-Iraqi Relations* (Lexington Books and The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003); A.B. Assensoh and Y.M. Alex-Assensoh review Joseph C. Dorsey's *Slave Traffic in the Age of Abolition: Puerto Rico, West Africa, and non-Hispanic Caribbeans, 1815–1859* (University Press of Florida, 2003); Joseph K. Adjaye reviews Verene A. Shepherd's *Slavery Without Sugar: Diversity in Caribbean Economy and Society Since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century* (University Press of Florida, 2002); Richard R. Super reviews *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, edited by Aviva Chomsky, Barry Carr, and Pamela Marie Smarkaloff (Duke University Press, 2003); Dale Stover reviews *Religious Fundamentalism in the Contemporary World: Critical Social and Political Issues* (Lexington Books, 2004), edited by Santosh C. Saha; and David Carey, Jr. reviews Sherry Johnson's *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba* (University Press of Florida, 2001).

The editorial staff of the *Journal* invites you to continue manuscript submissions for consideration in future issues. As always, the *ITWSJ&R* is a refereed publication and is open to articles and book reviews addressing any aspect of Third World studies. Articles examining the concept of the Third World are equally solicited. In addition, future issues will include reviews of films, translations, book notes, discussion notes, and interviews. Submissions should be mailed to the address printed in the Information for Contributors section of this issue.

In an attempt to make the journal more readily accessible, the editors have offered an on-line version of the journal. Whether the journal moves to an on-line only format will be gauged by the success of this experiment.

The contents of the last five volumes and the Information for Contributors can be found on the journal's website. The journal's homepage is maintained by the Department of Philosophy and Religion at <http://avalon.unomaha.edu/itwsjr/index.htm>. For information on the annual Third World Studies Conference at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, go to <http://www.unomaha.edu/~twsc/>.

— *Rory J. Conces*

# INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

*International Third World Studies Journal and Review* (ISSN 1041-3944) is an annual interdisciplinary journal of scholarship in the field of Third World Studies. The Editors welcome submissions that contribute to the understanding of the Third World. *International Third World Studies Journal and Review* publishes research conducted in several disciplines including economics, history, literature, philosophy, religion, political science, anthropology, environmental studies, and public health.

Articles and book reviews intended for publication should be sent to Dr. Rory J. Conces, Editor, *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0265. Books for review should be sent to Dr. Owen G. Mordaunt, Book Review Editor, *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, Department of English, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0175. Manuscripts should conform closely to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed., and be typewritten in English on one side of white paper (8-1/2" x 11") using 1" margins on all sides. Contributors should submit the original and four copies. Computer-generated manuscripts *must* be of letter quality (*not* dot-matrix). All text, including notes and block quotations, should be double-spaced. The manuscript should be reasonably subdivided into sections, and if necessary, sub-sections. First-level subheadings should be in full capitals, boldface type, and typed flush left; second-level subheadings should be in initial capitals, boldface type, and flush left; and third-level should be in initial capitals, boldface type, and set at the beginning of the paragraph and followed by a period. Subheadings, except the third-level, are each set on a line separate from the text. Notes, kept to a minimum, should be marked in the text at a point of punctuation, and listed consecutively at the end of the article in a section entitled "Endnotes."

**Do not use the automatic footnote feature of your word processor.** Bibliographical references will not be published unless they are given as endnotes. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all quotations and for supplying complete references. Manuscripts should be accompanied by biographies of no more than 200 words describing each author's current and recent academic and professional affiliations, research interests, and recent publications, as well as an abstract of the article (not exceeding 200 words). All manuscripts accepted are subject to editorial modification.

The Editors prefer articles of 15-25 double-spaced, typewritten pages (approximately 250 words per page). Longer articles will be evaluated in terms of whether their scholarship and importance warrant the additional space required for publication. Book reviews as well as film reviews will be considered, especially if they are under 10 double-spaced, typewritten pages (approximately 2000 words).

The Editors regard submission of a manuscript to *International Third World Studies Journal and Review* as an implied commitment to publish in the journal. Authors submitting manuscripts should not simultaneously submit them to another publication, nor should manuscripts have been published elsewhere in substantially similar form or with substantially similar content.

To help defray the costs of publishing the journal, a nonrefundable submission fee of \$45.00 is required for each unsolicited manuscript. Checks should accompany the manuscripts and be payable to the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

For information regarding advertising, please contact the Editor.

The *Journal* is a peer-reviewed publication. All manuscripts considered appropriate for the journal are reviewed externally by at least two referees. In order for the referees to review manuscripts without knowledge of the author's name or institutional affiliation, the Editors request that information be provided in the cover letter, and not on the manuscript itself. The Editors attempt to inform authors of their decision within eight months of receiving a paper. Authors of accepted submissions will be asked to provide a final version on a 3.5" disk (IBM formatted-WordPerfect 5.1-8.0 is preferred) together with the hard copy typescript. Galley proofs are sent directly to the author. Typescripts of rejected articles and book reviews will not be returned. Contributors of articles (in case of joint authorship, the primary author) will receive a copy of the *Journal*; book and film reviewers will receive an offprint of their review.

**The deadline for manuscript submissions for Volume XVI (2005) is 1 April 2005.**

For further information concerning the journal, please contact Dr. Rory J. Conces, Editor, *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0265. (402) 554-2947. FAX: (402) 554-3296. [rconces@mail.unomaha.edu](mailto:rconces@mail.unomaha.edu)

The University of Nebraska at Omaha is pleased to announce the 28th National Third World Studies Conference, an interdisciplinary format devoted to the widest possible combination of scholars, practitioners, and participants. It will take place 12-15 October 2005.

The scope of the conference includes Challenges Facing the Third World; Terrorism; Nationalism and Micronationalism; Conflict Resolution; Western Media and the Third World; Technology and Resources; Regional Conflicts; World Economy; Nuclear Proliferation; Food, Agriculture, and Appropriate Technology; Geography; Philosophy and Religion; Education and Teaching; Literature and Fine Arts; Third World Cultures; Human Rights and Refugees; Third World Women; Newly Independent States and the Third World; Health Care, Community Health, Public Health Nutrition, and Environmental Health; Communication; Development Economics; and Violence.

Participants are encouraged to submit their papers for publication in the *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*.

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## **TWENTY-EIGHTH NATIONAL MEETING**

## **SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION**

# Internal Displacement in Guatemala

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## Introduction

Beginning in the late 1980s, the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War heralded a new dawn for many in the global community premised on the ostensible and peaceful transition to democratic rule coupled with material prosperity grounded on free trade. Yet, for an estimated 25 million people scattered across the regions of Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, one of the world's most acute and growing crisis was beginning to gain recognition as a global socio-political issue. Internal Displacement is now recognized as both a human tragedy and one of the most pressing challenges to beset the global community at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Primarily because internal displacement did not become visible until the post-cold war period, it is often thought to be a post-cold war phenomenon. However, as Roberta Cohen and Francis Deng assert, internal displacement is not new and major cases of displacement took place either during the cold war or were significantly affected by cold war policies.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike refugees who cross international borders, internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain within the territorial frontiers of their countries. Additionally, in contrast to refugees who are afforded some measure of legal protection and assistance in accordance with international conventions and regional declarations, IDPs fall outside this umbrella of rights with the exception of Article 40 of the Geneva Convention and Article 17 of Additional Protocol II. Despite this modicum of support and the belief that “rights have no borders,” IDPs are captives of the nation-state system that rests on principles of territorial sovereignty and non-intervention into the “internal” affairs of states because they are still in their home country.

In the early 1990s, while scholarly attention to the problem of internal displacement was in its infancy, several United Nations agencies and international organizations outside the UN framework have been instrumental in placing the crisis of internal displacement on the global political agenda. In 1992 a United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) asked UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to appoint a special representative to the newly created post of Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons. Despite this voluntary position, Special Representative Deng does

not have a mandate to politically and economically assist this category of people. Instead, within the UN system, only the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has ever acted on behalf of IDPs in situations when they have been commingled with returning refugees. According to Deng, in situations where the UN does assist, the UNHCR remains reluctant to involve itself too deeply into the IDP issue for a variety of reasons, including, *inter alia*, its unwillingness to compromise its “core” work with refugees.<sup>2</sup> Scholarly attention to the crisis of internal displacement is a relatively recent force in academia. It was Cohen and Deng's prodigious 1998 study that proved to be the turning point in academic circles. The growing body of literature is an indication of our expanding interest and awareness of IDPs. Generally, the literature can be divided into a broad variety of categories. Among these categories are topics addressing complex emergencies or conflicts that produce IDPs; country-specific case studies; discussions over the nature and definition of who is an IDP; the impact of displacement on gender; response mechanisms that provide increased understanding of how individuals, families, and communities cope during the various phases of displacement; and, the work of humanitarian and development organizations that offer protection and assistance.

Despite the growing academic attention to the issue of IDPs, there is also a noticeable gap in the literature. What is lacking is any systematic analysis of the post return/resettlement phase of displacement. There remains little, if any, effort to identify, let alone quantify the number and types of IDPs whoever, and for whatever reasons, were not able to return and resettle. This understanding is important because it would allow us to develop a form of measurement of when an IDP ceases to be an IDP and to develop a typology of displacement when multiple reasons for this condition exist simultaneously.<sup>3</sup>

This observation begs the following question. Does one's status as an IDP depend solely on the recognition by international organizations based on the prevailing principles and standards of who is an IDP? Or is there an inherent psychological element to displacement based on self-identification? If self-identification plays a role, under what circumstances will an IDP self-identify as such or not? This last question is particularly important in circumstances where IDPs in the post return/resettlement phase face serious rep-rehension especially if they are believed to have played a

supposed role in fostering internal strife that led to conflict induced displacement.

This scenario is paramount in Guatemala because the conflict-induced IDPs were thought to be guerrilla sympathizers. In the post-civil war context, the safe return and resettlement of this group is extremely precarious.<sup>4</sup> As we discovered, many of the conflict-driven displaced are still considered to be IDPs. However, they do not identify themselves as IDPs as a protection mechanism to explain the fact that they have not returned or resettled. An understanding of this is important when the IDP situation is continuous over an extended period of time and when IDPs locate in areas already inhabited by persons or groups who are uprooted for reasons other than conflict and civil war.

## Internal Displacement in Guatemala

Guatemala's 36-year civil war officially ended on 29 December 1996 with the signing of the *Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace* between the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). This agreement represented the final step in a series of previously negotiated accords between the government and the guerrillas that began in 1994 under the auspices of the United Nations. With the official ending of the civil war, previously agreed upon accords such as the 17 June 1994 *Agreement on the Resettlement of Population Groups Uprooted by the Armed Conflict* could officially enter into force. The provisions of the resettlement agreement called for the establishment of a Technical Commission (CTEAR) to implement a number of principles that would allow for the return and resettlement of Guatemala's estimated 100,000 refugees and 1 million internally displaced.

However, when CTEAR concluded its work, its final report listed only 324,187 persons that had been resettled as part of the total uprooted population—a figure that includes both returning refugees and the internally displaced. For the purposes of implementing the resettlement accord, CTEAR identified five “zones of peace” in which return and resettlement would occur. These zones of peace consisted of the following five Guatemalan Departments: Quiché, Peten, Alta Verapaz, San Marcos, and Huehuetenango. Ironically, during the civil war, the government classified these same five departments as “zones of conflict.” Excluded from CTEAR's resettlement were the approximately 600,000 IDPs who left their original villages in the conflict zones and relocated in the environs of Guatemala City and the southern region of the country—departments not included in the zones of peace for the purpose of resettlement. Adding to the predicament concerning the return and resettlement of Guatemalan IDPs remains the often overlapping and differing data on the topic. Moreover, when the final peace accord was signed ending the civil war, several international organizations such as the U.S. Committee for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the UNHCR assumed that Guatemala no longer had an IDP problem. Many of these organizations based this assumption on the erroneous belief

that the resettlement agreement repatriated the refugees and returned or resettled all the IDPs who intended to return. However, the facts on the ground do not support this assumption. The reality is that most of Guatemala's IDPs, displaced as a result of the civil war, were simply not resettled. Furthermore, the IDP problem in Guatemala is not declining; instead, it is increasing. This increase, in part, exists because of the unresolved land issue and the growing number of government sponsored forced evictions of indigenous marginalized communities.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the victims of Guatemala's civil war were the indigenous Mayan. Even though they comprise the majority of the country's population, the Mayans remain politically, economically, and socially marginalized. They constitute the vast majority of Guatemala's poor, its land-less peasants, urban shanty dwellers, and IDPs who were not included in the resettlement agreement. Despite the end of the civil war, many of Guatemala's remaining IDPs cannot voluntarily return to their place of origin. In part, the government's scorched-earth counterinsurgency war in the zones of conflict between 1981–83 completely destroyed more than 440 Mayan villages along with the Mayan's ability to engage in subsistence agriculture. In other instances, squatter groups now occupy many villages and homes that escaped complete destruction in the conflict zones. In other circumstances, conflict-induced IDPs face serious human rights violations should they attempt to return because of the stigma of their alleged association as guerrilla sympathizers.<sup>6</sup>

During the civil war in Guatemala, indigenous leaders who asserted land rights were persecuted as communists and subversives. The government's violent dispossession of indigenous land deprived the Mayan of their means of survival and endangered their cultural traditions. Even after the civil war, indigenous rural groups have persistently called upon the state to uphold Article 67 of the Constitution that protects indigenous land, yet the judicial branch routinely recognizes individual landlord claims that are often absentee over the indigenous that renders their land subject to expropriation, sale, or break-up. This, in turn, only serves to fuel further displacement.

The IDP issue in Guatemala remains important because many of the indigenous and IDPs do not believe that the conflict is over. Many of the IDPs surveyed for this study believe that the civil war in Guatemala still rages at a psychological level. Moreover, the successful consolidation of the peace process will depend on the extent to which the government is able and willing to address the issue of the IDPs. At present, it is the government's view that IDPs are not a special group; instead, they are in the same general situation as the rest of the population facing extreme poverty.<sup>7</sup>

Conflict displacement has been central to the experience of the indigenous population afflicted by Guatemala's bloody civil war. Prior to 1980, internal displacement as a result of civil conflict was reserved more for individuals being targeted as subversives — a theoretical paradox be-

cause individuals were not afforded IDP status. Moreover, until the rise of the “Scorched Earth Campaign” displacement, both internal and external, was only a “collateral” effect of the violence engulfing the state. As a result of this campaign, displacement then became an actual counterinsurgency policy objective.

Beginning in 1983, military strategy shifted and was directed at resettling the Mayan communities under the control of the Army. The military attempted to institute this strategy by creating “model” villages and “re-education” programs in the regions that were the most conflictive; by relying on the civilian patrols (PAC) formed by the military; and through the military appointment of local leaders. Yet, many displaced did not return or resettle given the State’s “stigmatization” of the Mayan villagers as either guerrillas or guerrilla sympathizers who were responsible for the armed confrontation.

Indigenous villages in Quiche, San Marcos, Chimaltenango, Alta Verapaz, Baja Verapaz, and Huehuetenango were targeted specifically because of their alleged entanglement with guerrillas. It was the belief of General Efraín Ríos Montt’s government (1981–83) that if the bases for popular guerrilla support among the indigenous were destroyed, then the guerrillas would be broken. This belief translated into a policy that left the Guatemalan people with few choices other than flight. The *Recovery of Historical Memory Project*, REHMI, basically identified similar patterns of displacement during the civil war as did the *Guatemala Memory of Silence: Report of the Commission for Historical Clarification Conclusions and Recommendations*. REHMI, however, did identify two distinct forms of displacement: individual and community. Individual displacement took place mainly in the urban areas during the 1960s and 1970s. This type of displacement was the result of particular persons being targeted exclusively as subversives. Moreover, individual flight occurred only if the targeted individual’s family that remained behind had an adequate social and safety network. However, what generally happened was that family members of the individual who was displaced would often follow in an effort at family reunification thereby contributing to the displacement problem.

According to REHMI, displacement in rural areas typically took place in groups and thus involved entire communities. Direct violence committed against the community was most often the catalyst for flight. Also, flight as a result of the fear of violence was not uncommon. In some cases the indigenous were forced to flee as a result of the destruction of land, a military objective that effectively left the indigenous population with very little means of subsistence. Because most communities were forced to flee in the face of violent massacres they were not able to escape with much more than very basic essentials. Most families lost all of their property as a result of the violence. Given the abrupt and hurried nature of flight most families were not able to take any food or other essentials with them. As a result they were forced to scavenge for food in the wilderness where

the terrain was most inhospitable and unfavorable. Survival in the wilderness ranged from short periods of time consisting of a week or less, to months or years while in transit to more hospitable locations. Displacement and survival in the wilderness led to the break up of family units, questions about whether or not any family still existed, the status of fellow community members, and whether or not return would ever be possible.<sup>8</sup>

The IDP situation is particularly acute in Guatemala City where a number of different types of IDPs are interspersed in marginalized communities. Compounding their predicament is the lack of cohesion among these disparate IDPs whose only basis of unity is the land issue. Also, many of the grassroots organizations that address the IDP issue often work at cross purposes making it difficult for IDPs to present a unified front before government. The IDPs in Guatemala City remain invisible and there is a general lack of opportunities for them to return to their place of origin since the signing of the 1996 peace agreement. Moreover, the data on the number of IDPs is unreliable and the figures on displacement are only estimates given the lack of systemized data collection efforts.

Although Guatemala has always experienced episodes of internal migration owing to changing socio-economic dynamics that revolved around agriculture and industrial development, these patterns changed with the escalation of the civil war in the 1980s. To date, only two studies have attempted to categorize Guatemala’s IDPs—Santiago Bastos and Manuel Camus’s 1994 study, *Los desplazados por la violencia en la Ciudad de Guatemala* and the 1997 study sponsored by The Association for the Advancement of the Social Sciences in Guatemala (AVANSCO). The latter study identified two types of IDPs. The first category identifies those who fled between 1980 and 1982 and were displaced in the mountains near their place of origin. The bulk of these IDPs formed what became known as the communities of popular resistance (CPRs). The second categories, the dispersed-displaced, are those conflict IDPs who fled to two areas in particular—Guatemala City and the southern coast. The AVANSCO study concluded that the *dispersed-displaced* are more difficult to analyze because they are scattered, hidden, and remain anonymous among both the urban and rural poor. Furthermore, the *dispersed-displaced* are inadequately represented within the social sciences and by the international community, non-governmental organizations, and governmental agencies that could offer them protection and assistance. Their inadequate representation is attributed to their lack of identification as a collective group of IDPs whose needs are based on their forced relocation.<sup>9</sup>

The Bastos and Camus study explored the condition of Guatemala City’s IDPs from the standpoint of their lack of adaptation to urban life and their limited ability to communicate because they only spoke indigenous languages. Moreover, Bastos and Camus noted that the violence and forced flight to safety left many enduring scars on this particular population, which may account for their reluctance to as-

sert their claims. While these studies are important because both of them draw similar conclusions and deepen our understanding of the particular features of their situation, they are not representative of Guatemala's IDP population for several reasons. First, both studies are in Spanish and their circulation is limited. Secondly, the Bastos and Camus study predates the end of the civil war and the subsequent, *albeit*, ostensible resolution of the IDP situation.

There is no international instrument that addresses when an IDP ceases to be classified as such. The end of the civil war in Guatemala did not terminate the fact that there is a substantial IDP population; hence, the importance of developing a typology of the number and type of IDPs. On a more theoretical note, the development of a typology of IDPs would be universally applicable across a range of IDP cases. As such, this would permit the development of theoretical frameworks beyond the more broadly defined humanitarian constructs that underscore studies in this area. Specifically, a typology of IDPs could lead to concept and theory building along dimensions of areas such as civil society and democratization studies. Additionally, such a typology could be used for comparative studies that examine similarly situated IDPs in cross-cultural and diverse political settings. Studies such as this could enhance our understanding of the phases of displacement and how the international community might best address the issue of displacement.

## Preliminary Survey Findings

In several preliminary exchanges with IDPs in three marginalized communities within the environs of Guatemala City (El Tuerto, Los Canolitos, and Via Canales) the majority of individuals and families identified economics as the primary reason for them taking up residence in their particular community. Our survey instrument included both open-ended and a closed-ended questionnaire. Our closed-ended questionnaire gathered demographic data as well as information specific to the flight phase of displacement, such as whether they were forced to flee, with whom did they leave, and the locations and duration of their temporary settlement. Our open-ended questions asked respondents to recant their ordeal in anecdotal terms.

In El Tuerto, our interviews with 28 families and numerous individuals revealed that most of them had left their place of origin prior to the period they identified as "the violence" and that all of them resided in two to three other locations before settling in El Tuerto. The central concern that these residents expressed was title to land. When asked if they knew of persons residing in this community who were internally displaced because of the violence, the residents replied in the affirmative. Although they were reluctant to explicitly say so, their response to this question suggested that the conflict-induced displaced residents of El Tuerto constituted a distinct category. When further queried about the conflict-induced displaced, the economic displaced residents of El Tuerto indicated that they had little contact with that group.

In Los Canolitos, 18 displaced families originally from Quiche whose displacement could be categorized as conflict-induced because of their reasons given for displacement and the specific time frame in which their displacement occurred. However, nearly all of these families were hesitant to self-identify as conflict-induced displaced. One family described themselves as "not displaced, but in a place not of their origin." When asked if they would like to return to their homes in Quiche, one family responded that fear keeps them from returning while another family noted that they have nothing to return to in that Department. Among this group only one of the families admitted that they had extensive awareness of CONDEG—the Council of Displaced Persons of Guatemala formed to obtain land and housing for IDPs and their right to return to their communities from where they originally fled. Despite this awareness, this family believed that CONDEG no longer represented popular issues but has grown more NGO-like.

In Via Canales, five of seven families, who were originally from Quiche all cited the violence as the reason for their leaving in the early 1980s; however, once again, they are reluctant to self-identify as conflict-induced displaced. Their hesitancy, in part, could be attributed to the fear that most of them expressed as reason for their unwillingness to return to their place of origin. Among the residents of this community, the land issue and their dire conditions of poverty are paramount among their immediate concerns.

While the 57 families and individuals surveyed represent only a small number of IDPs in and around Guatemala City, their circumstances do seem to indicate that the formal peace of 1996 and the *Accord on the Uprooted Population* did not cast a wide net over Guatemalan society. One observation can be noted—despite the differences in reasons cited for displacement across the three communities, the land issue remains a pervasive theme among the IDPs surveyed. Additionally, while some cohesiveness was evident among the residents within each of the three communities, these IDPs appeared to self-select on the basis of their self-identification as the root cause of their displacement. More research is needed that includes future visits to marginalized and displaced communities with residents who self-identify as conflict-induced displaced so that they can be compared to this preliminary group.

## Conclusion

These preliminary findings lead us back to our original questions regarding IDPs and self-identification—when does an IDP cease to be an IDP? If these individuals are unwilling to self-identify as conflict induced internally displaced and, if they consider themselves to be at home despite the fact they are not in their original place of origin, do we as researchers have the right to still call them internally displaced? If an IDP does in fact identify as being displaced, but for reasons other than conflict how then do we classify them? For example, what if a community predominately expresses the sentiment that they are internally displaced

due to lack of economic choices in their places of origin? Even if it is easy to surmise that the economic degradation of society is a direct result of the violence inflicted on the population are we able to call these people conflict displaced? Even still, if we do find those who are conflict-induced displaced and are willing to self-identify as such, but are unwilling to return, are they no longer an IDP? If one considers oneself to be resettled for whatever reason, then have they ceased to be displaced? These are some of the questions we as researchers are trying to discern.

Clearly, in the case of Guatemala, if the fear factor precludes both the self-identification of, and the return of conflict-induced IDPs, then we in the academic community are left with a gross misunderstanding of what the Peace Accords intended to accomplish. Additionally, if economics is the reason cited most often for past and present internal displacement regardless of the actual cause, then surely the rehabilitation of Guatemalan society after 36 years of civil war is compromised when over half its population remains outside the umbrella of civic inclusion. Surely, one would not anticipate that this rehabilitation would occur instantaneously; however, the international community has for the most part done just that. As an academic community and as privileged outside observers it is imperative that we recognize Guatemala's internal displacement problem as being unresolved by the 1994 Accord on Resettlement, and the subsequent 1996 peace agreement. Until the issue of internal displacement is settled for all of Guatemala's citizens how will peace ever be *firm* or *lasting*?

## Endnotes

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# History, Political Discourse, and Narrative Strategies in the African Novel: Ahmadou Kourouma's *Allah n'est pas obligé*

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## Introduction

African writing in European languages has evolved over the years, and so have the themes and the narrative strategies. During the colonial era, African writers were mainly concerned with challenging the myths and Euro-centric perceptions often created about Africans by Westerners. They challenged the moral, political, and economic legitimacy of colonialism, and also sought to educate Westerners as well as Africans themselves on African traditions and customs. In the post-independence era, African writers have drawn on recent history for their imagination and have mostly turned to concerns about governance in the post-colonial states. In this study, I attempt to delineate the connection between history, political discourse, and narrative strategies in a recent francophone West African novel. The Ivorian writer Ahmadou Kourouma is one of those authors whose writing focuses on politics among other agendas in Africa. In an earlier study, I argued that Kourouma's *Monnè, outrages et défis* is a historical novel.<sup>1</sup> *Allah n'est pas obligé* is also a historical novel, though not in the conventional sense in which historical novel is defined. In a study on Kourouma's *Monnè, outrages, et défis*, Abiola Irele observed that:

Although not exactly a historical novel in the conventional sense, the fact that the work draws directly upon the actual facts of the history of French colonialism in West Africa for its theme and for its system of allusions makes it particularly interesting for considering the function of narrative in its projection of the historical consciousness in modern African literature.<sup>2</sup>

In this study, I am interested in how Kourouma uses narrative in his projection of historical consciousness. Irele's assertion is relevant in a reading of *Allah n'est pas obligé*, a novel that is inspired by the recent history of post-colonial states in the West African region. Narrative techniques Kourouma employs in this novel demonstrate how adept he is at using history as raw material for his fictional imagination. As characteristic in his other novels, he draws on oral narrative techniques and manipulates the French language in a manner that is typical of his writing in general.

The rapprochement between history and fiction is the subject of a study by Hayden White.<sup>3</sup> According to White,

what distinguishes "historical" from "fictional" stories is first and foremost their content, rather than their form. He goes on to assert that the content of historical stories is real events, events that really happened, rather than imaginary events, events invented by the narrator. White also believes that what this implies is that the form in which historical events present themselves to a prospective narrator is found rather than constructed. What White postulates here is interesting for a reading of Kourouma's novel which is inspired by recent historical events in West Africa. If it is the content rather than the form that distinguishes the "historical" from the "fictional," as White asserts, then what status do we accord to the "fictional" which is inspired by the "historical"? White attempts to answer this question when he postulates that what distinguishes historical fiction from history is not only the marrying of real events with imaginary ones but also the fact that the form in the narrative is constructed by the author.<sup>4</sup> What makes his theory even more interesting for us is the fact that in constructing the form of his narrative, Kourouma resorts to narrative strategies that deconstruct the dominant discourse in the history that inspires his fictional creation, as I intend to demonstrate in this study. His narrative strategies are also determined by historical time — post-colonial Africa — and cultural codes — African oral narrative forms.

In this study, using theories in historical fiction, I contend that in his novel, Kourouma makes use of historical "causality" the same way a historian does in a historical work. For me, history is not merely about the distant past. Rather, history continues to manifest itself in the present as we see in Kourouma's novel. Yet Kourouma evokes historical personalities in order to lampoon them, and to critique dictatorship and those responsible for the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. To do this, Kourouma blends history with fiction through an effective use of certain narrative techniques such as humor, proverbs, flashbacks, and the use of a diegetic picaresque-like narrative voice that speaks against injustice on behalf of the voiceless, the subaltern.

## Historical Fiction and National Identities

In their introduction to the book on *Identities* that they co-edited, Kwame Appiah and Henry Louis Gates comment that:

Ethnic and national identities operate in the lives of individuals by connecting them with some people, dividing them from others. Such identities are often deeply integral to a person's sense of self, defining an "I" by placing it against a background "we."<sup>5</sup>

I find this contention relevant in my assessment of Kourouma's narrative about national and ethnic identities. The life of the narrator, Birima, is intrinsically linked to that of others he reveals to the reader through his narrative by a kind of "destiny." Yet this "destiny" is forged through the acts of people who try to connect with some while striving to distance themselves from others. Their sense of an "I" and a "we" is defined in terms of ethnic, national, and class identities. It is through the use of history as raw material that Kourouma skillfully creates a fictional story that is so close to the lives and destinies of the peoples of the region, and in the process questions how political discourse shapes people's identities.

Kourouma's novel is about representing the past through fictional discourse. His fiction helps us understand the past but also the present, because people's identities have been affected by events of the recent past. But how do historians and novelists represent the past? According to Hayden White, the past can only be represented in either consciousness or discourse in an "imaginary" way because the past by definition is about events and processes considered to be no longer perceivable.<sup>6</sup> If what White postulates is plausible, then this is a rapprochement between history and fiction. Both are by this manner of reasoning "imaginary." It also makes it interesting in this light to see how legitimate it is to argue as Paul Veynes does that the novelist can question historical causality.<sup>7</sup> One way Kourouma questions historical causality is through the discourse he creates around national identities and political discourse.

In this section of the essay, I focus on the importance of ethnic and national identities in the history that serves as raw material for Kourouma's novel. In the section that follows, I will then illustrate what narrative strategies he uses to deconstruct the political discourse that forges the identities of peoples. Kourouma's narrator introduces himself as a "p'tit nègre parce que je parle mal le français"<sup>8</sup> (a little nigger boy because I speak French badly). This is a subtle allusion to the history of colonizer-colonized relationship and the pejorative manner in which the French refer to Africans who do not speak what is considered standard French. Yet, Kourouma's narrative is not about colonial relationships, but rather about inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts in the West African region. He refers to some African countries as "républiques bananières corrompues de l'Afrique francophone"<sup>9</sup> (corrupt banana republics of francophone Africa). Several times he alludes specifically to some countries in the same terms. For example, "une république foutue et corrompue comme en Guinée, en Côte d'Ivoire etc. etc."<sup>10</sup>

(a damned hopeless and corrupt republic as in Guinea, in Ivory Coast etc.).

Ethnicity is important in the history the novel evokes because it defines people's identities. The narrator introduces himself as a Malinke:

Les Malinkés, c'est ma race à moi. C'est la sorte de nègres noirs africains indigènes qui sont nombreux au nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, en Guinée et dans d'autres républiques bananières et foutues comme Gambie, Sierra Leone et Sénégal là-bas etc.<sup>11</sup>

[The Malinke are my own ethnic group. They are the kind of nigger black indigenous Africans who are many in northern Ivory Coast, in Guinea and in other banana and damned republics such as Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Senegal over there etc.]

Though the emphasis is not on pre-colonial history, Kourouma attempts to situate recent West African history within the framework of a past in which artificial borders were created. Those borders now share something in common. In the novel, they represent the human tragedy the novel describes. In terms of political identity, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire are well demarcated by political discourse and by official borders, while at the same time emphasizing how they shape ethnic and national identities.

Malinke identity in all the West African countries is defined by the commonality of culture, and not necessarily by the identity of post-colonial nation-states. Indeed, Kourouma's novel is about the tragedy of how identities are defined by who wields power and who has the political power to define people's citizenship, and for that matter their identity. The main characters in the novel constantly find themselves having to define their identity, or to have it defined for them by others who attempt to erase their identity. The only way to survive the mayhem is to constantly identify themselves with the ethnic group that wields power in the country at any specific time in history. They also define their identities at each border crossing, emphasizing, when politically prudent for their own safety, their Malinke origin. Nationality becomes less important than ethnicity in this reshaping of history. Yet the two are intertwined. Also, class, as in the case of the military, is important in this type of political discourse.

Another important factor in recent West African history that inspires Kourouma's novel is the phenomenon of child soldiers.<sup>12</sup> The narrator (Birama) is a child soldier who travels between several countries. His personal adventures during these travels become the motif for portrayal of historical characters and historical events. He tells us that he has killed a lot of people in Liberia and Sierra Leone where he was a child soldier. He is haunted by the ghosts ("gnamas") of his numerous victims. Political discourse has

made a street child such as Birama an important agent in the civil wars in the region. Civil wars reconstruct people's identities and Birama's national identity becomes blurred in his peregrinations across borders in search of means of survival.

The narrator is not an authentic historical figure. Yet the evocation of authentic family and ethnic names emphasizes the importance of these cultural traits in the politics of identity in the region. Birama's family and ethnic identities in a way shape his destiny. At borders, he and the other travelers can only survive the gaze of enemy soldiers as long as they are not identified with the enemy ethnic camp.

Joking relationships among ethnic groups are important in how they define themselves, and the narrator takes advantage of this social reality in his humorous description of some characters:

Les Bambara sont parfois aussi appelés Sobis, Senoufos, Kabiès, etc. Ils étaient nus avant la colonisation. On les appelait les hommes nus.<sup>13</sup>

[The Bambara are sometimes also called Sobis, Senoufos, Kabiès, etc. Before colonization, they were naked. They were called the naked people.]

These joking relations have been maintained throughout the history of the region, and Kourouma appropriates this humor in order to deconstruct the political discourse about national and ethnic identities.

One important characteristic of a historical novel is that it evokes names of people, places, and historical events that are verifiable. In Kourouma's novel, the narrator, Birama, is a fictional character, and so are a lot of the characters such as the military with whom he comes into direct contact. Yet, Kourouma also evokes authentic important political characters in the recent history of the West African region. They are important characters in terms of the role they each played in the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. For example, Charles Taylor (president of Liberia until rebel forces and the pressure of the international community forced him out of power at the time this study was done) was responsible in many ways for some of the atrocities committed in the Liberian civil war. With the humor that characterizes the whole novel, this is how the narrator describes political figures:

Il y avait au Liberia quatre bandits de grand chemin: Doe, Taylor, Johnson, El Hadji, et d'autres fretins bandits.<sup>14</sup>

[In Liberia, there were four highway bandits: Doe, Taylor, Johnson, El Hadji Koroma, and other small fry bandits.]

The narrator evokes not only historical personalities but also authentic political groups such as the National Patri-

otic Front of Liberia: "NPFL est le mouvement du bandit Taylor qui sème la terreur dans la région"<sup>15</sup> (NPFL is the movement of the bandit Taylor who spreads terror in the region). When he evokes the name of another political group and its association with Samuel Doe, this is how he describes it:

UNIMO (United Liberian Movement) ou Mouvement de l'Unité Libérienne, c'est la bande des loyalistes, les héritiers du bandit de grand chemin, le président-dictateur Samuel Doe qui fut dépecé. Il fut dépecé un après-midi brumeux dans Monrovia le terrible, capitale de la République de Libéria indépendante depuis 1860. Walahé (au nom d'Allah)!<sup>16</sup>

[UNIMO (United Liberian Movement) is the band of the loyalists, the inheritors of the high-way bandit, the president-dictator Samuel Doe who was dismembered. He was dismembered one foggy afternoon in terrible Monrovia, capital of the Republic of Liberia independent since 1860. Walahé (in the name of Allah!)]

The violence in the text is metaphoric of the violence that permeates the history that serves as raw material for the novel. The death of Doe itself was documented in a videotape that was circulated around the world, emphasizing the senselessness and the inhumanity in dictatorship, military intervention, and their attendant consequences. This video that was created by the perpetrators in order to document their own inhuman act becomes part of historical documentation. It is interpreted differently in different communities around the world outside the context in which it was produced. In a way, it provides evidence for a criticism of the regime that replaced Samuel Doe's. The video serves as a testimony for why most African countries need political reforms so badly. Neither Samuel Doe's dictatorial regime nor that of the ones that overthrew his government had any political or moral legitimacy to rule over Liberians. By evoking this history, Kourouma questions historical causality.

The novel deplores the different forms of ethnic violence. Samuel Doe, a Krahn, and Thomas Quionpka, a Gyo, who belong to the largest ethnic groups, kill all the Afro-American senators and then massacre their family members. Identity is defined by ethnicity and class, and sometimes identities are defined by suppressing the identities of others, as we see in the massacres.

Doe makes mockery of democracy when he quits the army to be elected as a civilian president. Kourouma evokes this tragic history with his characteristic humor:

Et la constitution fut un dimanche matin votée à 99,99% des votants. A 99,99% parce que 100% ca faisait pas très sérieux. Ca faisait *ouya-ouya*.<sup>17</sup>

[And the constitution was approved one Sunday morning by a vote of 99.99%. A 99.99% vote because 100% did not look very serious. It was *ouya-ouya*.]

In many ways, Kourouma's language is a subversive one. The narrator is a child soldier. Yet obviously the author manipulates his language and speaks about politics with an intellectual maturity that is not possible in a person of the age of the narrator. But the strategy is to use humor to subvert the discourse of political figures such as Doe.

In this tragic story of civil war in Liberia, Kourouma is very critical of the international community too. This is particularly the case in the description of how Doe was killed at a time ECOMOG seemed to be in control of things in the Liberian capital. The choice that the historical novelist (just like the historian) makes as to what to narrate is a subjective one. The choice of events that inspire Kourouma's fiction is clearly a strategy to have an impact on the psyche of the reader. The violent language in the narrative is an ideological choice that Kourouma makes.

In the second part of the novel, the narrator takes us to neighboring Sierra Leone where the same drama of civil war plays out, again with the use of child soldiers as was the case in Liberia. For Kourouma the novelist, the tragedies that played out in the recent history of the two countries are interconnected. It is an indictment of ethnic and national politics in the West African region. These are the civil wars that have redefined the identity of millions of people in the region. And it is not fortuitous that the same child soldier narrator takes us across the border to reveal the tragic history of Sierra Leone. The international community has tried to interpret this recent history, and so it is not a coincidence that recently Charles Taylor was indicted by an international court of justice in Sierra Leone for crimes against humanity for his role in the civil war that happened in that country.

The narrator describes Sierra Leone as a "bordel" (bloody hell):

La Sierra Leone c'est le bordel, oui, le bordel au carré. On dit qu'un pays est le bordel au simple quand des bandits de grand chemin se partagent le pays comme au Liberia.<sup>18</sup>

[Sierra Leone is the bloody hell. Yes, the squared bloody hell. We say that a country is simply the bloody hell when highway bandits divide the country among themselves like in Liberia.]

"Bandits" is a humorous term that becomes a refrain in the entire narrative to aptly describe a tragic history.

The tragic history of Sierra Leone is also about the suppressed discourse of the subaltern. As in Liberia, identity is defined by who wields political power:

En Sierra Leone, étaient dans la danse l'association des chasseurs, le Kamajor, et le démocrate Kabbah, en plus des bandits Foday Sankoh, Johnny Koroma, et certains fretins de bandits. C'est pourquoi on dit qu'en Sierra Leone règne plus que le bordel, règne le bordel au carré.<sup>19</sup>

[In Sierra Leone, the hunters association, the Kamajor, and the democrat Kabbah, as well as the bandits Foday Sankoh, Johnny Koroma, and certain small fry bandits were in the dance. That is why it is said that in Sierra Leone there is more than the bloody hell, there is the squared bloody hell.]

The narrator tells us Sierra Leone used to be a haven of peace, then goes on to recall how the first president, Milton Margai, favored members of his own ethnic group. This is aptly portrayed in a proverb: "Ca, c'était normal, on suit l'éléphant dans la brousse pour ne pas être mouillé par la rose"<sup>20</sup> (that was normal; one follows an elephant in the bush in order not to be wetted by the dew). The history of the civil war in Sierra Leone is one of betrayal of what I would call the "petit peuple" (the powerless ordinary people). And Kourouma suggests that this was done "avec la complicité du bandit Taylor de ce pays [le Liberia]" (with the complicity of Taylor the bandit of that country [Liberia]). Yet the betrayal of the people in this history was accentuated by the dubious nature of the intervention of the international community, Houphouët Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire being the target of Kourouma's most invective diatribe. There are other heads of state of the region who are also targets of Kourouma's sarcasm: Abacha of Nigeria, and Eyadema of Togo for example:

On fait appel au nouveau sage de l'Afrique, au nouveau doyen d'âge des dictateurs africains, le dictateur Eyadema. Le vieux dictateur Houphouët-Boigny qui, depuis des lustres, remplissait ce rôle a cassé la pipe entre temps.<sup>21</sup>

[They appeal to the new sage of Africa, the new most senior member of the African dictators, the dictator Eyadema. The old dictator Houphouët-Boigny who, for a long time played this role, has in the meantime kicked the bucket.]

In narrating the story of the civil war, Kourouma recalls how victims' arms were cut off. The narrator alludes to this tragedy when he recounts how the fictional character Tieffi "a voulu nous envoyer dans l'abattoir; c'est le coin où on coupait les mains et les bras des citoyens sierra-leonais pour les empêcher de voter"<sup>22</sup> (wanted to send us to the slaughterhouse. That was where they cut the hands and the arms of Sierra Leonean citizens in order to prevent them

from voting). This inhuman act is a very symbolic way of terrifying the population into accepting a government imposed on them. It is an attempt to deny them of the will to exercise their democratic rights. The narrator identifies five groups involved in the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, and as in the case of Liberia, the natural resources of the country become paradoxically the symbol of the armed conflict as the different factions fight for control of the diamond and gold regions.

Thus, Kourouma's novel is a fictional documentation of a history of human tragedy, and the historical figures who take on fictional roles in the novel only demonstrate Paul Veynes' assertion that history is a true novel and that the conception that history makes of historical "causality" is exactly the same that a novelist makes of causality in his or her novel.<sup>23</sup> Kourouma evokes historical figures in order to lampoon them, to make them an object of mockery in order to emphasize the human consequences of the irresponsible acts of politicians. The privilege of fiction is that the writer can manipulate history and question historical causality.

According to Hayden White, the story told in a historical narrative is a mimesis of the story lived in some region of historical reality, and insofar as it is an accurate imitation, it is considered a truthful account thereof.<sup>24</sup> This theory is helpful in understanding how Kourouma uses historical figures and how his fiction can be deemed a mimesis of the story lived in the West African region.

## Narrative Strategies

In this section, I attempt to illustrate the relationship between political discourse and the narrative strategies that Kourouma employs in his novel. In a study I did on Kourouma's *Monnè, outrages et défis*, I argued that using the language of the former colonizer, Kourouma "translates knowing into telling" as Hayden White terms it in his study of narrative already alluded to above.<sup>25</sup> This is what Kourouma also does in *Allah n'est pas obligé*. White has argued that "the functional model of discourse relegates different kinds of discourse to the status of 'codes' in which different kinds of 'messages' can be cast and transmitted with a communicative, expressive, or conative aim in view."<sup>26</sup> He goes on to posit that these aims are not mutually exclusive for every discourse has aspects of all three functions, and that this is the case for "factual" as well as "fictional" discourse. The discourse in Kourouma's novel is embedded with "codes" which have ideological "messages." The close reading of the language employed by Kourouma that I will do in this section is an attempt to decode the messages in his historical fiction, and also to delineate the importance of this language in the political discourse that the novel creates.

The narrative in Kourouma's novel is characterized by the use of imagery and by symbolism. For example, when the narrator describes the conditions in which girls live under the supervision of Colonel Hadja Gabrielle Aminata, the environment is metaphoric of the physical and mental

condition of the characters. The compound walls, the human corpses, and Aminata's ruthless discipline make the girls collectively an epitome of what war has forced upon the inhabitants of the region, and especially women. Yet there is one narrative strategy which poses a dilemma to me, and that is the role of the female characters. Some of the female characters play a role that is not in consonance with what happened in the conflicts in the West African region. For example, the use of fire arms by female characters wielding some military power in a camp is not the sort of thing that we have seen in the recent history of the region. In a sarcastic way, Kourouma mocks at the politics of exclusion which marginalizes women. In the event of a coup d'état or of civil wars, women are often raped. Rape is sometimes used as a weapon against the opposing camp in a battle for power in which women are not the initiators of the conflicts, but are ultimately the victims of them.

Language is important in historical as well as fictional narrative. According to White:

A narrative account is always a figurative account, an allegory. [Therefore] to leave this figurative element out of consideration in the analysis of a narrative is to miss not only its aspect as allegory but also the performance in language by which a chronicle is transformed into a narrative.<sup>27</sup>

Kourouma has created an allegory in his narrative through the use of historical figures and events, and through the use of proverbs, humor, sarcasm, and other types of figurative language. Readers familiar with Kourouma's previous novels know that the use of proverbs is a distinctive characteristic of his writing. The use of proverbs does not merely create a local flavor in the narrative. Proverbs are more apt in portraying his characters, and in describing the personality of these characters and the history that they ultimately shape. Proverbs are a communicative strategy, and in African society they are often used as a subversive strategy with an interlocutor.

Associated with the use of proverbs is the use of humor. Proverbs convey humor and sarcasm more effectively than ordinary language. Humor and sarcasm are a very effective language strategy for conveying Kourouma's critique of dictatorial regimes in the West African region. Humor and sarcasm reinforce the metaphor in a proverb. For example, to explain why he should be grateful to Bella the leader, the narrator says that "il faut toujours remercier l'arbre à karité sous lequel on a ramassé beaucoup de bons fruits pendant la bonne saison"<sup>28</sup> (you must always thank the shea-tree under which you have picked a lot of good fruits in the good season). To poke fun at insincere Muslims, the narrator says "l'infirmier était musulman et ne pouvait pas mentir"<sup>29</sup> (the nurse was a Muslim and could not lie). Using irony he says of the man who takes away the children from his aunt: "A cause des droits de la femme, les deux enfants ont été arrachés à leur mère et confiés à leur père"<sup>30</sup> (because of the rights of women, the two children

were seized from their mother and given to their father). Language strategy also explains the Africanization of the French language, which again is very characteristic of Kourouma's writing. It is a subversive strategy. The French language is no longer the exclusive creation of the metropole, but rather a hybrid of French and terms from African languages. Indeed, the whole novel is a metaphor of the deconstruction of the French language.

This leads us to the discussion of one important narrative strategy that Kourouma employs in the novel. The narrator claims that he needs different types of dictionaries in order to be able to narrate his story, because he did not have a good formal education in French. In the first sentence of the novel, he identifies himself as Birama, and later tells us that he is a school drop out. This, he claims, explains why he says of himself: "P'tit nègre parce que je parle mal le français"<sup>31</sup> (little nigger boy because I speak French badly). This is a narrative strategy on the part of Kourouma. The narrator subverts the formality and the cultural connotations of the French language by recourse to an Africanization of the French language. After all, Birama is supposed to be uneducated, and as such we expect him to have a sub-standard linguistic competence in French. Kourouma also subverts the French language through the use of authentic Malinke proverbs to demonstrate how the French language is inadequate in portraying indigenous African discourse. The narrator uses several dictionaries in order to translate what he calls his "bla bla" and this seemingly authenticates his claim that the reader cannot blame him for a lack of profound knowledge of the French language. Yet it is through the psyche of the semi-illiterate Malinke man that Kourouma uses imagination, marrying the "historical" with the "fictional."

The narrative is interrupted frequently by definitions in parentheses of words and expressions which the narrator assumes his audience might not understand. While these definitions create humor in the language, they also unnecessarily interfere with the flow of the narrative itself. I should say nonetheless that these constant interruptions do not affect the progress of the story itself. What is important is how this humor deconstructs the language of the political figures.

At the end of the novel, we learn how the narrator came about all these dictionaries in his possession. The dictionaries are *Larousse*, and *le Petit Robert* for French, and *l'Inventaire des particularités lexicales du français en Afrique noire*, and *le Harrap's* for pidgin. Varrassouba Diabaté (of the griot caste) is employed as interpreter for the Haut Commissariat aux Réfugiés (High Commission for Refugees) because he knows a lot of languages. He is a Malinke and his family name Diabaté tells us that he is of the griot caste:

Varrassouba Diabaté était intelligent comme tous les gens de sa caste. Il comprenait et parlait plusieurs langues: le français, l'anglais, le pidgin,

le krahn, le gyo et d'autres langues des noirs nègres indigènes sauvages de ce fichu pays du Liberia.<sup>32</sup>

[Varrassouba was intelligent like all the people of his caste. He understood and spoke several languages: French, English, pidgin, krahn, gyo, and other languages of the savage indigenous nigger blacks of this damned country, Liberia.]

Varrassouba dies and Sidiki does not know what to do with the dictionaries. So he gives them to Birama the narrator. Birama is going through the four dictionaries when it dawns on him to tell the story of his own life. It is also at this moment that his cousin Dr. Mamadou (who, unlike the narrator, has been successful in school) who is traveling with him in the same car to Abidjan asks him: "Petit Birama, dis-moi, dis-moi tout ce que tu as vu et fait, dis-moi comment tout ça s'est passé"<sup>33</sup> (little Birama, tell me everything; tell me everything you saw and did; tell me how it all happened). Thus, on the prompting of a cousin, the narrator tells a tale of his life, which becomes the motif for recounting the atrocities of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This explains why we see the story through the eyes of a child-soldier, and in this first person narrative, there is authorial intervention especially in the commentary on the civil wars in the region. In narrating his story, Birama wants to convince his audience about the cause and effect in that story. He is the narrative voice through which Kourouma speaks about historical causality in West Africa, and his subaltern voice is a subversive one.

Birama's adventures make him a modern version of a picaresque character. His travel through several places in the region allows the fictional narrator to recount the life of child soldiers forced by adults into a life of death and destruction. The picaresque hero in classical European novels (and Lazarillo of the Spanish novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* comes to mind) belongs by definition to the lower class. Also, chance plays an important role in their life. The picaresque hero travels a lot, changes masters, and becomes more hardened with each experience. In many ways, Birama's life recalls that of the picaresque hero. He is not necessarily of a lower caste. Yet, he belongs to the lower class because of his status as an economically and socially exploited child-soldier living in miserable conditions. Also, like the picaresque hero he changes "masters." He finds himself constantly under the command of different military and para-military personnel, and he is obliged to bow to their whims and caprices. It is also significant that like the picaresque hero, he finds ways to survive in extremely difficult and changing situations. His picaresque-like life makes him an omniscient narrator, and through his gaze Kourouma attempts to make a connection between political discourse and the human tragedies that have unfolded in the region in recent times. The story of political dictatorship and violence is not told by the powerful but through the voice of a picaresque hero who serves as the voice of the subaltern.

In reading Kourouma's novel, I see a link between colonial and post-colonial discourse. The relationship between characters in the novel is one that I would compare to the Manichean relationship that according to JanMohammed prevailed between the colonizer and the colonized.<sup>34</sup> It is a relationship characterized by a polarization between those that wield political power on the one hand, and the mass of the population on the other. Child soldiers are made pawns in this power struggle between politicians. And so are the women. I have already discussed how ethnicity determines people's identity. Roland Barthes in his writing described how colonial language revealed the mechanisms of European power. It was a language that was meant to intimidate and thus facilitate the control of colonized peoples.<sup>35</sup> I appropriate that theory in the context of post-colonial Africa and intimate that the Charles Taylors who are characters in Kourouma's historical novel use only the language of intimidation; and that language reminds one of the colonial order. Only now the colonial order is the language of African dictators and not that of European colonizers. Frantz Fanon had made a prophetic assessment of the national bourgeoisie at the time of African nationalism against colonialism.<sup>36</sup> The post-colonial political leader in Kourouma's novel, like the nationalist leaders that Fanon had talked about, is alienated from the mass of the people. No wonder the language Kourouma uses in the novel is symbolic of the discourse of the politicians. Birama, the narrator, needs several dictionaries in order to communicate his "bla bla." His language would otherwise be incomprehensible. It symbolizes how politicians do not communicate well with the people they govern. The use of three dictionaries is also symbolic of the rapport between francophone Africans and France. French is a cultural, economic, and political tool in post-colonial Africa. It represents the unequal nature of the partnership.

It is significant that the narrator identifies each child-soldier by name. Child soldiers were not just a mass of people. For example, Kik was attending school when the civil war broke out. He ran into the bush. "Kik regagna la concession familiale et trouva son père éborgné, son frère éborgné, sa mère et sa soeur violées et les têtes fracassées. Tous ses parents proches et éloignés morts"<sup>37</sup> (Kik returned to the family compound and found his father slaughtered, his brother slaughtered, his mother and his sister raped, and their heads smashed into pieces. All his immediate and extended relatives dead). Kik's individual plight represents that of all the victims of the atrocities, and Kourouma shocks the sensibilities of his reader to a breaking point through the use of a language that is violent.

Another narrative device is the constant evocation of Allah, as one does in an oral narrative prayer. The evocation of Allah as a narrative device emphasizes the thematic importance of religion. Kourouma pokes fun at the hypocritical practitioners of both Christianity and Islam. In one instance, sex becomes a metaphor for the atrocities caused by the civil wars. Mother Superior (who had defended her school valiantly against gangsters) makes love profusely

with Prince Johnson, one of the historical characters in the novel. This act is a metaphor that depicts the spiritual and moral depravity of Johnson, and by extension, all the corrupt African politicians.

Kourouma uses flashbacks, and at times the narrator introduces another narrative voice by suggesting that what he recounts was told him by the other characters. If Birama sometimes relies on others in order to tell his story, his role as omniscient narrator is limited, after all. It suggests that historical narrative is subjective and so its authenticity should always be questioned.

Nonetheless, the diegetic narrator controls the narrative. He controls and manipulates the pace of the narrative, and the truth, because all the other narrative voices do not address the reader directly in any significant way. This is much like the hegemonic discourse of the historical characters. They control power and for that matter speech and freedom in the history that is the raw material for Kourouma's novel. Kourouma the novelist is like the praise singer among some West African societies. The praise singer (or *griot*) manipulates and controls the discourse at the time he or she performs in public. The praise singer can make authentic praises, but he or she can also criticize directly or use very ironical and satirical language to lambast the people who are the object of the singing. In this novel, the narrator often sarcastically praises the behavior of brutal dictators and their cohorts, using proverbs that evoke Malinke beliefs and reveal their relationship with nature. This lends credence to my interpretation of Kourouma's role as that of a *griot*; but a *griot* that chants in a foreign language that he has learned to appropriate well to fit his ideological agenda. And that ideological agenda is to use fiction to lay bare the tragedy in human relationship in the West African region (and by extension all of Africa), when that human relationship is hegemonically controlled by the inhuman acts of political dictators and their lieutenants. And that leads me to my conclusion.

## Conclusion

In his rapprochement of historical and fictional narrative, White provides us with a very useful tool for understanding what writers such as Kourouma have done in their fictional creation. White has theorized that the transition from the level of fact or event in the discourse to that of narrative can also be described as a "process of transcoding" in which historical events are retransmitted in a literary code.<sup>38</sup> What I have attempted to demonstrate in this study is the discursive strategy Kourouma has employed in "transcoding" historical events in a literary code. We have seen how in the process, Kourouma represents how he perceives the relationship between historical causality and people's identities in the West African region. He uses a narrative strategy that deconstructs the language of historical personalities whose exercise of political power has negatively impacted the lives of people in the region. If narrative is a symbolic or symbolizing discursive structure as

White has theorized, then how important is truth in Kourouma's narrative? White has said that the notion of what constitutes a real event turns, not on the distinction between true and false, but rather on the distinction between real and imaginary. One can produce an imaginary discourse about real events that may not be less "true" for being imaginary.<sup>39</sup> What I can draw from this theory is that Kourouma's discourse in *Allah n'est pas obligé* is not less "true" because he has created an imaginary discourse about real events. For after all, as Frederic Jameson has suggested in a study, narrative is a "socially symbolic act." By its form alone, rather than by the specific "contents" with which it is filled, narrative endows events with meaning.<sup>40</sup> I would conclude from this study that indeed Kourouma's narrative is a "symbolic act," but I would argue, following the analysis I have done in this study, that it is not by its form alone, but also by its contents that Kourouma's narrative achieves this "symbolic act." This is how I see the connection between political discourse and narrative in Kourouma's historical fiction.

Writers challenge the authority of the status quo, the politicians. They do this by violating the space of hegemonic discourse, deconstructing that discourse, and serving as a voice of the subaltern. This is what makes Kourouma's historical fiction a powerful example of how narrative discourse can be an allegory for questioning historical causality.

## Endnotes

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
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6. White, *The Content of the Form*, p. 57.
7. Paul Veynes, *Comment on Ecrit l'Histoire* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), pp. 423–24.
8. Ahmadou Kourouma, *Allah n'est pas obligé* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), p. 9.
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12. Amnesty International has documented how child soldiers were used in the civil war in Sierra Leone. See *Sierra Leone: Childhood: A Casualty of Conflicts* (New York: Amnesty International, 31 August 2002).
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# Majoritarianism, A Cause of Conflict: The Rights and Wrongs of Self-Determinism

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## A Tale of Woe

This article starts with a few of the tragic events which have happened in the last twenty years, and all of them are related, directly, to the right of self-determination and the widely accepted majoritarian interpretation of that right. The most recent story is possibly the worst.

In July 2002, parties to the twenty-year old civil war in Sudan signed the Machakos Protocol. This states that, in six years' time, South Sudan shall have the right to self-determination, a referendum on secession. Within months, there was civil war in Darfur.

In September 1999, the (Catholic) people of East Timor exercised their right to be independent of the (Moslem) people of West Timor.<sup>1</sup> In so doing, they followed the example from Yugoslavia where, in 1991, the Catholic (Croatian) Slavs exercised their right to be separate from the Orthodox (Serbian) Slavs. More of the Balkans in a moment, but the reaction in East Timor was violent, and because of this and conflicts elsewhere in the archipelago, Indonesia has already been dubbed "Asia's Yugoslavia."

In March 1999, international mediators negotiated the Rambouillet Agreement by which Kosovo, in three years' time, would be allowed to exercise its right to self-determination. Milošević refused to sign. Within days, NATO forces were bombing Serbia. Eventually, Chernomyrdin re-negotiated the agreement by, *inter alia*, removing the referendum clause. Whereupon Milošević did sign. So the bombing had not served its stated purpose.

On Good Friday, 1998, the British and Irish governments launched the Belfast Agreement. Accordingly, at some future date, Northern Ireland will be allowed to exercise its right to self-determination by referendum, repeatedly, every seven years or so, until it gets the answer they want. Partly as a direct result, sectarianism in the Province is as bad as ever!

In 1995, Quebec exercised its right to self-determination. The people had determined themselves to be part of Canada in 1980, but the losers of that referendum did not like the result; they wanted independence. So they arranged for another poll. They lost that one too, by 1%. Now they want a third. As in Northern Ireland, the process is not so much a referendum but a "never-end-'em."

In November 1991, the European Union set up the Badinter Commission to study the future of Yugoslavia, and it concluded that every people wishing to determine itself

should hold a referendum. As a result, the disease turned into a plague, and there were two-option votes in Slovenia (1990), Croatia (1991), Macedonia (1991) and Bosnia (1992), which were all recognised. The subject is still a bone of contention in Montenegro, where there's talk of a referendum and then independence on 13 July 2005, but any vote there will probably also be recognised. Other votes, in *Krajina* (1990 and '91), *Republika Srpska* (two in 1991, and one in each of '92, '93 and '94) and *Herzeg-Bosna* (2000), were not recognised. And a few other polls, in Kosovo (1991) and Sandžak (1991 and '92), got a mixed reception. The point, however, to quote Sarajevo's now legendary newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*, is that "all the wars in the former Yugoslavia started with a referendum."<sup>2</sup>

At about the same time, in December 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh held a referendum. Unlike the Balkans, the Caucasus held their plebiscites *after* their wars, by which time, of course, the minority was either exiled or dead. The vote in Nagorno-Karabakh was 99.9% in favour. Abkhazia also voted retrospectively, with 97% support.

## Fourteen Points

The right of self-determination, first put forward by President Wilson during the First World War,<sup>3</sup> suggests that every people shall be entitled to exercise this right. At the time, it foresaw the demise of imperial (but not fiscal) colonialism. Its application to-day, however, begs two questions. The first is, "what is a people?" And the second: "how shall a people exercise that right?" There are many academics who study the former, but few if any ask the question "how?"<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, in this article, we will look at the methodology — the *how?* — and ask if it is right and proper that a people should determine itself on the basis of only a majority of itself. Then we will examine this Western democratic structure, majoritarianism, in more general terms.<sup>5</sup> And finally, we will consider a rather more inclusive, more peaceful *modus vivendi*, at least in so far as it concerns decision-making, be it in parliament or be it in national plebiscites.

## Russian Dolls

If a great big country wishes to exercise the right of self-determination, it may. And if a majority so wishes, then that big country may continue to exist. Unless, that is, a minority, which happens to be concentrated in one particu-

lar part, decides to exercise its right to opt out. And if a majority of the minority so wishes, then it can seek independence and set up its own middle country. Unless, of course, a minority of the minority, which happens to be concentrated in one particular part, decides to exercise its right to opt out of opting out. And if a majority of the minority of the minority so wishes, then it can seek independence of the middle country and set up its own tiny country. Unless, needless to say, a minority of the minority of the minority... and if a majority of the minority of the minority of the minority....

Like the famous Russian dolls, every majority has its corresponding minority, and this formula will only bring peace, harmony and tranquillity to society, when every individual is an independent nation state consisting of only one person! The formula is a nonsense, a madness. For some reason, however, Western politicians are convinced that a decision can only be democratic if it is taken by a majority vote.

In practice, the big country is the UK, the USSR or Yugoslavia. The middle countries are (from the UK) Ireland; (from the USSR) Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova; and (from Yugoslavia) Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. And the tiny “countries” are (from the UK) Northern Ireland; (from the USSR) Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara, and Trans-Dnestr; and, (as implied above, from Yugoslavia), *Krajina*, *Republika Srpska* and *Herzeg-Bosna*, Kosova, and the *Sandžak*. The madness continues. Indonesia is already open to division in Aceh, Ambon and Irian Jaya, and that’s just the beginning. And now Sudan looks as if it might split up into South Sudan, Darfur, and maybe East Sudan. Except (so far) from the last named, every one of these places has seen serious, if not horrific violence. God knows what will happen if the disease spills over into the Congo.

## The Academic Debate

When the subject turns to electoral systems, politicians talk about lots of themes — majoritarian, proportional and preferential — and lots of variations on those themes — direct and indirect elections, electoral colleges, open and closed PR-list and two-tier systems, the single transferable vote and maybe even the quota Borda system.

On decision-making, however, there is not even a debate. If a decision is to be taken democratically, the voting procedure is, always was, and apparently must remain, a two-option majority vote. Either the decision is taken in consensus, by which is implied a *verbal* consensus; or it is taken by a (simple, weighted, qualified or consociational) majority vote. Furthermore, with the exception of a few special cases in post-conflict plural societies where cabinets are based on a system of power-sharing, governments themselves are invariably majoritarian, either single-party or majority coalition.<sup>6</sup>

In “normal” societies, then, in places like the U.S. and the UK, decisions are taken by simple majority vote. On

some sensitive issues, certain groups use a weighted majority vote. In more complex organisations like the EU, a rather odd formula is concocted so that big and small countries alike can vote together in a qualified majority vote. And in plural societies like Belgium or post-conflict societies like Northern Ireland and Bosnia, a form of consociational majority voting is employed. The question, however, is usually dichotomous. Politics is invariably adversarial. The system is always majoritarian. And this also applies to the right of self-determination, apparently. It is assumed to be a given, almost beyond question.

## Majoritarianism

The world, or at least the Western world, is obsessed with a double myth. Firstly, democracy is not majority rule, but they think it is. Democracy should not be a means by which one lot then dominates the rest. Rather, it is, or should be, a process by which all can come to an accommodation, their unanimous viewpoint, common consensus or, at the very least, their best possible compromise.

Secondly, a majority opinion cannot be *identified* by a majority vote, but they think it can. Among populations measured in umpteen millions, one cannot identify the popular will of a few millions by asking all of them a two-option question: something like are you left-wing or right-wing? They might be hard or soft left, hard right or middle right or soft right. Or they might be neither.

If this double myth could be shattered, international (i.e., Western) diplomats would no longer impose this majoritarian decision-making on other peoples, via the Badinter Commission on Yugoslavia, or via the Machakos Protocol on Sudan etc. So before we examine other methodologies, let us take a closer look at this majoritarian nonsense.

If the Labour Party, to take a British example, has a majority of the seats in parliament, it may form the government.<sup>7</sup> If, subsequently, the Labour Party decides to initiate a certain piece of legislation, it may do so. But the Labour Party, being democratic, takes its decisions by majority vote. The parliament, being democratic, does the same. In this instance, therefore, the outcome depends upon two votes: it needs the majority of the Labour Party, and the majority in parliament. So the actual outcome depends upon only the majority of the majority. But a 51% majority of a 51% majority is just a 26% minority. If you really wanted majority rule, you would have to insist upon 71% of 71%. Which would mean that any 30% minority could veto the proceedings. Either way, therefore, what goes for majority rule is actually, in many instances, a form of minority rule. Majority rule does not even exist.

Now consider a different scenario. Most political questions are multi-optional. There are, invariably, many constitutional arrangements to choose from, an almost infinite range of planning options, numerous variations of budget proposals, and quite a few possible ways of tackling the problems of Iraq, for example. In politics, most questions, if asked in the right way, are indeed multi-optional. It is not

a question of “Capital punishment for murder, yes or no?” It is, “How shall we deal with the convicted murderer?” It is not, “nuclear power, yes or no?” It is, “How shall we create sufficient energy?” It is not, “Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom or a united Ireland?” It is, “What is the constitutional future of Northern Ireland?” It is not, “Resolution 1441, yes or no?” It is, “How shall we deal with the question of Iraq?” And so on.

So what happens when a parliament or a people is given a stark choice between two possibilities — which we will call options **A** and **B** — when in fact there are other possibilities — option **C** at least, and maybe options **D** and **E** as well.

South Sudan, for example, according to the Machakos Protocol, could stay as part of Sudan (option **A**) or it could secede (option **B**). There again, it could be autonomous within a de-centralised Sudan (option **C**). Kashmir, to take another instance, could be incorporated into Pakistan (**A**), incorporated into India (**B**), or declared independent (**C**). In like manner, Northern Ireland could be part of the United Kingdom (**A**), or part of a united Ireland (**B**), or part of an Anglo-Celtic federation (**C**), or under a form of joint British/Irish authority (**D**).

The number of possible options cannot be decided by imposition; rather, the democratic process itself should allow all concerned to consider just what options are possible, and any subsequent vote should be based on a (short) list of, let us say, four to six options.

For present purposes, let us consider a hypothetical situation where an electorate is confronted by a two-option choice between options **A** and **B**, in what is nevertheless a three-option debate of options **A**, **B** and **C**. In the Scottish devolution debate, for example, there were three distinct possibilities: **A** *status quo*, that is, rule from Westminster; then came option **B**, devolution or autonomy; and finally, there was **C**, independence. The vote, Tony Blair decided, would be held between options **A** and **B**. So the Scottish National Party, which wanted option **C** to be on the ballot paper, would just have to go without.

Now it can be assumed that those who wanted **A** probably had preferences **A-B-C**. While those who wanted **B** had preferences **B-A-C** or **B-C-A**. If option **C** had been on the ballot paper, then those who wanted **C** would probably have had preferences **C-B-A**. Because **C** wasn't there, however, some **C** supporters argued that they should vote for **B** because it was their second best, while others said that they should vote for **A** in the hope that **B** would lose and that then all the **B** supporters would campaign for a second referendum, which just might include **C**.

Well, as it happened, they voted on just the two options, **A** or **B**. From the results, however, no one knows for sure how many of the **A** supporters were actually **C** supporters, nor how many of the **B** supporters were actually **C** supporters. So, on the basis of that referendum, there was only one *definite* conclusion: it was not that the people of Scotland wanted devolution, it was that Tony Blair wanted the people of Scotland to want devolution.

Except in comparatively rare cases like citizens' initiatives, then, the outcome of a majority vote *identifies*, not the will of the voters, not even the will of the majority of the voters, but simply the will of he who wrote the motion. Little wonder, therefore, that the majority vote was the chosen instrument of such notables as Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, Antonescu, Duvalier, Khomeini, Milošević and Tudjman, to name but some of those who have used this methodology successfully, and only one “democratic dictator,” Pinochet, actually lost his referendum.<sup>8</sup> Little wonder, too, that the majority vote is used so often by prime ministers in parliaments where, of course, they have the added advantage of a party whip.

In some instances, then, a majority vote is not very democratic. And in practice, some plebiscites on sovereignty have not been very democratic. The classic was in Bosnia where there were definitely more than two options on the agenda. Secondly, there were more than two ethno-religious groups. Thirdly, no one group had a majority, for there were, nominally, 40% Moslem, 30% Orthodox and 20% Catholic, along with a few others, the Jews and the Roma, to name but two. A direct consequence of holding a two-option majority vote in such a society was that any two of the bigger groups could gang up against the third. The whole thing was dangerous and highly divisive. The Moslems ganged up with the Catholics. The Orthodox boycotted. On the day of the vote, the barricades went up in Sarajevo. And within a year, the Catholic/Moslem gang had split up and they too were fighting a war.<sup>9</sup>

## A More Inclusive Democracy

When our forebears first opted for democracy, they knew that it was a system of governance which was “of the people, by the people and for the people.”<sup>10</sup> And they meant *all* the people. Democracy was meant to be for everybody, (even if the founding fathers tended to be a fairly small minority of white, free males).

The trouble came when, on some subject of dispute, they tried to identify either “the will of the people,” and/or that which should be its equivalent, “the will of parliament.” The only country which looked at this problem in any depth was France. In England and America, academics tended to favour “the greater good of the greater number,” which, (good or bad), is no more or less than majority rule. In France, however, they realised that you cannot *identify* the will of parliament by a two-option ballot. You can *confirm* it, perhaps. But you cannot *identify* a collective will by a majority vote.

Admittedly, if there is unanimity, it does not matter which (voting or non-voting) procedures are used, the outcome will always be that single, unanimous viewpoint. On matters of some dispute, however, where those concerned try to come to an accommodation, a majority opinion *may* be the same as the common consensus, but Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the first to note that this is not always the case.<sup>11</sup> Finally, if the topic is really contentious, the best

possible compromise is almost certainly *not* the same as the majority opinion; indeed, in most majority votes, there isn't even a compromise option to vote for! Again, we come to the conclusion that, in some instances, majority votes, and national plebiscites, are not very democratic!

Accordingly, when members of *l'Académie des Sciences* looked across the English Channel at what was, at the time, almost the only existing parliament in the world, they realised that the House of Commons was actually using the most inaccurate measure of collective opinion ever invented. (It still is!)

Heads were scratched, discussions were held...and two voting procedures were invented. In 1784, M. Jean-Charles de Borda proposed a points system, while Le Maquis de Condorcet preferred a pairings mechanism, a sort of league process. The former won the debate and, as a result, the Borda count was adopted by *l'Académie*, albeit mainly as an electoral system and rather less as a decision-making procedure. It worked well.

It didn't last very long, however, for a new member appeared on the scene and he wanted the simple majority vote. None of this consensus nonsense! It should be pointed out that this particular individual was not especially noted for his democratic idealism; his name was Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>12</sup> Four years' later, he won his third 99% referendum majority, this time in favour of one of his own "modest" proposals...that he should become Emperor. Another undemocratic majority vote.

Since that time, nearly every Western parliament has chosen to use the same methodology. Admittedly, Norway has made provision for a two-round procedure, while when debating amendments, Finland and Sweden sometimes use a form of serial voting, and so too does the U.S. Elsewhere, however, nearly every parliament uses the two-option majority vote, although, to be fair, at least twenty countries have sometimes allowed their citizens to enjoy a degree of pluralism in multi-option referendums.<sup>13</sup> For the most part, however, we Westerners impose this primitive two-option methodology both upon ourselves and on the hapless peoples of other countries, either as the means by which peoples may determine themselves, and/or as the methodology to be used in national parliaments. We even do this in places where majority rule should never have even been considered, places like Rwanda. Of which, more in a moment.

Happily, there are some exceptions, and some peoples have chosen to exercise their right of self-determination by means of a multi-option vote, although admittedly, most of these have been in a post-colonial setting.<sup>14</sup> Wherever there is an internal argument about some ethno-religious dispute, however, those involved do not want a compromise. So they use a simple, two-option vote, even, as we have seen, at the risk of war!

## An Open Society

A majority vote can only take place if the question is a closed one. It is "Option A, for-or-against?" Or it is "Option

A or option B?" In conflict resolution work, in contrast, mediators invariably rely on *open* questions. No matter whether the conflict is between man and woman, or whether it is of an ethno-religious nature between peoples, they first try to find out just which options exist. Then they establish what are everybody's preferences. And finally, they identify (usually in a verbal rather than in a votal process) that option which is the best possible compromise, i.e., the option which is everybody's highest average preference.

What is needed is a democratic structure which is itself peaceful, which, *inter alia*, allows for compromise. If the question is an open, multi-option ballot, and if everyone is enabled to express their preferences, then it should be possible to identify that option which is everybody's highest average preference.

As noted earlier, a democratic decision is either everyone's unanimous viewpoint, or their common consensus, or their best possible compromise. No matter which, it is always that option which is their highest average preference. An opinion ratified by a majority vote is democratic, sometimes. Everybody's consensus is always so.

## Democratic Logic

Let us first examine the theory of open decision-making. If there are five options "on the table," options **A**, **B**, **C**, **D** and **E**, and if everyone expresses their preferences on all five options, then it should be easy to see which one has the highest average preference. If option **D**, say, gets an average preference score of 1, then obviously everyone gave **D** their 1<sup>st</sup> preference. If option **C** gets an average preference score of 3, then either everyone gave **C** a 3<sup>rd</sup> preference, or some gave it a 2<sup>nd</sup> while an equal number gave it their 4<sup>th</sup> preference. And lastly, if option **A** gets an average score of 5, then obviously, everyone gave **A** their 5<sup>th</sup> preference.

Now in practice, the chances of every option getting the same mean score of 3 are just about nil. Something is bound to be above the mean score, (and something else below). "The Borda count always gives a definite result."<sup>15</sup>

If the winning option gets an average preference score of between 1 and 1-1/2, it can be said to enjoy overwhelming support if not, indeed, unanimity. If the outcome gets a score of about 2, it may be seen as the votal consensus. And if the most popular option is of the order of 2-1/2, then it represents the best possible compromise.

## The Gacacas

The traditional form of decision-making in Rwanda is the *gacaca*, a *Kinyarwanda* word meaning "grass." Basically, if your cows were eating my vegetables, both you and I would be called to a meeting of the village elders, who would doubtless be sitting on the grass, under the shade of "the big tree," to quote Julius Nyerere.<sup>16</sup> And they would talk and talk, until they came to a verbal consensus. To the African, "Majority rule was a foreign notion."<sup>17</sup>

Rwanda has now adopted this *gacaca* as the means by which to overcome the legacy of the genocide. The ring leaders of that atrocity still go to the UN court in Arusha. But the other suspected criminals, possibly as many as 100,000 people, are being asked to confront their victims' bereaved and, depending on the severity of the crime, the guilty of lesser crimes are sentenced to undergo a community service order which benefits those bereaved. In effect, the *gacacas* are like mini-Peace and Reconciliation Commissions, in every village in the land, and each works on the basis of a verbal consensus.<sup>18</sup>

## The Modified Borda Count

To reduce the occasions when people in conflict resort to violence, the political process should also consist of open, multi-option questions by which can be identified that option which is the best possible compromise for all concerned. The appropriate methodology is a sort of votal *gacaca*, the modified Borda count. It asks everyone to state their preferences, and it identifies that option which has the highest average preference.

Mathematically, it is a points system. In a 5-option ballot, a 1<sup>st</sup> preference gets 5 points, a 2<sup>nd</sup> preference gets 4 points, and so on. And the option with the most points, (which translates into the highest average preference), is the winner.

This methodology allows everyone to cast their preferences, for (one, some or) all the options listed. He who votes for  $n$  options exercises

$$n, n-1 \dots 2, 1 \text{ points}$$

while she who casts her preferences for only  $m$  options exercises only

$$m, m-1 \dots 2, 1 \text{ points.}$$

In a five-option ballot, this means that he who votes for only one option gives his favourite option only 1 point. She who votes for two options gives her favourite 2 points and her next choice 1 point. While he who votes for all five options gives his favourite 5 points, his second choice 4 points, and so on. In other words, a voter's 1<sup>st</sup> preference always gets 1 more point than her 2<sup>nd</sup> preference, whether or not she has actually expressed that 2<sup>nd</sup> preference.

This methodology actually encourages the voters to cast more than their 1<sup>st</sup> preference. And if everyone states not only their 1<sup>st</sup> preference but also their compromise option, it should be possible to identify that option which is the collective best compromise. Which is what democracy is all about.

Furthermore, when every politician knows that the final decision-making process will be a vote in which the outcome is the option with the highest average preference — in other words, when they know that the final vote depends upon the preferences of *everybody* — the nature of the de-

bate will itself change. In majority voting, if there is more of me and mine and less of you and yours, then I win, and debates which precede majority votes are often antagonistic. In consensus voting, on the other hand, if I want my option to win, then I will need not only the 1<sup>st</sup> preferences of my supporters, but also the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> preferences of my erstwhile majoritarian opponents. So persuading those who had intended to give my option their 5<sup>th</sup> preference, to now give it their 3<sup>rd</sup> or even 2<sup>nd</sup> preferences, will pay handsome rewards. In consensus voting, the atmosphere changes, completely.

## A Democratic Structure for a Plural, Post-conflict Society

Given that majority rule is a myth, there can be no excuse for any majoritarian administration. Therefore, not only should parliament represent the entire country, so too government should represent the *entire* parliament. Accordingly, parliament should elect its government, by a proportional and preferential electoral system,<sup>19</sup> just as the people should elect the parliament by a proportional and preferential system.<sup>20</sup> And all decisions taken by that parliament should be based on either a verbal or a votal consensus.

This requires a further aspect to the separation of powers. The government must no longer be the sole author of the motion in question. The choice of options to be included on any ballot for self-determination, must itself be subject to an open democratic process, either in parliament or through the appointment of a special commission. Similarly, in parliament, all parties to the debate must be allowed to propose a motion. Similarly again, in the UN Security Council, all fifteen members should be enabled, either singly or in groups, to make a proposal on Iraq! Indeed, in all democratic chambers, the procedure should be open. There should therefore be an independent team of non-voting consensors, whose job is to determine just how many and which options are to be on the final ballot paper.

Initially, the consensors would allow all concerned (and not just Bush and Blair) to make a proposal. During the course of the debate, questions would be asked, clarifications sought, and ideas suggested, so the number of options "on the table" (and summarised on a computer screen) could rise or fall. At all times, however, the consensors would maintain a balanced list of options, in summary of that debate. A commission into self-determination would be charged with producing a short list of options. A parliament, on the other hand, would need to make just one decision. If, then, in the parliamentary scenario, there were but one option remaining at the end of the debate, it could be assumed that this represented the verbal consensus. If differences remained, however, and if, therefore, there were still a number of options to choose from, the consensors would again draw up a short list of options to reflect the debate, and all would then proceed to a vote. Finally, the consensors would analyse this vote and announce the outcome.

## Conclusion

To summarise, all plebiscites on sovereignty should be subject to a preferential multi-option ballot, not only among those who wish to secede, but also with those who are to be the new neighbours. Secondly, any subsequent administration should be a broad-based all-party coalition, so that, no matter what their ethno-religious grouping, no matter whether they had been members of the old majority and were now a new minority, all persons would be able to participate, not only in parliament, but also in government. Thirdly, all non-urgent decisions taken in parliament would be subject, where appropriate, to a multi-option preference vote.

In such a structure, in consensus politics, all may long for the day when the words ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ simply fade from the political lexicon.

## Endnotes

1. This one-line interpretation of events does not wish to belittle in any way the appalling violence associated with the 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor.
2. *Oslobodjenje*, (Sarajevo), 7 February 1999. For a full list of these referendums, see the author’s *From Belfast to the Balkans* (Belfast: The de Borda Institute, 1999), pp. 62–63.
3. In later life, President Wilson remarked that, at the time, he had not realised there were any Germans in the Sudetenland.
4. In her *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995), for example, Susan L. Woodward argues at length about the numerous geographical, historical, religious, linguistic and political reasons for why one group of folk might like to consider themselves to be different from their fellows. She does not, however, question majoritarianism.
5. Majoritarianism was not common to other non-European societies. For example, the “Confucian ethos [in] many Asian countries stressed... the importance of consensus... [in contrast] with the primacy in American beliefs of... democracy” (Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996], p. 225). This suggests, of course, that we Westerners took a majoritarian form of democracy to be not just the best but the only true interpretation. See also footnote 17.
6. Switzerland adopted an all-party form of power-sharing government in 1959.
7. Because of the vagaries of the first-past-the-post electoral system, Tony Blair won a huge majority of seats in parliament in the general election, but only a minority of the votes, 44%.
8. The antics of these “democratic dictators” are described more fully in the author’s *Defining Democracy: Decisions, Elections and Good Governance* (Belfast: The de Borda Institute, 2002). Pinochet got 78% in his first referendum in 1978, but only 43% in the second ballot, ten years later.
9. To be fair to Robert Badinter, his Commission did suggest that the referendum in Bosnia would be valid “only if respectable numbers from all three communities in the republic approved” the result (Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, p. 280). Too late.
10. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysberg Address, 19.11.1863.
11. See William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 53.
12. Duncan Black, *The Theory of Committees and Elections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 180.
13. These include Finland (3-options), New Zealand (5 options) and Guam (6- or even 7-option). See the author’s *Defining Democracy*.
14. Examples are Newfoundland’s 3-option ballot (1949), Singapore’s 3-options (1962), and Guam’s 6-option referendum (1982).
15. Ben Reilly writing in *International Political Science Review* 23 (October 2002): 358.
16. “The elders sit under the big tree and talk until they agree” (Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, in *The Ideologies of the Developing Nations*, Paul Sigmund [New York: Praeger, 1966], p. 197). The Kiswahili equivalent of the *gacaca* is *baraza*, and these forums can be used in courts of law and/or elected chambers.
17. Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Boston: Little Brown, 1994), p. 25.
18. The imposition of the European concept of majoritarianism has caused major upsets in many African countries, but most of all in Rwanda. A horrible interpretation of majority rule was used by the *Interahamwe* as a “justification” for their genocide which they initiated with the slogan “*rubanda nyamwinshi*,” “the majority people” (Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis* [London: Hurst and Co, 1997]).
19. A parliament could elect a government by an ordinary system of PR, after which those elected would then sort out the various ministries; but that could be problematic. The better approach would be to use a PR matrix vote in which every member of parliament would vote, in their order of preference, not only for their chosen nominees, but also for the ministerial post in which they wished each nominee to serve.

20. The most consensual electoral system yet devised is the quota Borda system (QBS). It is both proportional and preferential. The quota element ensures that QBS, like PR-STV, encourages parties to nominate only that number of candidates which they

think will get elected. And just as the modified Borda count encourages the voter to express a full list of preferences, so too QBS encourages the voter to cross the gender, the party and even the sectarian divide.



## Book Review: Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir of Books

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Nafisi, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir of Books*. New York: Random House, 2003. 356pp. \$13.95 (paper).

Azar Nafisi, now the Director of the Dialogue Project at John Hopkins University, does a fine job in this book of piecing together her life as an academic, especially the last two years of her residence in Tehran when she embarked on an adventure to supplement the education of a select group of university students. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is a multi-layered memoir about teaching Western literature in revolutionary Iran in the late 1990s.

The first layer covers the hardships that both professors and students face in post-Khomeini Iran. The references to the clash between conservative and liberal factions within Iranian society that surface set the book's tone and serve to connect Nafisi's memoir with how Iranian society has been commonly portrayed in Western media. It iterates familiar themes: slogans on walls condemning Western culture, men driving around the streets of Tehran chastising women for not wearing a veil, the dismissal of professors from their university posts for teachings alleged to be contrary to Islam, the censorship of university curriculum and the media, and the harsh punishment for committing adultery and prostitution have been known for years. Taking these events into account, it is easy to understand why Nafisi invited seven of her best and most committed female students (though a male student was occasionally invited to attend) into her home to read, discuss, and respond to works of fiction, including some forbidden Western classics like Nabokov's *Lolita*, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

The class was meant to be a means by which a neutral and safe space would be created for truthful and honest discussion, a space within which the women could be "themselves" while becoming more educated. The university was no longer such a place: "how could one teach when the main concern of university officials was not the quality of one's work but the color of one's lips, the subversive potential of a single strand of hair?" (p. 11). Thus the need for Nafisi's "home schooling." The class was successful in creating the space for open dialogue and, in some ways, a very liberating endeavor. Nafisi's illustrations are quite informative in this regard. Near the beginning of the book she notes her shock

of seeing them shed their mandatory veils and robes and burst into color. When my students came into that room, they took off more than their scarves and robes. Gradually, each one gained an outline and a shape, becoming her own inimitable self. Our world in that living room...became our sanctuary, our self-contained universe, mocking the reality of black-scarved, timid faces in the city that sprawled below. (pp. 5-6)

And:

There, in that living room, we rediscovered that we were also living, breathing human beings; and no matter how repressive the state became, no matter how intimidated and frightened we were, like Lolita we tried to escape and to create our own little pockets of freedom...It is amazing how, when all possibilities seem to be taken away from you, the minutest opening can become a great freedom. We felt when we were together that we were almost absolutely free. (pp. 25, 28)

However, it is not simply a memoir on the inadequacies of Iranian society. In fact, I do not read *Reading Lolita in Tehran* as an indictment of the Islamic Republic of Iran per se, but rather of the Republic's political and religious leadership that gives truth to Nabokov's claim that "curiosity is insubordination in its purest form" (p. 45). Nor is it simply a memoir about a secret literary discussion group. Nafisi's work creates a deeper, more reflective layer of thought that goes well beyond the contingencies of its Iranian context. There is something that speaks to what it means to become an autonomous person in situations where governments work to "blur the lines and boundaries between the personal and the political, thereby destroying both" (p. 273). It is in situations like these that life becomes increasingly more capricious or arbitrary, even unbearable. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* is a description of how a group of people attempt to "recover" their personal sphere through the discussion of literature within a deliberative community.

Being a professor of literature at the University of Tehran, and then later at the University of Allahem Tabatabai, which was singled out as the most liberal university in Iran, Nafisi understood the importance of the university and the power possessed by works of fiction. Unfortunately, the revolution eventually began to insert its political, religious, and cultural ideology into the institutions of higher educa-

tion. The restrictions that the cultural purists placed on faculty and students became such that Nafisi eventually left the academy in Iran, and eventually left Tehran for the United States in 1997. But her last two years in Tehran, when she conducted her “underground” classroom, were a time when Nafisi was driven by the power of literature.

Literature can be used in a variety of ways, but according to Nafisi, “do not, under any circumstance, belittle a work of fiction by trying to turn it into a carbon copy of real life; what we search for is not so much reality but the epiphany of truth” (p. 3). The idea was to use the great imaginative works of fiction not as portals for dealing with the dominant ideology that attempted to define and identity each citizenship in a certain way, making his or her existence a canvas on which the state can decide what to paint, but as a means to engage truth and the good, to become a more autonomous person. *Lolita*, *The Dean’s December*, and the other works of fiction that were to be read, were not merely intellectual exercises or works with which to pass the time of day, but were to be read in order to reclaim the personal sphere from the Islamic state, a way to take back their personal identities and once again make their histories relevant to who the women were as persons.

It becomes clear that the women that Nafisi selected, and the regimen that was about to be administered, would be looked upon as suspect by the state, the clergy, and their families, for they were in their own way rebels; and the class itself would be regarded as rebellious, for it commandeered a vehicle of expression—literature—that was used by writers, the handmaidens of ideology and the guardians of morality. Take, for instance, Nafisi’s introduction of Yassi, the “real rebel” of the group. Nafisi writes,

She did not join any political group or organization. As a teenager, she defied many family traditions and, in the face of strong opposition, had taken up music... Her rebellion did not stop there: she did not marry the right suitor at the right time and instead insisted on leaving her hometown of Shiraz to go to college in Tehran... That day, sitting opposite me, playing with her spoon, she explained why all the normal acts of life had become small acts of rebellion and political insubordination to her and to other young people like her. All her life she was shielded. She was never let out of sight; she never had a private corner in which to think, to feel, to dream, to write. (pp. 31–32)

What better candidate for the class than Yassi, the young rebel? However, many questions remained to be answered:

Could she [Yassi] ever live the life of someone like me, live on her own, take long walks holding hands with someone she loved, even have a little dog perhaps? She did not know. It was like this veil that meant nothing to her anymore yet without

which she would be lost. She had always worn the veil. Did she want to wear it or not? She did not know... She said she could not imagine a Yassi without a veil. What would she look like? Would it affect the way she walked or how she moved her hands? How would others look at her? Would she become a smarter or a dumber person? (p. 32)

Answers to these and many other questions would be sought by the women under Nafisi’s guidance. It was a challenging experience, not only because each of them would have to lead a double life, but because great literature asks a person to contemplate the life worth living and demands the additional burden of critical thinking. How is this so? What is the connection between literature and morality? To begin with, Nafisi’s quote of the German philosopher Theodor Adorno is worth repeating: “the highest form of morality is not to feel at home in one’s own home” (p. 94). Nafisi believes this feeling of displacement, of perhaps exile, is indicative of the imaginative works of literature, which

were meant to make you feel like a stranger in your own home. The best fiction always forced us to question what we took for granted. It questioned traditions and expectations when they seemed too immutable. I told my students I wanted them in their readings to consider in what ways these works unsettled them, made them a little uneasy, made them look around and consider the world, like Alice in Wonderland, through different eyes. (p. 94)

The connection between morality and literature becomes clear when Nafisi relates this dyad to the experience of empathy. It is this discussion that amplifies the importance of *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. I noted above that this work has something to do with personal autonomy, and autonomy has everything to do with morality. If morality deals with the good, then increasing one’s autonomy has something to do with choosing good over evil. Nafisi’s contribution is the acknowledgment that this is made easier through the use of literature. According to Nafisi, empathy is at the heart of the novel. Putting yourself in the shoes of the characters is crucial to reading a novel. By becoming engrossed in works of literature, one learns that

every individual has different dimensions to his personality... Those who judge must take all aspects of an individual’s personality into account. It is only through literature that one can put oneself in someone else’s shoes and understand the other’s different and contradictory sides and refrain from becoming too ruthless. Outside the sphere of literature only one aspect of individuals is revealed. But if you understand their different dimensions you cannot easily murder them.... (p. 118)

Serious reading of literature is a courageous act of empathy that awakens a person to the significance of another's feelings and needs. The "fictional character" acquires a sense of being alive, at least insofar as the imagination is concerned.

Literature also does something that is rare among political and religious ideologues. It allows you to heighten "your senses and sensitivity to the complexities of life and of individuals, and prevents you from the self-righteousness that sees morality in fixed formulas about good and evil..." (p. 133). Whereas good is all about "seeing" others and empathizing with them, evil is the inability to "see" others and to empathize with them. It is when we become blind to others that evil enters into our lives and we begin to impose our dreams and desires on others. The means by which Nafisi resists evil is through reclaiming the human within the great imaginative works of literature. Contact with the imaginatively human reawakens and refreshes our own lived humanity.

The reader's attraction to Nafisi's understanding of literature and imagination in defense of humanity, however,

may also be what unsettles the political and religious leadership who favor a closed rather than an open society. This is because the use of literature to stir the imagination in "seeing" others also promotes the freedom that is necessary for genuine democracy. It is to retain and to consolidate the "private" as opposed to the "public," to lay claim to there being a distinction between the two worlds rather than accepting a conflation of the two.

This book is a fascinating read. It is a refreshing change from the diatribes lodged against the conservative leadership in Iran, including Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Such criticisms only solidify the "us" vs. "them" dichotomy, and creates an atmosphere for xenophobia and chauvinism. Nafisi, on the other hand, reawakens the importance of autonomy and democracy. Although this reviewer, schooled in political philosophy and ethics, did not appreciate the discussions of the various classics, he did value how the author meshed those discussions with her inclination to engage in soulcraft. This is a must read for those interested in learning about the problems as well as the possibilities of guiding students under conditions such as those in the present-day Islamic Republic of Iran.



## **Book Review: The Sugar Industry and Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775–1810**

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Carrington, Selwyn H. H. *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775–1810*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002. 394pp. \$59.95 (cloth).

Sixty years after the publication of Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* the debate over the cause of the British anti-slavery movement still rages. Did the decline of the profitability of slavery in the British West Indies provide the material conditions necessary for an effective abolitionist movement to rise? Or was abolition caused a moral revolution in the English populace that overcame a profitable trade and the West Indian interests that represented it? The writings of revisionist historians Seymour Drescher and David Brion Davis have argued strongly against the Marxist interpretation. Selwyn H. H. Carrington's *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775–1810* suffers from a repetitious argument style and a lack of long-term, macro-economic data on such important matters as the volume of slave importation into the British West Indies and the change in sugar prices over time in England, but it nonetheless offers a meticulously researched and convincing rebuttal to these scholars. Carrington's use of plantation papers to analyze the impact of British economic policy on West Indian planters illustrates the mounting losses that planters increasingly incurred as the eighteenth century progressed.

Carrington argues that British economic policy worked to disadvantage West Indian planters from the American Revolution through the era of abolition. Following the lead of Williams and Lowell J. Ragatz, Carrington views the golden era of West Indian profitability as ending with the Prohibitory Act of 1776 that criminalized trade with rebel controlled areas of the mainland colonies. The British West Indies had traditionally relied on the mainland colonies to provide provisions so that they could concentrate their slaves on producing sugar for export. Cut-off from its suppliers by the British parliaments attempts to suffocate the nascent rebellion, planters scrambled to find new suppliers. But they failed to prevent massive hunger and material shortages and the islands spiraled into depression. The end of the American war, and the later promise of plantation revival after the destruction of Saint Domingue's sugar industry, did not fundamentally change this situation. In 1783 the British government ordered that American ships continue to be excluded from West Indian ports. British officials remained more

concerned with punishing the new American nation than reviving West Indian economies. British suppliers in England, Ireland, and Canada were not able to meet the West Indian demand for cheap provisions and the result was high prices that eroded planter profits. The collapse of the plantation economy in Saint Domingue raised sugar prices briefly but rising shipping costs, increasing trade duties, and the English willingness to accept cheap East Indian sugars at their wharfs combined to render planter hopes illusory. As the English embraced Smithian free trade principals for the colonial metropolis, the idea that West Indian planters should have a guaranteed market for their sugars, and high prices, was consistently attacked.

The strength of Carrington's work is his use of plantation records, neglected by Davis and Drescher, to detail how British policies affected individual planters. His linkage of English policies with the experience of planters on the ground in the West Indies is methodologically sound and convincing. Carrington marshals so many examples of planter distress that it is hard not to be convinced of his thesis. Dozens of planter voices fill Carrington's pages with complaints about their lack of profits, worries about losing their plantations to English merchants, and their plans to reorganize plantation production in a bid to make it pay. One of the most interesting stories these records reveal is how planters tried to ameliorate slave conditions in a desperate attempt to make slavery profitable. Planters put more emphasis on fostering the natural increase of the slave population because they could no longer afford the capital expenditures necessary to maintain their labor supply. Chronic shortages and epidemic disease, however, undercut these efforts and this strategy did not pull the planters out of their economic tailspin.

Despite the broad importance of Carrington's arguments *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775–1810* will probably find its readership among specialists. These pages turn slowly, mainly because of Carrington's meandering, circular writing style. The same topics repeat, particularly in the later chapters, even though he has ostensibly adopted a chronological framework for his study. Topics such as the impact of the Haitian Revolution on the sugar industry are dealt with in passing throughout, rather than forcefully at one place in the narrative. The conclusion simply restates his thesis, which is clear from the opening pages of the book. A better approach, that would have increased the value of the book as a teaching tool, would have been to

try to suggest some comparisons between the causality of the demise of slavery in the British West Indies with other New World cases. How unique were the declining profits from sugar and slaves in the British West Indies?

The book would also have been livelier if it had more thoroughly incorporated the actions of slaves. How did the slaves become agents in the decline of sugar slavery's profitability? Carrington mentions events such as Tacky's revolt in Jamaica but overall slave resistance is not figured in to his story as prominently as it might be. Major issues in the literature such as the radicalizing impact of the age of

revolution on the Caribbean slave community are not thoroughly discussed. Carrington does show that planters feared bringing too many young Africans into their colonies, who they thought were particularly prone to resist, but such insights are not fleshed out with details from the slaves' perspective.

These criticisms notwithstanding, this is an important contribution to a distinguished historiography. Selwyn H. H. Carrington has served notice that even in our era of conservative retrenchment that Marxism still has much to offer the history of slavery and abolition.

## **Book Review: The Afrikaners: Biography of a People**

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Giliomee, Hermann. *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People*. Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 2003. 560 pp. \$39.50 (paper).

South Africa's population dynamics have given that country a complex and fascinating history. While a number of studies have examined its African majority, fewer have investigated its Coloured, Asian, English, or Afrikaner peoples. Hermann Giliomee, a long-time observer of South African affairs, a historian at the University of Stellenbosch, and an Afrikaner, himself, has written this text to shed light on his people. He hopes to tell their story "with empathy but without partisanship" (p. xiii). Critics might dispute that contention, especially after reading the portions of the book dealing with apartheid and its aftermath. Yet even those critics would have to agree that this is an important text, because it provides an informed and insightful insight into a group that is central to South Africa's contentious history.

Who are the Afrikaners? The first recorded use of the term ("Afrikaander") to describe a European occurred in March 1707, but a self-conscious Afrikaner nation is a relatively recent phenomenon. "Afrikaner" was still being used in multiple ways into the early 1900s, e.g., to describe all who had been born in the country, to refer to a South African patriot, or to refer to Dutch-speaking South Africans. Only in the first third of the twentieth century did it begin to be used in an exclusivist sense to describe a people of a certain race and culture. Readers familiar with the country's history will recognize this as the time following the Boer War, when there was lingering bitterness about the policies of the British. While some Afrikaners, e.g., Jan Smuts, urged cooperation between the two white groups, others emphasized the need to promote Afrikaans culture through the creation of separate social institutions. Accordingly, the first half of the twentieth century saw efforts to promote Afrikaans as a written language (it only became one of the country's official languages in 1924, along with Dutch and English), its use in schools, and the development of an Afrikaans press. Numerous Afrikaner self-help organizations, e.g., banks and insurance companies, were also developed as was a political party, the National Party.

This text is useful because it provides a different perspective on much of the conventional wisdom about Afrikaners. For instance, Giliomee presents a very different view of Afrikaner politics through the 1980s than was commonly assumed in the West. One element of the Western view was that a threatened Afrikaner population would retreat into a figurative ethnic *laager* (a term derived from the

Great Trek of the nineteenth century and referring to a unified, defensive formation) if the West imposed sanctions or otherwise tried to pressure it. Yet as *The Afrikaners* makes clear, the Afrikaners have long been a fractious people. Giliomee devotes an early chapter to the "fractious frontiersmen" of the late eighteenth century. In the twentieth century, the National Party suffered one split in 1932, when some members defected to form the Purified National Party, and a second in 1982, when conservative members broke with the NP to form the Conservative Party. Nor were Afrikaner intellectuals a monolithic force; they differed about the meaning and implementation of apartheid at its outset and later, about its morality and retention. Similarly, the Western belief about the power of the Broederbond, i.e., as a secretive organization pulling the strings of Afrikaner society behind the scenes, is overstated. That organization had little influence on the development of the apartheid ideology, although it did become somewhat more powerful in the 1960s as Prime Minister H.F. Verwoerd used it to advance his policies. However, the Bond's influence was declining again by the late 1970s.

Giliomee also presents novel interpretations of both the onset of apartheid and of the government's decision to abandon it. The sources of apartheid were multiple and complex. The idea had developed in the Dutch Reformed Church in the 1920s. Debating its missionary efforts toward the country's African and Coloured communities, the Church concluded that these were separate communities in need of separate churches. This concept was soon extended to education, as the churches were largely responsible for the education of Africans, and Afrikaner intellectuals pressed to have the idea extended to secular domains. From this perspective apartheid did not derive primarily from racist motives: while not ignoring these, Giliomee argues that it sought not so much racial superiority over Africans as racial survival against Africans: "Afrikaner nationalists argued that their survival as a volk was inseparable from maintaining racial exclusivity, and that apartheid was the only policy that systematically pursued that end. But apartheid with its racist outcomes was not a goal in itself; political survival was" (p. 470). Apartheid also contained an element of trusteeship for Africans. Discussing the idea in Parliament, future Prime Minister Daniel Malan argued, "I do not use the term 'segregation,' because it has been interpreted as a fencing off, but rather 'apartheid,' which will give the various races the opportunity of uplifting themselves on the basis of what is their own" (quoted at p. 475).

These ideas were not that unusual in the 1940s: apartheid was based on “mainstream Western racism, ranging from a superficial color preference to a pathological abhorrence of race mixing, which was still widespread in both Europe and the USA” (p. 495). To justify its 1949 law banning marriage between whites and non-whites, for example, the South African government pointed to the fact that thirty American states had similar laws. It was only in the 1950s and 1960s, a result of decolonization and the American civil rights movement, that Western attitudes began to change. In South Africa, however, these attitudes, or at least defense of apartheid, persisted for decades. As late as 1984, close to 80% of Afrikaners continued to support the key elements of apartheid: homelands for blacks; segregated residential areas, schools, and public facilities; a ban on sex between whites and blacks; and separate voter roles for the country’s Asian and Coloured communities.

The desire for survival also explains why apartheid ended when it did. For President F.W. de Klerk, “Pragmatic survival instincts preceded morality in [the] decision to abandon apartheid” (p. 637). Only in 1997, after he had left the presidency, did de Klerk apologize “in a spirit of true repentance,” telling the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that “Apartheid was wrong” (quoted at p. 651). Giliomee describes South Africa’s transition process as a “Surrender Without Defeat.” Yet in another challenge to conventional wisdom, he criticizes de Klerk for not having managed the “surrender” better: that “he and his negotiators would manage to retain so little despite a position of relative strength places a serious question mark over his leadership abilities” (p. 638). The reasons for de Klerk’s failure are many. He needed to act before the end of the 1994 parliamentary session, because he had promised that the 1989 whites-only election would be the last to exclude blacks. The process was slowed by extensive violence and further complicated by the widespread conviction, later essentially discounted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that a “third force” of government security forces and certain black leaders was fomenting violence between blacks. This allegation linked de Klerk with both the violence and a discredited military, but he could not abandon the military as he needed its support to realize his negotiating goals. Another factor was the defection of traditionally pro-government forces, e.g., the business community and white civil servants, after the ANC renounced nationalization and promised to pay the pensions of those civil servants who were entrenched in the new South Africa.

Giliomee is no apologist for apartheid, arguing that “[n]othing could ever compensate for the psychological damage it caused.” Still, “in terms of impersonal developmental data the performance of the NP government that ruled between 1948 and 1994 was comparatively impressive” (p. 666). The economy had grown by an annual average of 4.5% between 1948–81 and, while whites had done better than the other population groups, those, too, saw their economic situation improve. Black disposable personal income in-

creased 84.2% between 1960–80 (although from an admittedly low base), while white disposable income increased by only 47.6%. By 1980 black income was 10.6% of whites; it had been only 8.5% in 1960. Interestingly, the groups which did best in economic terms during the apartheid era were the country’s Asian and Coloured populations: disposable income among Asians increased 160% between 1960–1980 and nearly 97% for Coloureds in the same period. Reflecting the trusteeship element of apartheid, the number of African children in schools increased 250% in the 25 years following the initiation of apartheid. Finally, contrary to the notion that South Africa was a police state, it actually had fewer police per thousand in the population (1.4) in the early 1980s than the U.K. (2.4), Northern Ireland (5.7), or the Soviet Union (16.0). Similarly, the country’s military spending, at 13% of the national budget in the 1980s, was not as high as that of countries such as Zimbabwe (17%) or Israel (25%).

While Giliomee’s depiction of the status of blacks was not as dreadful as commonly portrayed, the situation for many people in the new South Africa is not as good as commonly assumed. Many South Africans are experiencing tough times as a result of increased crime, growing income differentials, higher unemployment, and an AIDS epidemic. There are also particular problems impacting the Afrikaner community. As one Afrikaner business leader remarked in 2002, “It is not to spread panic when one says the Afrikaner people are in a crisis with red lights flashing along their survival path” (Ton Vosloo quoted at p. 658). Some of the problems are the inevitable consequence of a broadening of political and economic power. Thus, the number of Afrikaners in the civil service had declined from 44% to 18% between 1994–99. Affirmative action programs were making it difficult for Afrikaners to find or maintain jobs. There was a decline in the use and teaching of Afrikaans, as more and more schools emphasized English-medium instruction. The National Party, long dedicated to promoting the community’s interest, had left the Government of National Unity in 1996 and was crushed in the 1999 elections, winning only 20% of the Afrikaner vote. Even the Broederbond had been transformed, changing its name to Afrikanerbond and accepting members who were neither white nor male. As a result of changes such as these, Giliomee concludes that by 2000, “it appeared as if Afrikaners had become a minority linguistic group rather than an organized ethnic group with myths of origin and kinship, capable of mobilization as a potent force” (p. 665).

Afrikaners have responded to these new realities in different ways. Some have chosen to leave the country: as many Afrikaans-speakers as English-speakers emigrated in 2001, the first time that had ever happened. Others appear to have a longing for the past. About 65% Afrikaners (as opposed to 36% of white English-speakers, 25% of Zulu speakers and 18% of Xhosa speakers) agreed with the statement “There were certainly some abuses under the old apartheid system, but the ideas behind apartheid were basically good” in 2000

(p. 655). Despite their current travails, however, Giliomee believes his people can have a role in their country's future. If they are able to "come to terms with...history, to nourish and replenish [their] love for language and land and to ac-

cept the responsibility to hand over their cultural heritage to the next generation," then "they would become a part of a new, democratic South Africa in their own special way" (p. 666).



## **Book Review: Robben Island and Prisoner Resistance to Apartheid**

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Buntman, Fran Lisa. *Robben Island and Prisoner Resistance to Apartheid*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 358 pp. \$65.00 (cloth).

Many political figures, especially those trying to remake their societies from outside the established political process, have spent time in prison. Leaders with such diverse political orientations as Fidel Castro, Ruhollah Khomeini, Václav Havel, Gerry Adams, and Nelson Mandela were all incarcerated. While there has been some examination of the impact of prison in biographies and autobiographies of these figures, there is little systematic examination of the ways that prison shaped their political goals and strategies. *Robben Island and Prisoner Resistance to Apartheid* examines this issue, concentrating on the experiences of those imprisoned on South Africa's notorious Robben Island. The author, a member of the Sociology Department at George Washington University, does not claim that the role played by the Islanders was more significant than that played by those outside the prison, but she argues that it is a role that has not been examined adequately. Buntman relies largely on interviews with former prisoners and warders, although she also examines records of the prison administration as well as secondary sources.

Robben Island, off the coast of Cape Town, had served as a prison for many years. The number of political prisoners there increased in the early 1960s as protests against South Africa's *apartheid* system intensified and the regime passed ever more draconian security legislation. Several hundred were already imprisoned by 1964, when the African National Congress's leaders—Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, among others—arrived. Later waves arrived after the Soweto-inspired uprisings of 1976 and the civil unrest of the early 1980s. Throughout, of course, Mandela and other ANC leaders remained. Not until 1991 was the last political prisoner released or removed from the Island.

Conditions are undoubtedly harsh in all prisons, but those in charge of Robben Island sought to make life there especially difficult. Some of the guards were brutal, hard labor was required of most prisoners, and there were daily humiliations. The *apartheid* system was replicated within the prison: the entire prison staff was white, while all the prisoners were "black" (African, Coloured, or Asian). *Apartheid* rules governed the provision of daily amenities: African prisoners received only 12 ounces of corn meal each

day, while Asians and Coloureds received 14 ounces; Coloureds and Asians received 6 ounces of meat or fish four times a week, but Africans received only 5 ounces. To further heighten tensions, prisoners of different political affiliations were housed together. In the 1960s, this meant jailing African National Congress (ANC) members with those of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). Later, after the Soweto protests of the mid-1970s, there was a large influx of prisoners who advocated Black Consciousness ideas. That group was also of a very different generation than Mandela and his colleagues, adding generational strains to political ones.

These details of daily life might lead one to expect the prison population to be atomized and focused solely on daily needs. That was likely the intent of prison authorities, but the prisoners were able to resist, to survive, and even to thrive during their years on Robben Island. "Resistance" is conceptualized here as more than just a refusal to submit to prison authorities; it also refers to efforts to remake the power relationships within the prison and, ultimately, society as a whole. Prisoners' resistance took two forms, "resistance for survival" and "resistance beyond survival." While there was not a linear progression from one type of resistance to the other, conditions had improved dramatically by the mid-1970s so there was greater emphasis on resistance beyond survival after that time.

Creating conditions for survival in prison is a prerequisite for any further resistance strategies. To combat the conditions identified previously, prisoners resorted to a number of tactics. These could be as simple as mouthing an unspoken profanity at a guard. More organized efforts included a hunger strike, as occurred in 1965 or 1966, and utilizing legal channels, e.g., preparing court petitions or writing letters to prison authorities. The prisoners also had a number of allies outside the prison. These included former prisoners, Helen Suzman—a South African parliamentarian, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. While external actors were important, both Suzman and prison authorities agree that the actions of the prisoners, themselves, were crucial to changing prison conditions because, in Suzman's words, "they were strong and they were united and they were organized and they were informed..." (Suzman quoted at p. 58).

Resistance strategies did not end as prison conditions improved. Struggling for more than mere survival, prisoners sought to improve their physical and mental health, not

only as a means of relieving boredom but also to improve themselves and to prepare for what many believed would be a post-*apartheid* order in their lifetimes. One of the most important of these “strategies of resistance beyond survival” was education. The Island was considered a “university” by many, a term usually taken to mean that prisoners were exposed to the insights of Mandela and other leading resistance figures. Yet it was also a university in the more traditional sense. Prisoners enrolled in correspondence courses offered by the University of South Africa and other distance education institutions, some earning college degrees. There were education programs within the prison, too, as better educated prisoners taught less well-educated ones. There was also political education. Some prisoners taught classes in political theory and later, as change became more likely, a prisoner trained in political science offered classes on different constitutional models. In addition to education, there were also efforts to improve the prisoners’ physical health, e.g., football (soccer) and rugby tournaments as well as tennis lessons. Recreational and cultural activities, including chess and checkers games, ballroom dancing competitions, the staging of plays, and instruction in musical instruments, were also available.

Besides keeping prisoners busy, these activities helped them develop political, organizational, and leadership skills. Over time, they were able to transform the “state of nature” that had existed on the Island into a new social system, one governed by an unspoken but widely recognized social contact. To construct this new society, prisoners had to tolerate different points of view, reach out to those across communal and organizational divides, and be open to new ideas, all necessary skills for the subsequent transition from *apartheid* to democracy. Ironically, then, the prisoners’ incarceration was not so much a barrier to post-1990 reform as an opportunity for them to develop the skills to help make the new system work. Not surprisingly, then, Buntman is able to identify many former prisoners who are now prominent in government, business, and civil society. These men have been able to “tak[e] the lessons learned from Robben Island to other spheres of South African life” (p. 174).

Of course, most prisoners did not want to wait until their release to try to influence politics on the outside. The desire to end *apartheid* that had led to their imprisonment did not eliminate when they arrived on the Island, and prisoners consciously sought to influence politics outside the prison. This took many forms, direct and indirect. One indirect way was the prisoners’ serving as beacons of hope for *apartheid*’s foes. Prisoners sought to keep their organizations, typically banned on the outside, alive in prison. More direct ways for furthering the struggle included giving instructions to departing prisoners. All were urged to work for improved prison conditions; some prisoners were given more specific tasks, e.g., getting black unions to shift from economic to political demands, joining community organizations and, in a few cases, going into exile to promote the

struggle from abroad. There were also occasions when strategic discussions among the prisoners shaped the strategies of the anti-*apartheid* movement on the outside. An important example is the United Democratic Front, the umbrella organization of anti-*apartheid* organizations created in the early 1980s. While there is some disagreement on this point, some prisoners claim that the UDF “was an idea from Robben Island” (Vronda Banda quoted at p. 164). Moreover, after the formation of the UDF, many ex-prisoners served in its leadership. To cite another example, it was ANC prisoners who developed the ANC strategy of negotiating with Inkatha in KwaZulu-Natal rather than confronting it.

The clearest illustration of Buntman’s themes is that the state chose to begin to negotiate the end of *apartheid* with a prisoner, Nelson Mandela. It is true, of course, that this decision was due, in part, to Mandela’s prominence and to the ability to keep the talks secret precisely because he was a prisoner. However, the fact the Mandela had survived more than two decades in prison, that he and his fellow prisoners had developed their own community and transformed prison life through mutual tolerance and reaching out to former foes, and that the prisoners had been able to influence politics on the outside made Mandela a desirable partner once the regime had decided to end *apartheid*.

To what extent are Buntman’s ideas applicable to other cases? No two prisons are alike nor are the governments which send prisoners away, but she does find evidence of similar resistance patterns elsewhere. There are numerous examples of prisoners resisting to survive, as one would expect given the cruel conditions most political prisoners confront. She also finds examples of efforts to resist beyond survival. However, there are few cases where prisoners had such an important impact on the political process outside the prison (one exception is the role of IRA prisoners in Northern Ireland). Why was the South African case unique in this regard? Perhaps it is a result of the nature of the prisons, their prisoners, and the conditions of their confinement. In South Africa, most leading prisoners were together in the same prison rather than placed in different prisons, *gulag*-archipelago style. The prisoners also understood from the start that they would be imprisoned for lengthy periods. Those two conditions enabled and perhaps forced them to develop knowledge of and working relationships with other leaders as well as an incentive to get along with their jailers. Without those conditions, it seems unlikely that the Islanders would have had the opportunity or the willingness to construct their own prison society and the skills to help shape the new South Africa.

Despite this inability to apply some of her points to other cases, Buntman has written an important book. She has opened Robben Island, illustrated how the prisoners there were able to survive as long as they did, and shown how, despite their incarceration, they played an important role in the creation of the new South Africa.

## **Book Review: Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World**

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Berger, Peter L. and Huntington, Samuel P., eds.  
*Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the  
Contemporary World*. New York: Oxford  
University Press, 2002. 374 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

In an effort to illustrate the globalization process, Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington undertook a monumental empirical study that utilized an international team of experts—groups of well-established social scientists and their respective teams—who focused on the most feared issue in recent decades: the impact of the globalization process and its unexpected consequences. *Many Globalizations* is a collection of research endeavors on globalization and its forces in China, Taiwan, Japan, Germany, Hungary, South Africa, Chile, Turkey, and the United States. It is comprised of four parts, and as the list shows, each part illustrates a few examples of cultural and economic globalization from each of the four continents (excluding Australia) around the world. In completing this work, Berger/Huntington et al hoped that perhaps continental examples of globalization reflect some of the similar patterns that are noticeable in the neighboring regions.

One of the most interesting aspects of the discussion presented in *Many Globalizations* is its emphasis on cultural globalization. This is an important point of departure for the book that makes it unique when compared with other existing work on globalization in terms of 1) its diversion from being exclusively economic oriented and 2) borrowing from the macro-theoretical perspective. In addition, the discussion presented in this volume takes field and empirical work as its methodology and attempts to portray a new picture of globalization that has been missing in the literature. Thus, the series of the discussions presented in *Many Globalizations* tries to unravel the myths that surround globalization, and questions the notion of globalization as a predominantly American, imperialistic phenomenon.

This approach, of course, complements the studies of globalization in the sense that *Many Globalizations* is among the first academic endeavors that have raised concerns regarding the validity of “globalization” as a monolithic and viable option for solving economic problems in the contemporary world. However, *Many Globalizations* diverts from other studies by reminding the reader that there are emerging new patterns and trends at the global level that are non-economic in nature and multidimensional in char-

acter. According to Berger/Huntington et al, these emerging patterns may appear on the surface as adopting a kind of American “global culture,” but are not affected by its central classical imperialism—i.e., homogenization via “McDonaldization” or “metastasized Disneyland.”

The initial depiction of such a notion of globalization in the studies conducted here was one of Peter Berger’s original critiques of the literature that treated globalization as an extremely exaggerated phenomenon in research. In this regard, the globalization process for Berger/Huntington et al is a cultural one that symbolizes an alternative to economic globalization. The central thesis in *Many Globalizations* rests on the idea that neither economic nor cultural globalization is the great salvation or hope adorned with democracy, equality, and prosperity that everyone is expecting it to bring about. Although the two may appear to be intertwined, the studies that focused on India, Japan, and Turkey observed an emerging pattern of alternative globalization that could be defined as local “cultural movements with a global outreach originating outside of the Western world” (p. 12). This finding is particularly significant in the characterization of globalization because most everyone who subscribes to modernization theory assumes that globalization operates as an agent of modernization that originates from the West and spreads throughout the world. One can detect only one obvious implication in the idea of “alternative globalization” emphasized in this book: that there are other paths to modernization than the Western-oriented efforts. Hence, Berger/Huntington et al present the alternatives and the multifaceted complexity that such alternatives could bring about to the contemporary world. From this viewpoint, it is safe to say that *Many Globalizations* is a pioneering academic work. The fact that the studies reported in this volume did not confine themselves solely to the economic aspects of globalization — the focus on the cultural aspects of globalization and the impact they have on local and regional cultures — attest to this point.

In line with the above thesis, the findings in this book suggest that globalization is not a predominantly Western phenomenon. The collective research efforts in this volume show that not only aspects of Western popular culture have gained indigenous momentum when brought to local regions, but also indigenous cultures have taken off as global forces. Some examples include Neo-Buddhist movements in Taiwan, the Love Parade in Germany, African Indigenous

Churches, a Confucian frame of thinking among the merchant class in China, and the evangelical movement in Chile that have become global trends exemplify not only localization but also a form of hybridization that carries a non-American and non-Western message. The authors maintain that localization of this kind, however, is more far reaching than a simple diffusion of American or Western cultural practices or convergence. As a result, according to the studies cited in *Many Globalizations*, Eastern philosophies and religions have gained positive momentums, and their pendulums are having sweeping swings for attracting millions of people around the globe—especially, in the West. This is the area where Berger/Huntington et al seriously question a purely Western notion of economic globalization and show many globalization processes and globalizing forces that are emanating from non-Western countries. Their discovery is significant in that they reveal the nature of globalization as a reciprocal process between Western and non-Western societies. However, it is intriguing to see that the research cited here easily treats locality as a controlling interest; that is, the tension between global and indigenous cultures converges at a crossroad at the local level.

Although some of the studies in *Many Globalizations* focus on the positive aspects of globalization, most contributors are critical of the process of globalization—whether economic or cultural. In the meantime, these authors do not perceive globalization as a homogenizing threat. However, a common theme in all of these reports is their critical look at the literature and how other scholars of globalization have treated globalization as a simple process for solving global problems. The authors commonly believe that the shape that globalization has taken is a complex one and must be dealt with in conjunction with the plans and changes envisioned by each country's actors of globalization (elites and local governments). These actors are more likely to be the hybrid products of the local cultures, who are accountable for a localized process of globalization and their Western training or partnership encounters necessitate them to conduct their duties based on the assumptions, principles, and theories that are rooted in foreign (Western) cultures. Nevertheless, despite what is expected of the local actors, research in *Many Globalizations* uncovers a paradoxical behavioral tendency by these actors that reflects a combination of a sense of national-cultural pride and patriotism, on the one hand, and a sense of western education and training, on the other. Hence the overall discussion in this volume shows that cultural globalization is even more difficult than economic glo-

balization to control.

The research team put together for this project is another interesting feature of *Many Globalizations*. The contents of the research reports published in this volume show that the selected scholars are highly diverse in their orientation and perspective. The diversity in thought and outlook, and variability in their interests and expertise are among the qualities that have added to the overall perspective of the presentation in this book. As a result, the current work qualifies to be an amalgamation of a broader and more complete definition of globalization. The attention that the authors have paid to a variety of issues that relate to globalization—e.g., popular culture, tastes and preferences, Evangelical and conservative Catholic movements, and even the effects of Buddhism and modern Islam, etc.—all have contributed to the field in the following ways: 1) it is a groundbreaking and pioneering work in its own right, 2) it laid down the ground work for subsequent studies, and 3) it contains materials that can be of interests to a diverse audience.

In sum, *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* gives a picture of the globalization process that contradicts the popular image that sees the emerging global culture as mostly Western, English speaking, and elitist. The collective message in the studies published in this book is that there is an emerging global culture, and the elites—who are predominantly functional in the areas of business, global trade, academic environments, and missionary religious groups—are the vehicles for its diffusion that cultural globalization is neither the threat nor the hope that some have envisioned in a homogenized world. Instead, we are facing an era in which indigenous globalizing movements are counterbalancing the forces of Western cultural hegemony and, most importantly, are producing many hybrid cultural innovations. This study, as Berger and Huntington rightly claim, contributes significantly to the study of globalization about which field research and the empirical data have been scant despite the volumes of published materials. *Many Globalizations* presents a variety of interesting discourse, as well as enough hints to launch other important studies. Because the book focuses on some of the pressing contemporary issues and explores their importance to developing countries in the globalization equation. The book makes an informative addition to the list of reading in social stratification, sociology of development, cultural studies, and international relations.

## **Book Review: Dancing with Saddam: The Strategic Tango of Jordanian-Iraqi Relations**

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Schenker, David. *Dancing With Saddam: The Strategic Tango of Jordanian-Iraqi Relations*. London, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003. Co-published with The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. 128pp. \$50.00 (cloth).

Seldom does a book become obsolete shortly after (or even before) appearing in print. This dubious notoriety seems to befall the book under review as its publication happened to coincide with the United States invasion of Iraq in Spring 2003 and the subsequent toppling of the Saddam Hussein regime. It is after all difficult to tango with an interlocker who is confined to a prison cell, awaiting trial. It is very tempting therefore to dismiss *Dancing with Saddam* as irrelevant, an example of the rapidly changing “new Middle East,” where yesterday’s realities may quickly turn into tomorrow’s anachronism. However, passing so harsh a judgment may be premature in this case. In spite of its apparent weaknesses, a closer scrutiny of this volume may prove useful to our understanding of the post-Iraq War regional realities, particularly insofar as the future of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan is concerned.

David Schenker is a Middle East policy advisor in the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense and former research fellow of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. This study is the product of research he conducted between 1999 and 2001 under the auspice of that institute. It is based in part on confidential conversations with “dozens of Jordanian politicians, businessmen, intellectuals, and royals” (p. vii) as well as printed media sources and a litany of statistical data gathered during the author’s stay in Amman. It can therefore be regarded as a valid representation of Jordanian public opinion towards bilateral relations with Iraq during a crucial period in the history of Jordan: the transmission of power from the late King Hussein to his son Abdullah.

The interest in deciphering Jordanian attitudes towards Iraq in the 1980s and 1990s derives from an apparent shift in the kingdom’s foreign policy during the crisis that had led to the Gulf War of 1991 and its aftermath. A loyal and consistent American (previously British) ally for most of his four and a half decades on the throne, King Hussein surprised many in the summer of 1990 when he assumed a position of friendly neutrality towards Iraq after it had oc-

cupied Kuwait. The ambivalent Jordanian stance towards the future of Iraq continued throughout most of the 1990s and into the early reign of Abdullah and the 2003 war.

Schenker’s thesis is plain and well articulated. Over the course of the past two decades or so, Iraq has become Jordan’s main economic partner. Jordan serves “as Iraq’s principal entrepôt” and it “has become economically dependent on Iraq” (p. 1). However, the ties between these two nations go well beyond economics alone. They share “very strong feelings of amity” (p. 6). Indeed, “Iraq is one of the few subjects on which most all Jordanians—East Bankers and Palestinians alike—agree” (ibid).

The book is divided into four chapters. The first, entitled “History and Common Identity” attempts to trace the historical ties between the two countries from the Arab Revolt of World War I to the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s and beyond. This is clearly the weakest part of the book since Schenker’s command of the two countries’ history is very limited. It is dotted with hollow and occasionally inaccurate statements, such as the characterization of “[t]he peoples of what would later become Jordan and Iraq” as “comrades in arms” against the Ottoman Empire (p. 7). Otherwise the reference to the relations between the two countries prior to the 1990s is scant. It is interesting to note that the short-lived union between the two countries, forged in early 1958 and terminated after the Iraqi coup that ended Hashimite rule over the country, is mentioned only once, in a coincidental manner, as Schenker cites an unidentified former Jordanian minister who “opined that Iraqis harbor a deep guilt about the slaughter of the Iraqi royals in 1958” (p. 23).

The second chapter, entitled “Economics,” is much better researched and its conclusions should be of interest to readers of current Middle Eastern politics. Schenker identifies correctly the structural weaknesses of Jordan’s economy and the manner in which its symbiotic relationship with its Iraqi counterpart helps alleviate some of them. Iraq’s supply of cheap oil to its neighbor to the west has been “the lubricant” of this bilateral economic relationship and it has formed “Jordan’s greatest source of foreign aid” during the 1980s and 1990s (p. 31). Meanwhile, during the long years of its war with Iran and international isolation following the war of 1991, Iraq relied on Jordanian supply of imported goods, allowing the Hashimite Kingdom to develop an “impressive transport industry” (p. 46). How-

ever, the declining traffic of such goods during the second half of the 1990s threatened to have a detrimental effect on Jordan's sole port city of Aqaba.

Iraq's superior economic position allowed Saddam Hussein to use bilateral trade as a tool with which to manipulate the Jordanian political system. Schenker's main contribution perhaps could be found in the third chapter of the book, entitled "Pro-Iraq Elements in Jordan," in which he identifies various groups and individuals that promoted closer ties with Baghdad and attempted to influence their country's policy in that direction. Saddam, it seems, was very successful in acquiring such good will with a blend of lavish spending, propaganda, and intimidation. The Iraq lobby in Amman included a variety of professional associations (most notably representatives of the printed and audio-visual media), economic interests (such as the Amman Chamber of Commerce), student unions (by the 1980s, about 5,000 Jordanians were enrolled in Iraqi universities, "comprising about 10 percent of Jordan's total higher education enrollment" [p. 73]), and Islamist advocacy groups.

The last chapter deals with "The Abdullah Era" and the manner in which he has attempted to follow his father's footsteps in maintaining the delicate balance between Iraq

and the USA (not to mention Jordan's other neighbors, Syria, Israel, and Saudi Arabia) in a manner that would most benefit the kingdom and assure the stability of his regime. Writing his study "as U.S.-Iraq war clouds begin to gather," Schenker assessed Abdullah's approach as "trying to improve ties with both simultaneously" (p. 92). Assessing in his concluding remarks the young monarch's likely conduct in the eventuality of a war, Schenker predicted, correctly, that unlike his late father, who had been "compelled to toe a 'neutral' line during the Gulf War, it is almost inconceivable that King Abdullah would not (quietly) align himself with the West" (p. 108).

In the aftermath of the war in Iraq, as the U.S.-led coalition continues in its efforts to suppress the indigenous insurgency and usher in a functioning, stable, democratically elected government, regional states like Jordan may and do play an important role in the process. Therefore, even though much of the data gathered for *Dancing with Saddam* may seem outdated, it could serve as the basis for assessing current and future Jordanian policies towards post-Saddam Iraq. Schenker ought to be encouraged to undertake follow-up research in that direction, assuming he has not become engaged in it already.

# **Book Review: Slave Traffic in the Age of Abolition: Puerto Rico, West Africa and non-Hispanic Caribbeans, 1815–1859**

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Dorsey, Joseph C. *Slave Traffic in the Age of Abolition: Puerto Rico, West Africa, and Non-Hispanic Caribbeans, 1815-1859*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003. 311pp. \$59.95 (cloth).

As an expert and college-level teacher of Caribbean, African and African American studies, Professor Joseph C. Dorsey has unlimited expertise to delve into the comparative study of the continuing slave trafficking in the age of abolition. As underscored eloquently, his 311-page book emanates from his “interest in the history of the Spanish seaborne empire and the variety of syncretic cultures deriving from it” (preface). His very useful study spans almost half a century, specifically between 1815 and 1859.

Any scholar, who is familiar with the story of the Amistad slave ship (which became an international spectacle in slave studies, also during the period of abolition) would agree with Dorsey’s prompt and exciting description of Havana’s international reputation in the 17th and 18th centuries, especially about the colorful and lucrative excitement of the city’s urban decadence and, in the words of Abbe Raynal, as “the boulevard of the New World.” Additionally, it is very important to note that, as far back as the 1700s and 1800s, Cuba was held in much significance, as compared to Puerto Rico that, as Dorsey pointed out, “played second fiddle to Cuba throughout the nineteenth century.”

Continuing slave trafficking, in the age of the trade’s abolition, brings what Dorsey pursues in his book into the realm of illegal commerce; as Dorsey cites, with gratitude, the Puerto Rico version is well covered in its legal and illegal commerce terms in Arturo Morales Carrion’s seminal work, *Puerto Rico and the Non-Hispanic Caribbean* (1952). Although Dorsey’s excellent work has slavery as its main thesis, it is very significant to point out here that it dwells a lot more on “the structures of its form as an illegal traffic and less on the structures of its content as a legal institution” (p. xii).

To make sure that his book creeps out of its original California dissertation mode, Dorsey brilliantly removed varied typical or specific thesis norms and requirements, which earlier included case studies of respective slaves. Instead, he dwells on several fundamental issues about un-researched (or unexplored) Puerto Rican involvement in the illegal trafficking of slaves, work that should benefit the teeming students and scholars of both history and culture of mainstream Caribbean, African and Latin American studies.

The introduction to the study (pp. 1-20), which deals with approaches, directions and concerns, begins with an eloquent quote from the introduction to Herbert Klen’s *Middle Passage*. Invariably, Dorsey utilizes the three parts (Parts I-III) of nine chapters of his work to provide his readers with what he describes as a “miscellany of themes that center on the clandestine slave trade to Puerto Rico.” In the publication, he further examines “the extent to which forces of doubt, disunity, and incoherence served a single branch of an outlawed enterprise described then and now as small” (p. 1).

Part I is a sub-title, “Strategies and Strategems”, under which Dorsey discusses the colony’s obscurity; early Anglo-Spanish diplomacy”; and “Friendly Fire, Enemy Fire..”. Part II deals with “New Routes, Old remedies,” whereby Dorsey discusses French, Dutch and Danish presence and how African rivers became the structures for the transportation of the illegal cargo; Part III, sub-titled “Mare Liberum,” provides readers and researchers with occurrences from the South Atlantic East; South Atlantic West, coupled with the Inter-Caribbean influx of 1847. The epilogue (with a French sub-title) is “Cette Fin Qui N’en Est Pas Une” (pp. 210-219), which sums up Dorsey’s scholarly contentions, including the assertion that “Puerto Rico was a small Spanish colony with a nucleus of planter and non-planter elites who continued to buy slaves and consume their labor in an age that heralded the end of slavery” (p. 210).

In dealing with the illegal slave commerce between 1815 and 1859, Dorsey unambiguously pinpoints the fact that the illegal Puerto Rican slave trade had a different cloak between 1817 and 1859, whereby it operated in the shadow of larger and wealthier competitors, adding that, despite several patterns of European occupation, settlement, and exploitation in the Caribbean, “slave labor and sugar production shaped the same colonial discourse” (Introduction).

Slave trading existed for over 300 years in these areas but, as Dorsey documents, legal cessation marked the end of pertinent government documentation and bureaucratic minutiae. Yet, the study is about the Puerto Rican slave trade “from the internationalization of the anti-slave campaign in 1815 to the arrival of the island’s last slave ship in 1859,” (p.3). According to Dorsey, the shift from legal to illegal slave trading in human cargo “rendered the 1820s a period of trial and error” (p. 3).

Divided into periods, the book offers readers and researchers (including teachers) varied scenarios and paradoxes, although in the end Dorsey would make it clear that

such work “is more than a study of paradox” (p. 219). For example, apart from the active illegal trading between 1815 and 1830, Dorsey explains that between the period of 1834 and 1840, Britain protested against the export of newly emancipated English slaves to Spanish dominions. There was a second period (1840–44), which was fraught with internal uncertainty, although the discovery of English slaves, by Great Britain, in Puerto Rico, embarrassed and angered the Spanish government in Spain.

In the midst of its embarrassment, it is significant that Dorsey takes the time to provide his readers with an excellent discussion of how the period was characterized by slave revolts and conspiracies in Cuba and Puerto Rico; in 1848, an abolitionist governor was appointed for Puerto Rico to show that Madrid was serious about the abolition of slavery. Apart from the extensive volume of information that scholars of Latin American and Caribbean studies gain from *Slaver Traffic in the Age of Abolition*, the publication that has a lot to offer scholars of African studies. As the epilogue confirms, West Africa was a great source of the illegal human cargo that was exported after abolition laws were put in place; in terms of the sources of the slaves, Dorsey clearly pointed out, *inter alia*:

It is certain, nonetheless, that the majority of captives who landed on Puerto Rico shores came from the interiors of Upper Guinea in present-day Guinea-Conakry, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. While many were polytheists from small states, acephalous societies, and client polities not far [from] the coast—such as the Pongo Susu and the Ganga of Sierra Leone and Liberia—some, such as the Fula and the Manding[o], were Muslims from larger and often newly centralized states between Futa Jallon and the Sahel at the Niger Bend...(p. 211).

Above all, several mitigating factors would help diminish the slave trading in of the period. Dorsey explains also that “fluctuations in the Puerto Rican slave trade were not centered on Euro-American politics alone” (p. 211). He further underscored that social, political, and economic forces or factors endemic to West African affairs did contribute to what he saw as the dictates of the traffic. Toward the end, Dorsey sought to provide lucid and beneficial answers to some of the cogent queries about the limited numbers of Senegalese and Gold Coast nationals as part of the slaves being sent to Puerto Rico; and the extent of Spanish involvement. In the end, relations were predicated on anti-slave trade treaties between Great Britain and Spain, all of which,

in Dorsey’s estimation, “constituted a series of unending maneuvers between diplomatic rupture and repair” (p. 212). Above all, Dorsey made it clear that international abolitionism was, indeed, not a monolithic crusade, and that its movement was fractured at the internal level.

In providing additional details about earlier British and Puerto Rican relations, Dorsey narrates details about how, on 16 June 1598, George Clifford, who has been knighted as the third earl of Cumberland, attached Puerto Rico and controlled it for two months. Also, the Dutch and the French had coveted the island in aggressive terms. In the midst of the abolitionist fervor, Puerto Rican economic fortunes were fading, hence in January 1852, Mayaguez customs chief Blas Ginart gave an 18-point plan to Spain-appointed interim governor Enrique Espana Taberner to reverse Puerto Rico’s troubled economy. Instead, he expected his replacement to be an official, who would “endorse the revival of African slave commerce,” as the seventh recommendation had asked for (p. 217).

Dorsey, above all, shows how abolitionism became associated with such various 18th century buzzwords as enlightenment, benevolent despotism, anti-clericalism, revolution, progress and several others; also, that the Age of Abolition functioned as a conductor for new ideas and practices. To help speed up the emancipation (or freedom) of Africans kept against their will, in the midst of abolitionism, Dorsey shows how, as “recently” as in August 1862—and less than five decades from the dawn of the 20th century—23 Africans signed a letter to be sent to the British imperial capital (London) seeking relief and freedom, the tail-end of which, *inter alia*, read: “We also wish your Excellency to send us away as soon as possible, and we shall ever remember this service and pray that God may preserve you many years” (p. 218).

According to Dorsey, in the end, “many Africans in Cuba and Brazil returned to the African continent,” and that some of them did also reach their homelands or lands nearby, while a vast majority remained, including the 23 Puerto Rico-based writers of the petition. One wonders if racism played any role in the fact that, although the British Royal Navy, Foreign Office and even the Spanish colonial administration facilitated measures for these Blacks to return their native homes, Foreign Minister Russell “declined to act on this request, despite Cowper’s urgent recommendations” (p. 219). In Dorsey’s very astute and brilliant conclusions, the history of slave commerce in the Age of Abolition is more than (i) the study of false constructions of human biology of inherent deceptions as well as race-based ideologies that are protected by the forces of politics and society; and (ii) paradoxes. To understand it better and in clearer terms, it is worth perusing Dorsey’s study.

## **Book Review: Slavery Without Sugar: Diversity in Caribbean Economy and Society Since the 17th Century**

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Shepherd, Verene A., ed. *Slavery Without Sugar: Diversity in Caribbean Economy and Society Since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002. 336pp. \$59.95 (cloth).

This volume is a collection of essays on colonial Caribbean society and economy that seek to demonstrate the complexities in the lives of the enslaved populations outside of the plantation. The book's principal goal is to critique the tradition of Caribbean historiography that views the plantation complex in a straight-forward monocultural model or enslaver-enslaved dichotomy. These paradigms, according to the authors, mask the inherent diversity and heterogeneity of Caribbean society. Though recognizing the relative dominance of the sugar plantation as a system of production, *Slavery Without Sugar* demonstrates to the contrary that sugar did not control the whole structure of life in the Caribbean.

The book's eleven essays include studies on indigo farming in St. Domingue/Haiti (David Geggus); timber extraction in Belize (O. Nigel Bolland); livestock farms called "pens" in Jamaica (B. W. Higman); and coffee farming in Jamaica (two separate essays, one by S. D. Smith, and the other jointly by Verene A. Shepherd and Kathleen E. A. Monteith). Other studies examine the production of a variety of forest, maritime, and other non-sugar agricultural resources, such as the cultivation of cotton in the Bahamas (Gail Saunders).

A major aspect of the economic diversity that the volume seeks to illustrate is in the lives of the enslaved urban populations. Thus Evelyn Powell Jennings' essay on the king's enslaved laborers who worked on Havana's fortifications in the 18<sup>th</sup> century demonstrates that their lives were significant not only in terms of occupational diversity in enslavement in Cuba but also in illuminating the characteristics of urban enslavement as a whole. Her essay, along with Pedro L. V. Welch's analysis of the urban context of the enslaved in Barbados, Felix V. Matos Rodriguez's study of domestics in Puerto Rico, and Franklin W. Knight's examination of the free colored in Cuba, demonstrate that enslaved urban peoples faced conditions of life different from plantation or rural slavery, thus underscoring the fact that the peculiar characteristics of urban enslavement have to be studied if the complexities of Caribbean slavery are to be fully understood. As all the essays show, the rural dimension represented only one aspect of the social reality of plantation societies.

*Slavery Without Sugar*'s major contribution is in critiquing the totalizing tendency to focus on sugar; "the concept of a single type of plantation complex modeled on sugar can no longer be applied sweepingly to the colonial Caribbean" (p. 14). In exploring different dimensions of non-sugar production, the volume does an effective job in illuminating the complex nature of Caribbean economy and the implications of those forms of production for our understanding of the wider dynamics of class, race, and power outside of the sugar plantation. Labor processes, for instance, affected settlement patterns, demographic characteristics, and political power. Thus the socioeconomic marginality of Jamaican pen-keepers, who lacked political power, is contrasted with the relatively better-situated status of coffee farmers. Indeed, the conditions of enslaved labor in the Caribbean varied according to a number of factors not the least of which were the nature of the economic enterprise in which they were engaged and whether they were in a rural or urban setting. For qualitative differences existed in their lives, their contribution to the economy, their capacity to negotiate the terms of their conditions of enslavement, and their pursuit of freedom.

In stressing that diversification was "the real Caribbean experience," the contributors to the volume are not exactly breaking fresh ground. The theme of diversity in commodity production and the occupation of the enslaved had been emphasized by Barry Higman and others since the 1970s.<sup>1</sup> However, *Slavery Without Sugar* makes a significant contribution to an under-researched aspect of Caribbean studies, by adding to the pluralist discourse on Caribbean economic and social history.

1. B.W. Higman, *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807–1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).



## **Book Review: The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics**

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Chomsky, Aviva; Carr, Barry; and Smarkaloff, Pamela Marie, eds. *The Cuba Reader. History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003. 723 pp. \$26.95 (paper).

Ever since C. Wright Mills squared off with Theodore Draper more than forty years ago, there has generally been but two perspectives on Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution. From Mills, author of the popular *Listen, Yankee* in 1960, Castro was fundamentally a Cuban nationalist, out to make the sweeping changes that national sovereignty and social justice required; if he moved toward closer ties with the Soviet Union, it was only in self defense against the hostility of the United States. Draper diametrically disagreed. In his 1962 *Castro's Revolution. Myths and Realities*, Fidel purposely turned to communism and the Soviet orbit to consolidate his personal power, thereby betraying the proclaimed goals and ideals of the 1959 Revolution. Four-plus decades and whole shelves of books on the subject later, little of that debate has been resolved. *The Cuba Reader. History, Culture, Politics*, edited by Aviva Chomsky, Barry Carr, and Pamela Maria Smorkaloff, is a case in point.

In their volume, the editors, two historians and a professor of literature, make no claims that theirs is a balanced treatment. The three, accomplished scholars in the field all, announce from the start a shared "commitment to social justice" (p. 2) that produces a sympathetic treatment of the Cuban struggle for change. What results is a collection of over 120 readings of every genre, from memoirs to poetry, to sociological analysis, to cartoons, arranged chronologically, first in four sections that describe the Cuban conquest, colony, independence movement, and ensuing neocolonialism prior to the Revolution, followed thematically by another four that illustrate post-1959 social, cultural, and international themes, as well as a final segment on the challenges of the Special Period. Throughout it all, the message is that, prior to Castro's Revolution, Cuba was controlled and exploited by outside forces and that afterwards the changes wrought were rational, justified, and welcomed by the vast majority of Cuban citizens. Take, for example, the section on The Cuban Revolution and the World. It portrays a heroic Cuba facing a malicious United States by juxtaposing diary entries and photos of the idealistic Venceremos Brigade with declassified documents from Operation Mongoose, the secret U.S. plan to overthrow the Castro regime. Likewise, as various U.S. administrations

plotted to assassinate Fidel, thousands of Cubans, including children cruelly separated from their families, were lured to Florida exile by "substantial [U.S.] government largesse" (p. 557). Meanwhile, Cuba became admired throughout the Third World for the thousands of physicians and health-care workers that it has sent out since 1963. Nowhere in this section is there suggestion of Cubans fleeing increasing political repression, of increasing economic dependency on the Soviet Union, or of the Revolution's military interventions in Africa and Latin America.

Despite its overall length, 712 pages of text, suggestions for further reading and acknowledgments, this anthology curiously pays little attention to Fidel himself, the central figure of Cuban history and politics, if not culture as well, since 1959. There is his "History Will Absolve Me" speech from 1953 and excerpts from a revolutionary speech delivered only days after assuming power. But afterwards there is only occasional and fleeting mention of him, as if he were but a piece of the background rather than a looming presence. Missing consequently is inclusion of readings from any of the many political biographies that contribute critically to the story of Cuba and its Revolution. Nothing from the self-defensive Herbert Matthews, the academic Peter Bourne, the journalistic Tad Szulc, or even the breezy Georgie Anne Geyer—any of these might have contributed significantly to the overall picture of the nation and its times.

Whatever the openly admitted imbalance and despite any gap in the presentation, *The Cuba Reader* is nevertheless an impressive and worthy addition to the series of similar readers on Peru, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico, published by Duke University Press. In this latest addition, the editors have gathered an engaging assortment of readings, some of them from classics, like Miguel Barnet's *Biography of a Runaway Slave*, Che's *Reminiscences*, the essays of Guillermo Cabrera Infante and the poetry of Nicolas Guillen, others from sources less well known, translated by one of the editors herself and apparently appearing in English for the first time. The outcome is a rich variety of voices, most of them Cuban, which, when read together reveal a nation and people of complexity and charm, pathos and poignancy, quite unlike the stark categories in which the warring ideologies usually place them. With few exceptions, the excerpts are kept short; without exception they are free of academic jargon and dense theory. Indeed, this is a volume that can be read with benefit and enjoyment by student and faculty scholars alike.



# **Book Review: Religious Fundamentalism in the Contemporary World: Critical Social and Political Issues**

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Saha, Santosh C., ed. *Religious Fundamentalism in the Contemporary World: Critical Social and Political Issues*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2004. 340 pp. \$75.00 (cloth).

This collection represents a pluralist approach to religious fundamentalism. No definitional order is imposed and a variety of theories are expounded. All the authors are engaged analytically in the attempt to identify and to comprehend the many faces of fundamentalist ideology in our contemporary world. There are ten chapters by authors representing a broad range of academic disciplines.

Those chapters focusing on methodological pursuit of religious fundamentalism include treatments of (1) the "Global Information Order" [ch. 1] as a transnational forum outside the control of states and corporations that is being exploited by fundamentalist groups, (2) the "nature of religious markets" [ch. 2] in a time when the "sacred canopy" of religion as social consensus is no longer a plausible reality for any society, and (3) the continuum along which both fundamentalism and pluralism are situated [ch. 3] in strong or weak versions determined by the interpretive handling of the "Collection" of writings held as sacred by the society. This last-mentioned study illustrates its points through an examination of the political role of religion in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In each of the three instances, the cultural complexity and social particulars of the society are judged as too diverse for a fundamentalist ideology to be functionally dominant. In Singapore, a city-state dominated by ethnic Chinese, a compulsory religious education curriculum called "Religious Knowledge" that included pluralist choices foundered because of "student disinterest in Confucianism" which was the choice favored by the government. Abandoning the "Religious Knowledge" project, the government adopted a set of principles "intended to enshrine an 'Asian' set of values" (p. 62). In Indonesia, "the Islam of a large proportion of the population is too mixed up with other local religious beliefs and practices to allow a purist version of Islam to be enforced nationwide" (p. 65). The government has employed a "strategic ideological compromise" known as *pancasila*, five principles that were included in the Indonesian constitution and that "contain both religious and secular ideas" (p. 64). In Malaysia, with 61 percent ethnic Malay Muslims and 34 percent ethnic Chinese and Indians, "almost none of whom are Muslims" (p. 67), the government "must try to find pluralist accommo-

dations with its large non-Muslim populations, which greatly reduces the prospect of implementing a particularist national ideology" (p. 67).

A fourth chapter grouped with the methodological approaches claims that, with the collapse of communist ideologies in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, "religions quickly moved to the center of public discourse" (p. 74), providing continuity to cultural identities. At first, this discourse was pluralist and predominantly lay discourse. Later, clerical discourse came to the fore with a particularist slant (p. 76). The author claims that "a straightforward, ostensible particularism, shown by the Eastern European religions, turns out to be in fact the only tactic for them to retain a substantial symbolic power in the era of global culture" (p. 85).

The remaining six chapters are identified as treating regional fundamentalisms, though chapters on political Islam and the Islamophobia of the Western media are not so much regional as thematic. The regional chapters include two addressing Hindu fundamentalism in India, one focusing on the Islamization of Pakistan, and one recounting the emergence of the Shas party in Israel.

Hindu revivalist politics [ch. 6] is obsessed with establishing Hindu religious communalism as the basis for national identity in India. It assumes the homogeneity of a Hindu community in the form of the brahmanical Hinduism of the Vedas and it freely revises history into an Aryan golden age followed by a Muslim age of moral decline (p. 144). It advocates the compulsory teaching of Sanskrit, the inclusion of astrology in university curricula, and observance of traditions like *sati*, the self-immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre. The author, who is also the editor of the volume, points out weaknesses in the ideology of the Hindu revivalists. Not only was the Hindu past always quite diverse and the history of India largely pluralist, but Saha claims that at the core of this revivalist movement "lay a secular ideology of the state and a modern approach to party politics" (p. 159). The revivalists, Saha asserts, created divisiveness, "but the majority of Hindus were in favor of a secular state because modernity would likely bring efficiency and material prosperity without jeopardizing Hindu norms and valued traditions" (p. 160).

Ideology supplants historiography according to a study subtitled, "The Islamization of Pakistani Social Studies Textbooks" [ch. 10]. History becomes a mere tool for creating heroes and villains suitable for teaching a Pakistani nation-

alism committed to the “Two-Nation Theory” which holds that “Hindus and Muslims in South Asia had always constituted distinct and irreconcilably separate communities” (p. 278). The rich cultural variety of peoples constituting Pakistan has been effaced by Islamization generated by the central government. “Islam has been the tool and Panjabi hegemony has been the rule” (p. 280). The Islamization of social science textbooks began in 1972 and reached full stride under General Zia ul-Haq, whose textbooks live on long after his assassination in 1988 (p. 290). “Denial and erasure are the primary tools of historiography as it is officially practiced in Pakistan” (p. 287).

Relatively short chapters on the Shas party in Israel [ch. 9] and the Bharatiya Janata Party in India [ch. 8] tell surprisingly similar stories. These parties are very pragmatic about wielding what power they can achieve, and they are both willing to manipulate political matters by use of religiously charged issues. Seeking political advantage, the BJP linked itself to the questionable tradition of Ayodhya as the birthplace of Rama which led to the razing of Babar’s mosque in Ayodhya by a mob on 6 December 1992 (p. 213). From its initial electoral foray in 1984, the Shas party has charted a political course that left its natural ally, Likud, in the lurch while allying with its original enemy, Labor, in the quest for favorable treatment toward its Sephardi constituents. The author claims that “both Labor and Likud failed to reach the voters through grass roots social and economic activities” whereas the Shas party concentrated on delivering the goods for the Sephardi cause (p. 256).

The chapter on political Islam [ch. 5] posits two phases of Islamist discourse. The first phase is identified as motivational and it consists of stereotypical denunciation of the immoral values of the West and of utopian claims about Islam as the answer to all political questions. The necessary second phase is analytical and directed toward pragmatic engagement with practical realities in order to implement desired political and economic changes (pp. 95–96). The author claims that the Ayatollah Khomeini is “the quintessential example of this (first) phase of Islamism” (p. 96), and that the current president of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, who “developed a very sophisticated worldview focusing on the need for progress in the Muslim world” (p. 95), represents the essence of the second phase of Islamist discourse. The author asserts that, in Khatami’s case, “both the essentialized ‘West’ and ‘Islam’ are viewed critically” (p. 106).

The chapter on “Islamophobia in the Western Media” [ch. 7] is the most volatile piece in this collection. Western phobia about Islam is cited as far back as Voltaire’s ignorant rant in a play he wrote about Muhammad. Samuel Huntington’s identification of Islam as the new “other” in his 1993 work, *The Clash of Civilizations*, is panned for its over-reliance on works by Bernard Lewis that employ simplistic reductions of Islam and point to fanatic Islamists as the real Muslims (p. 175). The co-authors conclude that “it is the scholarship of oversimplification that informs the West about Islam” (p. 176). The authors point out that there are no Jewish terrorists or Christian terrorists for the Western media—“only Muslims are ‘terrorists’” (p. 178). They note that “armed Zionists in the Hagannah, Irgun, and Stern Gang, fighting often ferociously for the independent state of Israel, were referred to not as Jewish terrorists but as patriots, nationalists, commandos, guerrillas, the Jewish underground, and freedom fighters” (p. 177). They further note that Serbs attacking Muslims in Bosnia were called “nationalists,” never “Christian terrorists” (p. 177).

The authors go on to present an instructive look at the media’s handling of the Rushdie controversy, concluding that his work was culturally treasonous and well outside the bounds of what the West permits to be published within its own cultural territory (p. 194). The authors contrast the coddling of Rushdie by the Western media to the treatment of Irish singer Sinead O’Connor when she tore up a photograph of the pope on *Saturday Night Live* in 1992. “No mention was ever made of O’Connor’s right to free speech while a mob cheered on a steamroller as it crushed hundreds of O’Connor CDs—a picture analogous to the burning of Rushdie’s books by a handful of Muslims in different parts of the world” (p. 194). The authors are equally lively in their exposé of Islamophobia in the media’s role in the Gulf War and in the War on Terror.

While there are nuggets of interest to be found in each of the ten chapters, the most valuable presentations are Saha’s chapter on Hindu revivalists and Yvette Claire Rosser’s chapter on Islamization of Pakistani ideology by way of textbooks. These authors both offer thorough knowledge about the leading figures, strategic shifts, and pivotal developments in the recent history of the two leading fundamentalisms of South Asia, and they provide sound, incisive critiques of these respective movements in India and Pakistan. The secular and pluralist traditions of India afford the reader some optimism, but the reader can only dread the future of Pakistan as a “failed state.”

## **Book Review: The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba**

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Johnson, Sherry. *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001. 267 pp. \$55.00 (cloth).

Latin American colonial historiography has focused largely on Mexico and Peru as indicative of Spanish American realities because of their economic, political, and social influence. But the mainland experience was vastly different from that of the Caribbean, particularly Cuba, a hub of maritime traffic between Spain and America. In turn, the dominance of slavery and sugar in Cuba's historiography has obscured other processes, patterns, and influences on the island during its over four hundred-year colonial past. Not until the nineteenth century did sugar plantations come to dominate the island's economy and leave their mark on the landscape. The concurrent demand for slaves to work these enterprises dramatically increased Cuba's African population to the point where they became the majority by the middle of the century. Yet prior to the nineteenth century, Cuba was a very different place. By exploring the military reforms in eighteenth-century Cuba and the influx of *peninsulares* (Spaniards born in the Iberian peninsula) during the last third of the century, Sherry Johnson reveals diverse economic pursuits and a population of predominantly European descent largely dependent on Spanish military investment. She argues that Spanish immigration to Cuba between 1763 and 1800 not only greatly outnumbered African immigration, but it was also the main engine driving social change on the island. But her book *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba* does more than just warn against the monocultural myopia of sugar and slavery; it also repositions Cuba within the broader context of Latin American colonial relations. She argues that Cuba, more than Mexico or Peru, was Spain's darling in the late eighteenth century, a privileged position that sustained Cubans' loyalty to Spain long after other colonies had declared their independence.

After England invaded and occupied Havana from 1762 to 1763, Spain made a concerted effort to ensure it would never lose this critical port to another European nation again. To this end, the crown sent Alejandro O'Reilly to the island to institute military reforms. The salaries, *fueros* (judicial privileges), and increased prestige of serving in Cuba's armed forces attracted *peninsulares*, Creoles (Spaniards born in the colonies), and people of color to its ranks. Johnson argues, "With perhaps the exception of slaves, almost all

benefited from the increased military presence" (p. 16). The dramatic influx of *peninsulares* who came to serve in the military altered Cuba's social life. Marriages between these *peninsulares* and Creole daughters and the creolization of the military facilitated close ties between Cuba and Spain; unlike the rest of Latin America, Cuban Creoles enjoyed an elevated status in the eyes of the Crown. That one third of all marriages between 1753 and 1800 in Havana were between *peninsulares* and Creoles reduced the Creole stigma there. Cuba was one of the only areas in the Spanish empire where those born in colonies benefited from privileges generally guarded closely by *peninsulares*. Even if they were not explicitly recognized as equals, many came to believe they were. Since the island's Creoles perceived themselves to be European and therefore *blanco* (white), they tended to associate themselves more with Spain's inhabitants than their geographically closer *mestizo*, indigenous, and African counterparts in Spanish America. Even after a new governor, Luis de las Casas (1790–96), disrupted the social pact between the island and Spain by favoring merchants and sugar interests to the detriment of the military, families who had been affected by militarization remained loyal to the Crown.

Because Las Casas's government was so ineffective and unpopular and he alienated the military, by the end of his term, Cuba was on the brink of rebellion. Unrest developed among the lower classes because they lost the opportunity to empower themselves through the military. At the same time, defiance and resistance spread at many levels; often captains who were caught between their charges and Las Casas's tyranny sided with their constituents and circumvented government mandates. Some, such as Captain Antonio José Morejón, became local heroes in the process. In this way, Johnson's revisionist history shows that many Cubans resisted the expansion of the sugar economy because they associated it with Las Casas, not necessarily because of a conscious disdain for the international market economy. And from a political standpoint, Las Casas's reign signaled the end of Cuba's preferential relationship with Spain. Even though the efforts of Joaquin Beltrán de Santa Cruz and Francisco de Montalvo averted anarchy and restored imperial order in the wake of Las Casas' destructive rule, Spain's investment in the island had been reduced and Cuban denizens' status had been diminished in the eyes of the Crown. By the early nineteenth century, *peninsulares* no longer held Cuban Creoles in greater esteem than their counterparts in the rest of Spanish America. Concurrently,

the economy was moving away from its intimate links with Spain and becoming more dependent on the United States. Nonetheless, the militarization of Cuba left an indelible mark on the families who were affected by it. Their loyalty towards Spain and the honor of their ancestors who were brought up in the Spanish military tradition continued well into the nineteenth century.

Johnson adeptly argues that this legacy of loyalty stunted independence movements in Cuba. Yet the thoroughness with which she pursues the development of Cuban loyalty to Spain is not emulated in her study of *Cubanidad* (Cubanness), an ideology distinguished by the Creole intellectual Félix Varela and his disciples that was rooted in Cuban pride and anti-Spanish sentiments. She does not explain how Cuba's heritage of loyalty to Spain was converted into its own sense of identity. To be fair, an examination of this ideology may be beyond the scope of *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba*, but when Johnson broaches the topic, the reader hopes for a fuller explanation especially since *Cubanidad* was a critical component in Cuba's independence movements that erupted in 1868 and again in 1895. And Johnson's assertion that "This research has sought to give voice to el pueblo and demonstrate that the ideology of Cubanidad (Cubanness) took its roots in eighteenth-century demographic and social forces" (p. 190) seems to miss the mark, if not contradict her findings. Her empirical data and analysis convincingly establish a cause and effect relationship between eighteenth-century demographic and social forces and Cuban loyalty to Spain, but not between these forces and *Cubanidad*. Most Cuban Creoles did not develop a sense of *Cubanidad* in the eighteenth century even after they lost their elevated status in the empire. Yet this shortcoming does not undermine her central argument that military reforms brought about social change on the island well before the onslaught of sugar and slavery.

Although Johnson intentionally focuses her study on the white population and on the social implications of the military reforms, she provides enough evidence to convince the reader that after 1763 much of Cuba's economic growth came from Spain's investment in construction and defense on the island. But other resources and endeavors contributed to the diversity of the economy—cattle, hardwoods, coffee, tobacco, apiculture, wax production, small-scale agriculture. When such economic reformers as Francisco de Arango y Parreño and Las Casas sought to convert Cuba to a sugar colony, they met fierce resistance not just from tobacco farmers (who enjoyed the Crown's favor), but also from large segments of the population who defended the merits of economic diversity and resisted monoculture. Leaders who eventually succeeded in shifting Cuba's economy to one dominated by sugar and slavery, did so against the wishes of most Cubans.

Apart from its economic ramifications, Cuba's militarization also had implications for ethnic relations on the island. Blacks who signed on to the military fared better in Cuba than anywhere else in Spain's overseas empire. That two-thirds of Cuba's free black population joined the mili-

tary is a testament both to the privileges and increased capacity to own property that military employment promised. In some exceptional cases, slaves earned their freedom and then purchased others to work for them. One former slave who was a veteran enjoyed full military privileges and accumulated enough wealth to own two slaves. Johnson builds a strong case to support her argument that in addition to ethnicity, class, and status (freed or enslaved), whether or not one was connected to the military also determined one's social position. However, her assertion that the military bridged the racial divide in the colony is less convincing, especially since the militias were segregated, and *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) remained a crucial aspect in establishing *peninsular* and Creole identity and thus their privileged status. One father opposed his daughter's "vile" fiancé in part because the suitor's family "was mixed with Indian blood" (p. 108). Elite perceptions of black and mulatto women as temptresses also point to ethnic animosity. In fact, these women were deemed such a threat that a law was passed to force them to cover their chests in public. Although that legislation had as much to do with gender relations as ethnic relations, it belies racial tolerance. On the other hand, in addition to contributing to peninsular acceptance of and attraction to Creole women, the disproportionate male to female white population on the island facilitated liaisons between *blancos* and women of color—both free and enslaved. (Conveniently, according to the data in appendix A, free colored and free black women in Havana outnumbered their male counterparts.) Naturally, the offspring of these associations increased the population of color, yet Johnson fails to explore the impact these mulattos had on Cuban society or how these relations may have contributed to reducing racial divisions. Her emphasis is on the white population and since people of color comprised less than fifteen percent of the free population, the growing number of *peninsulares* and their alliances with Creoles were the most significant determinant of social change on the island. Perhaps for this reason, black voices are rarely heard in her monograph.

In general, considering their infrequency in her sources, Johnson's treatment of women is laudatory. Since the military had been socially constructed as a man's domain, by its very nature, militarization subordinated women, but at times it also enabled them to improve their lot. One group of widows' successful fight for their pensions eventually contributed to the economic well being of all military widows, orphans, and mothers. Many of these same women later successfully deflected Las Casas' efforts to repeal their benefits. When emergencies demanded the men's attention, women acted as "deputy husbands" assuming control of the family's internal affairs, including financial matters. Yet even though a woman could arrange her son's education, daughter's marriage and dowry, and the sale of family property, the effect of women's empowerment reinforced, rather than disrupted patriarchal relations. Men recognized them as being equal to these tasks, but Johnson is careful not to overstate women's status or power. However, at times, she

seems to underestimate their nous. Johnson's description of a few Havana women's activities demonstrating "financial acumen unique for their time" (p. 119) belies her own findings (particularly the example of the proprietress of a boardinghouse and slaves in chapter two), which indicate that women with financial acumen were anything but unique. Nevertheless, Johnson's efforts to mine archival sources for evidence of women's realities provide a small window into their complex mix of empowerment and alienation in late eighteenth-century Cuba.

The transparent manner in which Johnson weaves her methodology and primary source material into the narrative is refreshing because it affords the reader a better position from which to critique her work, understand how she came to draw her conclusions and develop her analysis, and engage in the historian's craft. In the process she evinces the merits of microhistory as a way of both informing and correcting macro data. But at times extensive details bog down her narrative. Some parts are so packed with vignettes—the beginning of chapter five, for example, reads like a who's who in the José de Gálvez family and entourage—that the reader loses the larger argument. Because the plethora of information about myriad characters can be

dizzying, at times what emerges reads like a history of the great white men of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Cuba—Bartolomé de Morales, Alejandro O'Reilly, Las Casas, Arango y Parreño, Joaquín Beltrán de Santa Cruz, Francisco de Montalvo, Varela—despite efforts to weave a story of lesser known actors. The effect contradicts the true value of this work. Nevertheless, by employing the methodology of microhistory, Johnson reconstructs the diverse and complex lives of everyday colonial Cubans and in redressing the dominance of elite perspectives she also enriches our understanding of Cuba's colonial past by releasing it from the grasp of sugar and slavery. In so doing, she establishes an agenda that encourages scholars and students to eschew a tendency to privilege macro data and hegemonic forces, in favor of an approach that also examines grassroots perspectives and experiences. At the same time, she is careful to show how events in Spain and Spain's failed military pursuits in Algeria, for example, affected Cuba, so as not to present local conditions and realities in a vacuum. Johnson's fine book demonstrates how exploring the dialectic relationship between structure and experience can yield acute understandings of the past in Cuba, Latin America, and the developing world.



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