

BOOK REVIEW

Re-imagining the Guyanas. Edited by LAWRENCE AJE, THOMAS LACROIX, and JUDITH MISRAHI-BARAK. (Horizons anglophones; PoCoPages.) Montpellier: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2019. 316 pp.

Fruit of several international conferences, this volume illustrates the new vitality and visibility of global academic research on the so-called Guyanas. South American countries of the Guiana Shield used to be simply subsumed under the main research area of the Caribbean; now, a specific Guyanese research field draws increasing attention to this region, as does the culmination of landmark anniversaries: Suriname's forty years of independence from the Netherlands in 2015, and Guyana's sixty years of independence from Britain along with Guyane's seventy years of *départementalisation*, both in 2016. *Locating Guyane* has already proved a valuable reference for its multidisciplinary approach of the *département et région d'outre-mer* of Guyane (ed. by Sarah Wood and Catriona MacLeod (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), reviewed in *FS*, 73 (2019), 327). The present collection aims to be 'more comparative' and to show how 'the three Guyanas [can] provide a laboratory for a cross-disciplinary sharing of ideas and visions for the future' (pp. 15–16). However, this cannot be done without remembering the past. Discussions on history, space, and time are prominent in this volume, which is permeated notably with intimate recollections. By giving voice to private memories of Guyanese scholars and writers (although mostly from Guyana), this book sheds new light on complex histories of colonization, migrations, political violence, and relations to landscapes. Gaiutra Bahadur and Clem Seecharan bring Rose Hall Sugar Plantation in Guyana to life by paying homage to their enigmatic Indian foremothers. Janice Low Shinebourne and Cyril Dabydeen remember their childhoods in Rose Hall. In the same auto-ethnographic vein, Sonja Boon thinks of how '[g]old threads its way through [her] Surinamese pasts' as a 'product of transnational, colonial hauntings' (p. 75). These (auto)biographical insights find echoes in the final articles, which explore Wilson Harris's and Edgar Mittelholzer's writing and imagination. Influenced by Western philosophers and by Amerindian philosophy and narrative genres (as shown in the chapters by T. J. Cribb and Gabriel Cambraia Neiva), Harris was on a quest for 'a language that [would] do justice to the resources of landscapes and societies in marginalized space' (Michael Mitchell, p. 249). Juanita Cox shows that Mittelholzer was similarly fascinated by landscapes and passionate about oriental philosophies and occultism, in her effort to reassess this writer's complex work. At the heart of the volume, other articles tackle the political context of the Guyanas (Natalie Hopkinson on the Guyanese festival Mashramani), the place of indigenous peoples (Janette Bulkan on their fight for rights; Lisa Katharina Grund on the Makushi's ethics of travelling and the notion of 'kunaima'), and the impact of transnational and diasporic dynamics (Sinah Theres Kloß on the ritual of Ganga puja practised in Queens). The volume is incredibly rich, though we cannot help but notice that only one article is about Suriname, and two are about French Guiana (Charles Forsdick on the *bagne* and its rewritings, and Kathleen Gyssels on the Second World War in the poetry of Léon-Gontran Damas, Martin Carter, and Kamau Brathwaite). Therefore, the book focuses above all on Indo-Guyanese cultures and on Guyana, but this imbalance shouldn't stop researchers

interested in the Guyanas from reading it; on the contrary, it should invite them to fill in the gaps.

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