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Markus COESTER & Wolfgang BENDER (eds.), *A Reader in African-Jamaican Music, Dance and Religion*

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Markus Coester & Wolfgang Bender (eds.), *A Reader in African-Jamaican Music, Dance and Religion*, Kingston, Ian Randle, 2015.

Postcolonial critiques of knowledge formation and discourse are challenged by the fact that they are often formulated by way of recourse to Western epistemological models. Markus Coester and Wolfgang Bender's studies on African Jamaican popular culture present timely alternatives to avoid this pitfall. Their *Reader in African-Jamaican Music, Dance and Religion* (2015) brings together seminal articles by Jamaican scholars and anthropologists of the early to late twentieth century who examined their culture and society surrounding efforts towards cultural emancipation and after independence. Presenting the historical evidence gathered by Jamaicans surrounding their struggle for independence and cultural self-definition, Coester and Bender make a clear case for the need to examine Caribbean popular cultures on their own terms rather than borrowed concepts from either Europeanist and/or Africanist lenses.

Coester and Bender's anthology also attempts to rectify some of the reductionist readings of Jamaican popular or "bass" culture as simply appropriating, resisting and/or blending diverse cultural elements. Rather, they suggest that one must consider these cultural expressions as unique indigenous performance cultures that have emerged from the experience of slavery and colonialism in Jamaica. Hence, the editors define Jamaican and Caribbean popular culture via the term "accommodation." As they assert in the introduction to the anthology:

As such, accommodation implies that a tradition or cultural practice strives to integrate elements

from "outside" (for a communicative purpose) and that they are easily integrated by the practitioners, or rather that the practitioners are able to accommodate them, which leads to and shapes cultural change in a particular way, instead of either assimilating or rejecting these elements, without this effect (xix).

Whilst many of the articles assembled here are well known to scholars in the field and some appear dated, they nonetheless offer an archive for future scholarship to assess Jamaican cultural development and practice which is now widely accessible for the first time. As such, the contributions by seminal Jamaican scholars such as Ryman, Wynter, Bettelheim, Schuler, Seaga, Chevannes, Tanna, Bilby and Lewin constitute an oral history project in itself that is the consequence of discourses surrounding cultural

memory as much as the evidence of cultural practice still performed by Jamaicans today. That this is of value to the study and historical documentation of Jamaican cultural practice goes unquestioned and provides the evidence for further theorization as presented by Henriques's book. If Jamaican "vibratory power" as such is indeed non-representational, as *Sonic Bodies* suggests,¹ its performance event and socio-cultural clout are not, and by reading

Henriques's theoretical investigation alongside the historical documentation provided by Coester and Bender's anthology, this is clearly evidenced.

Sabine SÖRGEL

Note

1. See my review of his book *Sonic Bodies*, in this collection of texts.

Donna Hope (ed.), *International Reggae: Current and Future Trends in Jamaican Popular Music*, Kingston, London, Pelican Books, 2013.

The book *International Reggae: Current and Future Trends in Jamaican Popular Music* is an edited collection of papers presented at the 2010 International Reggae Conference hosted by the Institute of Caribbean Studies and Reggae Studies Unit at the University of the West Indies, Mona. The International Reggae Conference is a biennial academic conference that facilitates multiple and international discourses on various perspectives on Jamaican popular music and culture, both locally and internationally.

Section 1, "Cultural Interpretations," deals with the various readings and uses of dancehall and reggae music as they cross borders. According to Ellen Kohlins and Pete Lilly, authors of *Riddim Magazine*, In Europe and specifically Germany, the view of reggae and dancehall has changed from the "One love" philosophy promoted by Bob Marley's music to "One Hate." As the themes of cultural relativity and ethno-

centrism are tacitly discussed, homophobia in reggae and dancehall lyrics are analysed within Europe as inciting violence against homosexuals. Hope's empirical paper "Dancehall Violence & Jamaican Youth," reports that the link between violence, reggae and dancehall music