matched manifest destiny's urge to appropriate and own the entirety of the American continent. Shirley Foster's "'A Confusion of Unwashed and Shabbily Dressed People': Nineteenth-Century Americans and Urban Britain" revisits Hawthorne's *Our Old Home* (1863) in a study of the impact of England's cities on the writings of a series of transatlantic travellers whose record of urban spaces and peoples destabilised the geographic imaginary of New and Old Worlds set up by Washington Irving *et al.* in the early part of the nineteenth century. In "Sunny Tropic Scenes: US Travel Writers and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba," Peter Hulme examines travel writing about Cuba through three key historical moments: the Spanish–American War of 1898, which announced, overtly, America's colonial intentions, the period of relative stability prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the early years of the twenty-first century. In "Henry James and the 'Swelling Act of the Imperial Theme,'" Peter Rawlings examines the work of arguably the most prolific writer of travel and empire associated with England and America, in an account of James's troubled responses to late nineteenth-century British colonial endeavours in Afghanistan and Africa, as well as his wider understanding of the polyphonic ideologies of imperialism. Tim Youngs's "The Pacifist Traveller: Kate Crane-Gartz" argues that the travel writing of this largely forgotten agitator expresses profound anxieties about imperialist ideologies during the Second World War but struggles to resist racial stereotyping in accounts of Native Americans and Chinese immigrants in California. David Seed's essay, "American Ambassadors: Travellers in the Cold War," explores the uneasy consciousness of surveillance and a struggle for expression within a framework of geopolitical tensions in the travel accounts of Philip Wylie, Robert Heinlein, John Steinbeck and Richard Wright. Judie Newman's "In The Missionary Position: Emily Prager in China" examines the writings of the American feminist on Chinese culture, which accede to Western stereotypes on practices such as footbinding, but also explore the complex and tricky arena of transnational adoption within the framework of American–Chinese relations. This expansive and diverse collection demonstrates that the concept of empire was, as it continues to be, a formative and framing presence in American travel writing.

University of Central Lancashire THERESA SAXON

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Paul Gilroy, *Darker than Blue: On the Moral Economies of Black Atlantic Culture* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010, $22.95). Pp. 177. ISBN 978 0 674 03570 6.

The size of Paul Gilroy's new book belies the scope of its stated ambition: to help revitalize and update the field of African American studies. Organized into three extended essays, *Darker than Blue* examines automotive culture, human rights, and what Gilroy calls global "info-war" from a black Atlantic perspective. The book issues a passionate call to the field of African American studies to engage urgent contemporary issues like unsustainable consumer culture and neo-imperial wars. Despite his provocative assertion that black political thought has become a "vacuum"

(54), the book remains deeply invested in the redemptive history and possibilities of the "black Atlantic's heritage of freedom struggles" (3).

In the first essay, "Get Free or Die Tryin'," Gilroy offers an inspiring call for new scholarly foci, such as American automotive culture where aspirations for freedom, social mobility, and belonging intersect with destructive and crass consumerism and the atomization of public space. Gilroy considers how "ethnic" branding has shaped blackness in consumer society, and how, conversely, consumerism has organized black ideas about freedom, noting that "African Americans were being interpellated as consumers long before they acquired citizenship rights" (9). Such analysis opens up important insights into the ways in which the commercial, along with the political, has constituted a space in which racialized and abjected peoples could "demonstrate their freedom" while trying to "win and compel recognition as human beings" (9).

The second essay, entitled "Declaration of Rights," contests an exclusive European possessiveness in the concept of human rights and traces the significant ways in which ideas of human rights were advanced in sites of black nation formation such as Haiti, Liberia, and Ethiopia. Here, Gilroy calls for renewed critical attention to the contributions of international pop icon Bob Marley, whose visions of social justice awakened a great sense of possibility in youth around the globe. Perhaps Gilroy's recollection of his own formation in that exciting cauldron accounts for the sense of nostalgia which organizes his "eulogy" for African American music in the third essay, "Troubadours, Warriors, and Diplomats." Gilroy reminds us of the moral vision of musicians like Marley and also Curtis Mayfield, who is posed as another counterpoint to what Gilroy sees as the "fading political voice of African American popular music" (1).

In contrast to Marley and Mayfield, contemporary icons like Jay-Z and 50 Cent, along with cultural phenomena like *Pimp My Ride*, represent, for Gilroy, a regrettable departure from the moral vision and legacy of earlier generations of African American musicians. At the same time, Gilroy argues, the conflation of African American and generic American culture is dangerous because the global consumption of the former obscures and makes palatable the oppressive history and destructive potential of the latter. Yet we should not lose sight of the ways in which hip-hop remains an important cultural space where contemporary artists with both moral and political vision articulate social critiques. Gilroy's call for "de-provincialization" could open up much-needed critical attention to phenomena like MC Solaar's "prose combat" and to circuits of exchange between anglophone and francophone rap. It could also bring focus to the ways in which hip-hop has functioned as a space for racialized youth in Europe to articulate new visions of belonging that, in turn, transform and expand the political and moral potential of global hip-hop culture.

Darker than Blue lays out a compelling new research programme for scholars of American studies, one rooted in a deep commitment to social justice. The call for new tools of analysis that can engage complex matrices of agency, consumer culture, information technology, and global circuits of desire and domination is both urgent and timely.

University of Wisconsin BIRGIT BRANDER RASMUSSEN