

recurrence and evolving character, have reflected shifting ideologies and realities, ones that, like the *mulata* herself, resist containment (p. 216).

The range of artistic genres covered in this book is truly impressive. The reader will delight in the array of full-colour images accompanying each chapter. Moreover, the book offers deep and sustained engagement with many of the important works of scholarship on race and gender in Cuba. However, considering the prevalence of the *mulata* in Cuban popular culture, many of the themes Fraunhar discusses have been taken up previously by other scholars. The book does miss an opportunity to engage with a few of these key texts. In particular, Melissa Blanco Borelli's monograph *She is Cuba* (Oxford University Press, 2016) examines the ways *mulatas* constructed their own identities through movement and performance. Karen Y. Morrison's *Cuba's Racial Crucible* (Indiana University Press, 2015) also analyses many of the same racialised gendered tropes that shaped representations of the *mulata* through historical and historiographical sources. Rafael Ocasio's *Afro-Cuban Costumbrismo* (University of Florida Press, 2012) explored the depiction of African-descended characters in a genre that forms the foundation of Fraunhar's analysis. Given the sheer breadth of the visual sources Fraunhar examined, *Mulata Nation* would have been strengthened by a discussion of how this more expansive frame suggests revisions or innovations of existing explorations of the relationship between *mulata* representations and Cuban nationality. Engagement with these and other works might have offered the chance to sharpen the book's central argument and refine the content of the substantive chapters to spotlight the author's unique contributions to the field.

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Cristina Soriano, *Tides of Revolution: Information, Insurgencies, and the Crisis of Colonial Rule in Venezuela* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2018), pp. xiv + 316, \$95.00, hb, \$34.95, pb.

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This excellent book offers genuinely new evidence and interpretations on how print media, manuscripts, the reading practices and performances around these objects and the circularity between print and oral cultures (that includes rumours and songs) shaped conspiracies and revolts in late colonial Venezuela. Cristina Soriano opens her work with a vignette of Alexander von Humboldt, who noticed in 1799 the preoccupation with colonial politics among the White elites of Caracas. The fears of colonial authorities toward the French, and in particular Saint-Domingue, increased as Spain abandoned Santo Domingo to France in

July 1795. Indeed, in the closing five years of the eighteenth century, no other Spanish American region was more affected than Venezuela by the combined threats of French privateers; unrest among local and foreign Black militias; British invasions (as the British did occupy Trinidad in 1797 and then Curacao, temporarily, in 1800); as well as locally-generated slave, free Black, multi-ethnic and republican conspiracies.

While the first half of the book focuses on the number and circulation of books and pamphlets, the evidence of different degrees of literacy and the power of rumours, the second part centres on the meticulous analysis of three conspiracies and rebellions in relation to the themes analysed in the first half. Throughout the book, Soriano examines the formation of a public sphere that significantly contributed to the falling of colonial hierarchies before the wars of independence. Indeed, the waning of colonial deference from subaltern groups to elite sectors set the stage for more radical events after 1808, the closing period of this book. At least from 1789, the opening period of this work, it is possible to find the formation of a public arena in Venezuela, fuelled by the increasing circulation of print culture, which 'allowed the participation of a socially diverse population in a wide range of political debates, questioning the monarchical regime and colonial rule, the socioracial hierarchies of colonial society, and the system of slavery' (p. 3). Thus, this work magisterially contributes to understanding the unintended subversive effects of literacy and what Soriano calls 'semiliterate forms of knowledge transmission' (p. 6) in three revolts and conspiracies initiated by slaves and freedmen in Coro (1795), by a multi-ethnic and multi-class network in La Guaira (1797) and by Black French corsairs in Maracaibo (1799).

This is a great Atlantic history, which pays attention to the flow of all three factors: people, commodities and ideas. This connects trade (including the traffic of captives), travellers, sailors and refugees arriving and leaving late colonial Venezuela, and the intellectual exchanges taking place in the region. In particular, this work adds to the contributions to the international revision and reconsideration of the impacts of the Haitian Revolution in different Spanish American regions, made, among others, by Ada Ferrer for Cuba and Anne Eller for Santo Domingo (later known as the Dominican Republic). These works should be read in combination for a new comprehensive understanding of the very diverse impacts of the Haitian Revolution in the Spanish Americas. For Soriano, in the 1790s the Haitian Revolution became a 'common language used by both the rulers and plebeian groups to make demands and negotiate change' (p. 5). Commoners who engaged in conspiracies and rebellions developed their own understandings and uncertainties in relation to local conflicts in the late 1790s and used Haiti as a political reference. Indeed, Saint-Domingue became an unavoidable political reference for commoners and elites in debates stretching from local conflicts of the political economy (for example, taxes) to larger issues of colonial rule such as slavery and the prospects of republicanism. This reference provided new spaces for negotiation between colonial elites and subaltern groups, a completely new scenario, preceding the wars of independence.

What appears to be the most important slave rebellion in the history of Venezuela took place in Coro in 1795. Soriano provides a new interpretation of this event, where the rebels demanded better material conditions through new types of dialogue in

which colonial officials and White elites generated different representations of this revolt as a republican initiative and as a rebellion to depose White planters. In a way, this may be viewed alongside other late colonial revolts in which rebels denounced local authorities but defended the Spanish monarchy as they pursued the elimination of taxes and tributes that included Indigenous people. Yet, the official narrative of the rebellion points to rumours of a law supposedly abolishing slavery in the Spanish realm but concealed by colonial authorities. Apart from the meticulous work on reconstructing the timeline of events and the many versions in relation to Saint-Domingue, it is surprising that after the very violent suppression of the revolt (for the context of Venezuela) and the implementation of measures to control the free Black and enslaved population, new forms of what we may call 'popular politics' continued (p. 212). It seems that local authorities knew they were alone (without Spanish reinforcements) in the case of open rebellions, and thus they tried to accommodate certain demands from subaltern groups.

This is a very important work on the history of books and newspapers in colonial Latin America and on print media in a place that lacked printing presses, as it shows that the number of people owning books increased during this period and the exchange between oral and print culture also increased. *Pardos*, free Black men and women, as well as those enslaved, also participated in circuits involving the many forms of print culture (for example, in handwritten copies or theatrical representations), in the extension of what Soriano calls 'semiliterate media'. She successfully brings to life those engaging with print media. Local practices of reading and sharing information connected print and oral culture, in a world of handmade '*pasquines*', handwritten papers that could be as big as broadsheets and intimidated colonial elites. The soundscape of the towns should be included, as guitars accompanied revolutionary songs. With the risk of making a teleological observation, Soriano provides a catalogue of the objects and social practices of urban culture for the later revolutionary Spanish America, pretty much already present in the late colonial cities.

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Francisco Quijano Velasco, *Las repúblicas de la monarquía: Pensamiento constitucionalista y republicano en Nueva España, 1550–1610*

(Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2017), pp. 316, pb.

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This book examines the political thought of three early modern authors, Alonso de la Veracruz (1507–84), Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566) and Juan Zapata y