

## MARRONNAGE AND THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION

*Rituals, Runaways, and the Haitian Revolution: Collective Action in the African Diaspora.* By Crystal Nicole Eddins. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 359. \$99.99 cloth; \$79.85 e-book.  
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This book is an interdisciplinary exploration of the social and cultural worlds of Africans in the French colony of Saint-Domingue before and during the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). Whereas some previous scholarship has emphasized African ethnic identity as a key axis of identity formation among Africans, Crystal Nicole Eddins underscores the emergence of collective *racial* consciousness among Africans across ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and political distinctions. She posits that collective acts of resistance against enslavement, namely cultural rituals and marronnage, were key features of this emerging racial solidarity. In turn, she frames this racial consciousness as instrumental to the success of the Haitian Revolution.

The book is structured in three parts. The first part discusses the factors contributing to the slave trade, as well as the social and cultural knowledge African captives brought to St. Domingue. The second part explores collective consciousness among enslaved Africans. The third uses marronnage as a lens to assess the impact of collective consciousness.

This book differs from conventional historical accounts of the Haitian Revolution in its application of sociological theories, namely constructionist/interactionist approaches, to understand the development of collective consciousness. Part of that consciousness, Eddins shows, was oppositional—against enslavement, colonial rule, capitalist extraction. The interactions growing out of this collective oppositional consciousness facilitated the emergence of racial solidarity, she argues.

Methodologically, Eddins describes the book as an interdisciplinary case study drawing on quantitative and qualitative methods, with theoretical and conceptual roots in historical sociology and social movements research. In terms of sources, the book accesses history by way of the digital humanities. Although the notes make occasional reference to archival documents, the study relies heavily on published primary sources and digital repositories. Among the chief sources are the weekly Saint-Domingue-based newspaper *Les Affiches Américaines*, fully digitized from 1766 to 1791; the Marronnage section in the Atlantic World Database; and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database.

Interdisciplinary and mixed methods studies like this one can offer exciting innovations by integrating previously siloed frameworks and transcending conventional academic boundaries. Readers get a glimpse of this in Chapter 4, where Eddins analyzes a sizable sample of runaway advertisements gleaned from digitized colonial newspapers to infer

compelling details about collective consciousness among maroons. Statistical breakdowns of maroon communities by gender, race, ethnicity, age, form of escape, and other variables offer important insights into the subjectivities, relationships, and social networks emerging in these communities, and hints toward what Eddins calls ‘micromobilization.’ This kind of analysis offers one of the finest-grained renderings of maroon life in Saint-Domingue to date.

Applying collective consciousness as a lens through which to study enslaved resistance is undoubtedly intriguing. Precisely how this fascinating discussion supports the book’s broader argument about racial solidarity as a driver of the Haitian Revolution, though, is less clear. Indeed, it alludes to a broader tension between the book’s tight focus on the Haitian Revolution, as suggested in the title, and the more expansive interest in enslaved peoples’ resistance—writ large—that fills the majority of the book’s pages. Readers familiar with this extensive and deeply rooted historiography might push for a crisper conceptualization of the relationship between rituals and marronage on one hand, and revolution on the other. Reframing and expanding the brief discussion of “historiography” in the introduction, moreover, might have allowed the author to situate the study within two broader scholarly conversations on the Haitian Revolution: first, discussions of forms of resistance, including marronage and ritual in Saint-Domingue and the broader Caribbean; and, second, discussions of identity formation in the Black Atlantic. Both have established intellectual lineages of their own.

Over all, this book excels in bringing new questions, methods, and theoretical perspectives to bear on a topic of unparalleled historical importance.

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## CAPITALISM IN THE EARLY BLACK ATLANTIC

*Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic.* By Jennifer L. Morgan. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021. Pp. xvi, 296. Bibliography. Index. \$104.95 cloth; \$27.95 paper; \$27.95 e-book.  
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The history of slavery is, inevitably, a history of contradictions. Of those contradictions, none was more fundamental, as Jennifer Morgan shows in her wide-ranging and perceptive new book, than the contradictions embodied by enslaved women: between their kinship (on one hand) with others, white as well as Black, as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters, and their reduction (on the other) to saleable commodities. As