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Laurent Dubois and Julius S. Scott (eds.), *Origins of the Black Atlantic* (New York: Routledge, 2010, $38.95). Pp. x + 410. ISBN 978 0 415 99446 0.

These fourteen essays showcase the two recent methodological insights that have transformed the study of modern slavery in the Americas, and in so doing make a valuable contribution to Routledge's impressive Rewriting Histories series. First, the collection positions slaves as resourceful agents in fashioning their societies. Slaves petitioned kings and popes to abolish slavery; they turned rumour into forms of political pressure and action; they adapted Catholicism, sacred oaths, and Islam to structure and enrich their communities and methods of resistance; they pursued highly skilled and well-informed strategies of marronage, rebellion, and escape. Second, the black Atlantic is treated as a complex unit characterized by the intricate and incessant circulation of knowledge, news, skills, capital, rumour, and bodies around the Atlantic littoral. Individual essays discuss how slaves who were veterans of tactically and technologically sophisticated wars in Africa in the eighteenth century played important roles in the revolution which transformed French St. Domingue into the Haiti of the black Jacobins; how "maritime maronnage" spread news, rumour, and runaway slaves around the black Atlantic in ways that frustrated colonial control; and how the American Revolution exported both starvation and the powerful current of Enlightenment radicalism to the Jamaican slave insurrection of 1776. Collectively, these localized and specific historical accounts brilliantly demonstrate how the multiple identities and political formations in the early incarnation of the black Atlantic – whether slave, free, colonial, maroon, African, European, or especially American – were highly interconnected, dynamic, and prone to rapid and sometimes revolutionary change.

Temporally, the collection begins in 1684, as Richard Gray examines the petition presented to Pope Innocent XI by a representative of the Brazilian Christian slave elite, Lourenço da Silva de Mendouça, which successfully prompted the Catholic Church to condemn many of the practices of the Atlantic slave trade. It ends with Rebecca J. Scott's microhistory of the meanings of "freedom" in late nineteenth-century Cuba, which examines how slave emancipation and anticolonial insurgency helped define this term within one valley near Cienfuegos, and particularly how that definition unfolded in an illustrative ownership dispute over a mule. Scholars of North America will admire Ira Berlin's famous piece on Atlantic creoles, which explores how the charter generation of Africans in the North American colonies was not – as has often been thought – cowed, vulnerable, and deracinated, but rather comprising men and women skilled in the linguistic and cultural currency of the littoral who flourished prior to the ascendancy of plantation production. Similarly engaging are essays by Emily Clark and Virginia Meacham Gould on the significance of black women on the Catholic congregations of New Orleans, and Steven Hahn's piece on how Christmastime rumours of impending land reform in the US South of 1865 became a "field and form of political struggle" for newly emancipated African Americans (335).

Nine of the essays, however, choose the Caribbean islands as their focus, and many respond to Paul Gilroy's anticipation in *The Black Atlantic* that any intellectual field developing from his formulation would have Haiti at its centre. The collection

triangulates Haiti as a major hub of commerce and rebellion, simultaneously a wellspring of the black Atlantic's colonial revenue and the source of its most transformational ideas and revolutionaries. This is timely: the Haitian earthquake crisis has prompted much paternalistic media scrutiny of the island's problems, but less interest in connecting those problems to the history of how slaves defied European colonial plantocracies, and this book brilliantly reminds us how thoroughly the contemporary Atlantic world was shaped by this history. An extraordinarily rich and skilfully assembled collection, and one well suited to classroom use, this represents a valuable contribution to an increasingly sophisticated field.

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Bernard Koloski (ed.), *The Story of the Kate Chopin Revival* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2009, $35.00). Pp. 226. ISBN 978 8071 3495 5.

This book provides what its editor, Bernard Koloski, calls a "collective recollection" building "a literary foundation narrative" – in this case a narrative which gives new voice to the early scholars who not only brought Kate Chopin's work back into larger circulation but also wrote the provocative and inspiring commentary that energized a coming generation of Chopin scholars. The story of Kate Chopin scholarship is also the story of feminist criticism and Koloski is unequivocal when he asserts that "feminism unquestionably provided the primary motive force for the … revival." This collection of essays has, by its nature, an extremely personal dimension, but it is also made clear throughout that the exploration of Chopin's work conducted by the foundational scholars parallels and presages larger developments in literary and cultural studies. Emily Toth uses the framework provided by the development of her career as a critic and biographer to illustrate the wider changes in the academy, and, in particular, its attitude to women writers and scholars. Barbara Ewell notes in her essay that the recovery of *The Awakening* "helped to bring about the repositioning of local color in literary history." Helen Taylor, who brought Kate Chopin to the United Kingdom, charts the development of her own and others' understanding of "New Orleans writers within a transatlantic context," Taylor being amongst the earliest to bring a truly transatlanticist dimension and perspective to the study of American literature and culture. Mary E. Papke similarly celebrates Chopin's "interculturalism," and revisits her dedication and debt to Maupassant and other French writers as a way of indicating the writer's "insistence on the necessity of right reading" as crucial to the telling of "the right stories." Thomas Bonner Jr. links his discovery of Kate Chopin with the reverberations in his own life following *Brown* v. *Board of Education* in 1954, remembering a post-desegregation bus ride to school spent reading "Désirée's Baby"; Susan Lohafer critiques Chopin anew in order to chart her own work in "developing a genre-specific vocabulary for talking about short stories"; and Anna Shannon Elfenbein positions the restoration of "women of color" in relation to her own writing about Chopin, as she asserts that such "representations are evidence of Chopin's genius as a literary realist." Bernard Koloski concludes the