

and early 20th-century Mexico. Within the field Cuban Studies, the publication of Whitney's book is an encouraging sign that the clouds of the Cold War are gradually lifting. One hopes that the eventual political transition in Cuba will not curtail the production of such scholarly work, a fine example that is evidenced in *State and Revolution in Cuba*.

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MARY A. RENDA: *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism 1915-1940*. Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Mary Renda's book about the United States occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934 addresses two different questions: how US culture was used in the justification of the occupation and how military presence in Haiti contributed to the transformation of culture in the US between 1920 and 1940. It is not a history of the occupation, nor does it purport to explain the causes or effects of it, although enough background is provided to make the book accessible to non-specialists on Haiti.

For those wanting to learn about Haiti, the most interesting part of the book is the one dealing with the occupation itself. Renda's analysis enhances our understanding of such conspicuous facts as the use of violence and the racism expressed by the marines when dealing with the local population. The (yet unproven) thesis has sometimes been advanced that a majority of the soldiers in the occupation force are likely to have been Southerners, who "knew" how to deal with blacks. Renda has an alternative explanation: paternalism. Underlying the perceptions and actions of the marines was the belief that Haitians were not capable of forging their own destinies but needed guidance from a more advanced nation.

This view was shared by major and minor actors alike, from President Wilson to the common marine soldier. It was used actively in the propaganda, both in recruitment campaigns and in the representation of the occupation in Haiti as well as in the United States. It allowed the marines to punish, and if necessary kill, Haitian "bandits," since this contributed to the protection of the "ordinary citizen." It also provided a rationale for stimulating American direct investment in Haiti and for spending on the development of physical infrastructure in the country, even with the aid of *corvée* labor. The tutelage by Uncle Sam was necessary and it was the contact with a more advanced economic system that would put Haiti on the road to sustained economic development. Unfortunately,

neither the Haitians nor the prospective American investors believed in the idea.

Renda also shows how the clash between the paternalist ideology and the Haitian reality in which the marines had to operate in many instances produced a breakdown of morale. The *bons habitants* saw the *caco* guerillas not as bandits but as freedom fighters, and this in turn paved the way for routine violence, forced labor and crimes against civilians, i.e., it took the marines away from the very paternalist project. Marines who bothered to learn *krèyol* and find out about local thinking and habits began to doubt it altogether, to the point where some “went native” for loss of self.

Mary Renda’s book contributes to our understanding of why the American occupation of Haiti took the turns it did, it sheds additional light on the domestic American criticism of it, and it helps us to understand why the two presidential commissions that were appointed to evaluate the results came up with conclusions that contained few positive verdicts. It adds a dimension to the works of Hans Schmidt, Suzy Castor, Roger Gaillard and Brenda Gayle Plummer.

Renda also deals with the impact of the Haitian experience on the United States. The occupation ensured that Haiti got an “audience” there. Criticism of the occupation formed part of the presidential election campaign of Republican Warren G. Harding in 1920. Instrumental in this was the black writer James Weldon Johnson, himself a Republican, well connected in the party establishment.

Haiti would soon get represented also on the literary scene, by no less than Eugene O’Neill and his play *The Emperor Jones* (which builds on the legend that Henry Christophe killed himself with a silver bullet) —in time, one of his most celebrated works— where O’Neill takes a stance against United States paternalism, capitalism and imperialism. At the opposite end of the scale, the US experience in Haiti produced some sensationalist accounts, which were not very helpful when it came to projecting a favorable, or even realistic, image of Haiti: Robert Beale Davis’ *The Goat without Horns*, about human sacrifice in voodoo rituals, and the movie *White Zombie*, starring Bela Lugosi, of vampire fame, the starting point for countless later zombie flicks.

In between these two extremes we find the travelogues of the 1920s and 1930s: Samuel Guy Inman’s *Through Santo Domingo and Haiti: A Cruise with the Marines*, Blair Niles’ *Black Haiti: A Biography of Africa’s Eldest Daughter*, William Seabrook’s bestseller *The Magic Island* and Edna Taft’s *A Puritan in Voodoo-Land*, all of which, with their mixture of exoticism, race, sexuality and voodoo, and their generally sympathetic views of American paternalism, found a market among American readers.

It would take the efforts of more serious researchers and writers, like social anthropologist Melville Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*), folklorist and musicologist Harold Courlander (*Haiti Singing*), Trinidadian poly-historian

C.L.R. James (*The Black Jacobins*) and Zora Neale Hurston (*Tell My Horse*), to provide a less exotic and more accurate picture of Haiti, its people and its history for the United States audience.

Those who wrote on Haiti for the American public in the 1920s and 1930s all somehow responded to the events of the occupation in very different ways. No common pattern emerges from Renda's analysis, but responses range from endorsement of paternalism, assertion of white, male American identity, discourses on Haitian, mainly female, sexuality, via "commodification" in pulp novels and horror movies and endeavors to find out the "truth" about voodoo, to the opposition of dignified black masculinity and leadership to paternalism, criticism of American "imperialism" and, finally, a changing analysis of race and race-related themes. All of this had an impact in the United States and we should be grateful to Mary Renda for dealing with the multi-faceted material and pointing to the main patterns and currents found in it.

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PABLO TORAL: *The Reconquest of the New World*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2001.

This book examines the phenomenon of Spanish companies' foreign direct investment in Latin America during the 1990s, demonstrating that it really does constitute a significant reconquest of that part of the New World, which had been lost by Spain in the wars of independence in the 1820s. The book takes this very striking argument and supports it with a reasonable set of information about the Spanish banks, electric companies, telecom company, and oil company, which have indeed taken leadership of these sectors in Latin America. One can debate whether or not this constitutes a real reconquest, but the very visible fact is that key Spanish firms now are the leaders in several Latin American service sectors, and in the oil business.

The analysis made by the author is something of a mix of economic models, economic history, and other social science views. This is the least successful of the efforts in the book, since the line of reasoning from beginning to end winds through a wide variety of focus points, with little linkage and no clear perspective on which to base conclusions. The author asserts in the last chapter that "the advantage of Spanish MNEs (relative to firms from the US and other industrial countries) rested on their familiarity with and knowledge of the needs of the host Latin American markets: knowledge of and familiarity with the needs of economic liberalization, especially in the basic infrastructure sectors..." This