

laren zagen zich gedwongen hun handelsroutes steeds aan te passen, want zonder flexibiliteit gingen ze onherroepelijk failliet. De grote handelshuizen wisten alleen te overleven door terug te vallen op hun uitgebreide internationale handelsnetwerken, zoals we lezen in de bijdrage van Margrit Schulte Beerbühl over de Rothschilds.

Wat dit alles uiteindelijk betekende voor de havensteden van Europa wordt behandeld in het vierde en laatste deel. Deelstudies naar de handel in Bordeaux/Nantes, Antwerpen, Riga en Amsterdam vertellen het bekende verhaal van economische achteruitgang, waarbij ook wordt ingegaan op de gevolgen van deze achteruitgang voor de langere termijn. In sommige gevallen zouden de veranderingen die volgden op de invoering van het Continentaal Stelsel tot ver in de negentiende eeuw het economische beeld blijven bepalen.

De artikelen van *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System* zijn van hoog niveau. De diepgang en oorspronkelijkheid van de bijdragen varieert weliswaar, maar dit is in de eerste plaats het gevolg van het feit dat onderzoek naar het Continentaal Stelsel in sommige landen verder is gevorderd dan in andere. Belangrijk minpunt is dat er door de opzet van de bundel vrij veel wordt herhaald. Zaken als het Decreet van Berlijn en de manier waarop handelaren fraudeerden, komen in vrijwel alle artikelen terug. Aan de praktische werking van het keizerlijke handhavingsapparaat met douaniers en gendarmes wordt daarentegen nauwelijks aandacht besteed.

Deze kleine kritische noten nemen niet weg dat *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System* op heldere en overtuigende wijze de laatste stand van zaken in het vakgebied weergeeft, terwijl het tegelijkertijd nieuwe onderzoeksthema's benoemt en discussies oproept. Dit maakt de bundel voor zowel de geïnteresseerde leek als de specialist een waardevolle aanvulling.

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Rochelle Rowe, *Imagining Caribbean Womanhood. Race, Nation and Beauty Competitions, 1929-70* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), 199 p., ISBN 978-0-7190-8867-4

Creolization and hybridity are among the most enduring tropes in the academic treatment of Caribbean cultural politics. In *Imagining Caribbean Womanhood. Race, Nation and Beauty Competitions, 1929-70*, Rochelle Rowe engages these concepts, using the history of West Indian beauty competitions as a frame through

which the body and citizenship were constructed and debated in the period preceding and immediately following independence from Britain. Rowe highlights the value and mobilization of hybridity as a literal interpretation of “harmonious racial and cultural blending in the Caribbean through performances of cultured, modern beauty” (p. 6). Rowe offers an important analysis of ideological changes over time, while the focus on beauty pageants aims to explore “the serviceability of the concept of hybridity within the different nationalist projects of the mid-twentieth century in Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados, and how these projects were challenged, in the Caribbean and in London” (p. 6).

The monograph is organized into seven chapters. The introduction contextualizes beauty competitions within the history of creolization and hybridity, as well as the dynamics of race and ethnicity in the British West Indian colonies. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 historicize the emergence of beauty competitions in Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados, respectively. The Jamaican case reveals that ideals of white elite femininity were upheld by the organizers and sponsors of the ‘Miss Jamaica’ competition – the white Creole elites who envisaged a nationalism that perpetuated British ideology while negating brown middle-class and black working-class nationalisms emerging amidst the labor rebellions and cultural awakenings of the period 1929-50. The Trinidadian case examines the tensions between the ‘Carnival Queen’ competition, established in 1946 under the patronage of white Creole elites, and the ‘Queen of the Bands’ competition, founded by the emergent middle-class nationalists of the People’s National Movement. As Rowe illustrates, the values of the white elite and the Afro-Creole middle-class often ran parallel to one another, both reflecting bourgeois ideologies. Rowe next presents the Barbadian ‘Carnival Queen’ competition, established in 1956. Unlike the Trinidadian competition after which it was modeled, the Barbados ‘Carnival Queen’ – organized by the brown middle-class Junior Chamber of Commerce – broadened the competition to include black contestants. Responses to black contestants, however, revealed “the deeply ingrained and racialised investment in the black (female) body as the locus of primal Africanness, prone to vulgarity” (p. 113).

In Chapters 4 and 5, Rowe documents shifts in ideologies of beauty and their implications for nationalism. She returns to Jamaica on the cusp of Independence, examining the impact of the ‘Ten Types’ beauty contest ‘in the construction of a multiracial modern Jamaican identity’ (p. 118). By fashioning ten ‘types’ of racial/ethnic competition categories, the organizers mobilized an ideology of racial egalitarianism in a nation that had ostensibly moved beyond racism. Rowe next considers the 1959 establishment of a London ‘Carnival Queen’ competition by Trinidadian communist activist Claudia Jones, who attempted to ‘challenge the “multilayered pigmentocracy” at the heart of Caribbean society, striking at the

inner workings of the racial system of British colonialism in the process' (p. 153) through ideologies of black femininity and solidarity.

In the brief afterword, Rowe offers a concise summary of her findings, and reflects on the 1970 'Miss World' crowning of a Grenadian, light-skinned, upper-middle class woman – the archetypical femininity reified by many Caribbean beauty competitions featured in her text.

Imagining Caribbean Womanhood is an outstanding contribution to studies of creolization and hybridity for its rigorous attention to these concepts as value-laden and embedded in performances of the body in West Indian popular culture and nationalisms. Rochelle Rowe presents a dynamic analysis of hybridity during the transition from colony to nation, as an increasingly influential Afro-Creole population challenged the symbols and institutions from which Euro-Creole elite authority was deployed. Rowe's detailed attention to the role of print media, commerce, labor and community organizations in (trans)national discourses on respectability and femininity enables a nuanced understanding of the temporality and ethnographic specificity of constructions of nationhood and citizenship.

While the creolized, hybrid body was central to Rowe's argument, more attention to unpacking categories of race and ethnicity would have enhanced the analysis. Skin color as a signifier of race figured prominently, yet there was minimal attention to other phenotypical markers. For example, how was Miss Satinwood ('A Jamaican Girl of Coffee-and Milk Complexion') differentiated from Miss Allspice ('A Jamaican Girl of Part Indian Parentage') in terms of phenotypical features? Analysis of the complexity of Caribbean ethno-racial stratification and nationalism would have benefitted from greater attention to the nuances and manipulations of racial and ethnic typologies.

I highly recommend *Imagining Caribbean Womanhood* to popular and academic audiences interested in the politics of beauty and decolonization movements. While the study focuses on Anglophone Caribbean nationhood, this text offers a template for feminist historical scholarship that can be applied to other geo-political contexts and eras as well.

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