

deze van Christopher Bayly of Jürgen Osterhammel over de negentiende eeuw dat bijvoorbeeld wel doen.

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Sabrina Marchetti, *Black Girls. Migrant Domestic Workers and Colonial Legacies*. (Leiden: Brill, 2014) 220 p. ISBN 978-90-0427-692-5.

In their landmark study of domestic workers' memories of Dutch colonial rule in Java, Ann Stoler and Karen Strassler conclude that historians and anthropologists often rely on unexamined assumptions about the colonial past to account for its effects on the present.<sup>2</sup> More recently, Ann Stoler again concludes that postcolonial studies remain overconfident of its knowledge of how colonial pasts still matter in the present.<sup>3</sup> Both of these conclusions signal that there is still work to be done to theorize how, and to what extent, colonialism can be used as an explanation for present day social inequalities. These critical remarks serve as a call for all scholars to approach colonialism with caution, and to treat continuities between the colonial past and the present not as self-evident truths, but as empirical and analytical questions to be answered.

*Black Girls. Migrant Domestic Workers and Colonial Legacies* by Sabrina Marchetti responds to these concerns by providing an empirically grounded analysis of the ways that colonialism continues to cast a shadow over the lives of migrant domestic workers in Europe. The book takes as its main focus two populations of female domestic workers: Eritrean migrants in Italy and Afro-Surinamese migrants in the Netherlands. The similarities between Eritreans in Italy and Afro-Surinamese provide a rich ground for a comparative study. Both Eritrean and Afro-Surinamese migrants experienced colonialism and decolonization in their country of origin prior to migration to Europe, and then after migration to Europe were funnelled into domestic work. As a result, black female migrants hailing from former colonial possessions are over-represented in the niche of care and cleaning work in both the Netherlands and in Italy. Incidentally, Eritreans and Afro-Surinamese migratory flows to Europe peaked simultaneously in the period from 1970 to

2 Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler, 'Memory work in Java: a cautionary tale', in: Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal knowledge and imperial power: race and the intimate in colonial rule* (Berkeley 2010) 162-203, 203.

3 Ann Laura Stoler, *Imperial debris: on ruins and ruination* (Durham 2013) 5.

1975. Therefore, this study is able to compare two groups of women who migrated to Europe around this time, and who as a result also have similar experiences of childhood in the post-colony and adulthood migration to Europe.

*Black Girls* analyses interviews conducted with fifteen Afro-Surinamese and fifteen Eritrean migrant domestic workers in Italy and the Netherlands, focusing both on their retellings of childhood under colonial rule and on their reports of their adulthood as domestic workers in Europe. Taking this approach allows Sabrina Marchetti to track how experiences of colonial rule shape Afro-Surinamese and Eritrean domestic workers' identities, experiences and labour conditions in Europe. In short, *Black Girls* traces the continuities between the colonial past and the European present that run through migrant domestic workers' lives.

By analysing the narratives of Afro-Surinamese and Eritrean domestic workers in Europe, *Black Girls* aims to "demonstrate continuities between what happened at the peripheries of empire and what happens today in the hearth of Europe".<sup>4</sup> As indicated by Ann Stoler and Karen Strassler above, this is a challenging task. However, *Black Girls* accomplishes this aim due to the strength of its methodology. Sabrina Marchetti uses her extensive archive of interviews to deftly trace how migrant workers' childhood socialization in a colonial situation continues to shape their expectations and experiences of life in Europe long after their migration.

The chapters of the book are grouped into two parts. The first part, from chapter three to chapter five, details migrant domestic workers' narratives of their early life in late-colonial Suriname and Eritrea, and analyses how colonialism influenced the socialization of domestic workers. The second part, from chapter 6 to chapter 9, details migrant domestic workers' narratives of their lives after their migration to Europe, and their experiences with racial discrimination and marginalization in the workplace. Based on the analysis of these narratives, Marchetti concludes that childhood socialization in a colonial setting not only constrained postcolonial migrants' later career and social advancement in Europe, but also provided them with a repertoire of tactics to cope with exploitative labour conditions in Europe. This repertoire of tactics Sabrina Marchetti calls "postcolonial cultural capital" and is one of the more intriguing and compelling theoretical contributions of *Black Girls*. However, *Black Girls* remains unclear about how "postcolonial cultural capital" contributes to a broader analytical understanding of how colonialism still matters in the present. More elaboration in the introduction and conclusion would have helped to clarify how "postcolonial cultural capital" advances the scholarship on colonialism and the post-colony.

Nevertheless, this should not detract from overall contributions that *Black Girls*

4 Sabrina Marchetti, *Black Girls*, 6.

successfully makes. Its methodology is an excellent example of how to conduct a careful, empirical study that makes evident the enduring, recalcitrant traces of colonialism in the present. For audiences interested in how colonialism continues to shape migration, labour, race, gender, and social inequality in Europe today, *Black Girls. Migrant Domestic Workers and Colonial Legacies* is highly recommended. Its multi-regional, comparative scope makes *Black Girls* relevant for Africanists and Caribbeanists as well.

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Michael B. Miller, *Europe and the Maritime World. A Twentieth-Century History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 435 p. ISBN 978-1-107-02455-7.

De historicus Miller was mij bekend van zijn boek uit 1981 over de oprichting en de oprichters van Le Bon Marché, een nog steeds bestaand warenhuis in Parijs. Het is een degelijke microstudie van één bedrijf en er wordt nog steeds naar verwezen. Diezelfde degelijkheid is ook in zijn nieuwste boek te vinden. Het is veel breder van opzet en het is niet een bedrijf dat het onderwerp is, maar havensteden en hun achterland, handelshuizen en scheepslijnen, zeeën en rivieren. Het is geen vergelijkende studie van havensteden of scheepvaartlijnen maar een 'mondiale' studie van de Europese maritieme geschiedenis in de twintigste eeuw. De auteur heeft archieven in vele havensteden bestudeerd en hield interviews met betrokkenen. En hij kent zijn literatuur. Netwerken op drie niveaus vormen het verbindende en organiserende schema in deze studie. Het boek biedt een breed maritiem panorama, waarbij havensteden als Antwerpen, Hamburg Liverpool, Londen en Rotterdam een centrale plaats innemen. Bremen, Le Havre en Marseille vormen een tweede cirkel daar om heen. Ook Amsterdam natuurlijk, maar die havenstad wordt nauwelijks genoemd. De continentale havens beschikken over een groot achterland en een diversiteit van netwerken van verbindingen naar dat achterland. Dat heeft ze tot globale centra gemaakt met overigens een nadruk op hun verbindingen met de koloniën. Hoewel Duitsland nauwelijks een koloniaal rijk heeft bezeten, heeft het wel allerlei handelsvestigingen in Zuidoost Azië gekend. Na de inleiding volgen vijf hoofdstukken met ieder een eigen onderwerp: havens, scheepvaart, handelsmaatschappijen en hun goederen, tussenpersonen en culturen.

Als voorbeeld van een grote handelsmaatschappij krijgt de Rotterdamse handelsmaatschappij Internatio veel aandacht. De volledige naam van het bedrijf is