

KENDAHL RADCLIFFE, Jennifer Scott, and Anja Werner, eds., *Anywhere But Here: Black Intellectuals in the Atlantic World and Beyond* (Jackson, Miss.: UP of Mississippi, 2015), 270 pp.

Fields as diverse as postcolonial studies, diaspora studies, African American studies, American studies, intellectual history, sociology, and rock music studies have been influenced by the publication of Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* in 1993. Introducing his conception of the Black Atlantic as a counterculture of modernity, Gilroy urged his readers to rethink their notions of race, ethnicity, nationality, hybridity, and diaspora. He drew attention to "the rhizomorphic, fractal structure of the transcultural, international formation"<sup>1</sup> he called the Black Atlantic. Moreover, throughout his text he not only underscored the multilayered complexity of "those mongrel cultural forms" (Gilroy 3) created in the Black Atlantic world; he also warned against the constant lure of ethnic particularism and nationalism that might degenerate into a version of African American exceptionalism. By doing so, Gilroy presented himself as part of a tradition of black cosmopolitan intellectuals such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, and James Baldwin. Gilroy's idea of the Black Atlantic has not only been praised, but also vehemently attacked for its alleged shortcomings and insufficiencies. Some critics, for instance, have advanced the idea that by discussing authors such as Martin Delaney, Du Bois, and Wright in detail, Gilroy's conception of the Black Atlantic eventually only reinforces the powerful mechanisms of American cultural imperialism. The vulgarity of this critique can legitimately be termed refreshing. However, the claim that American cultural imperialism directs and shapes black diaspora studies has had a certain impact on attempts to conceptually grasp the cultural forms of the Black Atlantic.

Instead of offering a simplistic, moralizing critique of former conceptions of the Black Atlantic, the essays collected in *Anywhere But Here: Black Intellectuals in the Atlantic World and Beyond* seek to expand the idea of the Black Atlantic, and they moreover intend

<sup>1</sup> Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993), 4.

to offer new perspectives on forms of self-creation and self-invention in the Black Atlantic and beyond. In other words, these essays try to achieve two things. First, they want to expand the categories that have hitherto been associated with the Black Atlantic, as well as broaden our understanding of the processes of cultural, intellectual, and social transformations in the Black Atlantic world. Second, they contribute to an urgently needed redefinition of black intellectualism and the black cosmopolitan intellectual. Regarding the question of geographical boundaries, the editors contend: "Expanding the idea of the Black Atlantic beyond its traditional geographical boundaries to grasp black experiences more thoroughly allows us, furthermore, to include the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and, by extension, other lesser-known regions of the Southern Hemisphere and to include them in a self-determined context" (7). Establishing connections across time and space, the essays in *Anywhere But Here* illuminate examples of black diasporic experience within and beyond the Atlantic, that is, they tell stories centering on people of African descent who moved back and forth between countries and continents, who developed a new understanding of black agency, and whose appreciation of the dialectics of particularity and universalism led to new forms of black self-creation. According to the editors, the essays show "that the Black Atlantic need not be forever described as an interaction in a simple black/white/European context; nor should it be simply observed from an East/West perspective" (9).

*Anywhere But Here* is divided into three sections. The first part, "Reordering Worldviews: Rebellious Thinkers, Writers, Poets, and Political Architects," concentrates on how people of African descent, as black intellectuals, have confronted the legacy of the Enlightenment and the hegemonic structures of (white) modernity. Douglass W. Leonard ("Writing Against the Grain: Anténor Firmin and the Refutation of Nineteenth-Century European Race Science"), Amy Caldwell de Farias ("Activist in Exile: José da Natividade Saldanha, Free Man of Color in the Tropical Atlantic"), and Ikaweba Bunting ("Developmentalism, Tanzania, and the Arusha Declaration: Perspectives of an Observing Participant") discuss issues as varied as scientific racism, imperialist rhetoric and the creation of a counter-hegemonic racial consciousness, and Africa-centered responses to

Western models of developmentalism. The second section, "Crafting Connections: Strategic and Ideological Alliances," focuses on the question of black alliances, relationships, and cultural exchanges, particularly on their partly unlikely nature. What role has Garveyism played in the Pacific world? What exactly is the relationship between Pan-Asianism and Pan-Africanism? In other words, what happens when Japanese nationalists creatively use Garvey's rhetoric and ideas in order to argue against the position of racial inferiority to which they had been relegated by European racist discourses? Why is it interesting to ask about the forms of interaction between black activists and intellectuals such as Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Angela Davis and the Communist East German dictatorship? These are the questions that are discussed by John Maynard ("Garvey in Oz: The International Black Influence on Australian Aboriginal Political Activism"), Keiko Araki ("Africa for Africans and Asia for Asians: Japanese Pan-Asianism and Its Impact in the Post-World War I Era"), and Anja Werner ("Convenient Partnerships?: African American Civil Rights Leaders and the East German Dictatorship").

In the final section, "Cultural Mastery in Foreign Spaces: Evolving Visions of Home and Identity," four pieces seek to redefine the notions of home, subjectivity, and identity in a black diasporic context: Kimberly Cleveland, "Abdias Nascimento: Afro-Brazilian Painting Connections Across the Diaspora;" Edward L. Robinson Jr., "'Of Remarkable Omens in My Favour': Olaudah Equiano, Two Identities, and the Cultivation of a Literary Economic Exchange;" Kimberli Gant, "Rupture and Disrupters: The Photographic Landscapes of Ingrid Polland and Zarina Bhimji as Revisionist History of Great Britain;" and Danielle Legros Georges, "From Port-au-Prince to Kinshasa: A Haitian Journey from the Americas to Africa."

As one can see from this brief summary, the breadth of the issues discussed in this volume is indeed impressive. From Pan-Asianism and the Francophone African diaspora to Afro-Brazilian painting and various forms of self-creation of black cosmopolitan intellectuals, the essays succeed in broadening one's understanding of the cultural, intellectual, and political implications of the idea of the Black Atlantic. Furthermore, they elucidate hitherto unnoticed aspects of black intellectualism.

Most of these convincingly argued pieces urge one to renew one's attempt fully to appreciate the unpredictable cultural and political work of translocal, incredibly mobile mediators in nontraditional spaces.

As regards the volume's shortcomings, one has to note that the idea of black cosmopolitanism is central to most of the essays, but none of the authors offers an analysis of this concept. They discuss examples of black cosmopolitanism and tell stories that focus on the practice of black cosmopolitans. However, they refrain from taking the argument to a theoretical level. In general, the anti-theoretical gesture of these essays is blatant. In this context it is interesting to ask whether the authors consider this gesture to be *de rigueur* in the "new" Black Atlantic studies, or whether they would be inclined to put a stronger emphasis upon the necessity of theoretical work in the future. Should the notions of hybridity and diasporic (non-)identity still be analyzed by means of conceptual tools offered by poststructuralism, or can the practitioners of the new Black Atlantic studies leave this theoretical baggage behind? What about the genealogy of black cosmopolitan intellectuals that have been influenced by American pragmatism?<sup>2</sup> How could one use the stimulating impurity of positions that mediate between poststructuralism and versions of post-Marxism in order to accentuate the challenges of the new Black Atlantic studies? These are only three questions that demonstrate the potential fruitfulness of the attempt to discuss theoretical problems when one seeks to illuminate the contours of future Black Atlantic studies.

For Americanists it might seem somewhat problematic that authors such as James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, Richard Wright, and James Baldwin are not discussed, or even mentioned, in this volume. Wright is briefly mentioned (6), but a detailed discussion could probably only repeat many of the insights offered by Gilroy in his chapter on Wright in *The Black Atlantic*. Trying to expand the idea of the Black Atlantic, *Anywhere But Here* offers Americanists the possibility of learning about hitherto ignored forms of black agency in the African diaspora, as well as about intel-

<sup>2</sup> In this context, see Ross Posnock, *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1998).

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lectual, cultural, and physical exchanges and alliances that force us to rethink our understanding of modernity. There is a fairly high probability that this volume will play a signifi-

cant role as far as the future of Black Atlantic studies is concerned.

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