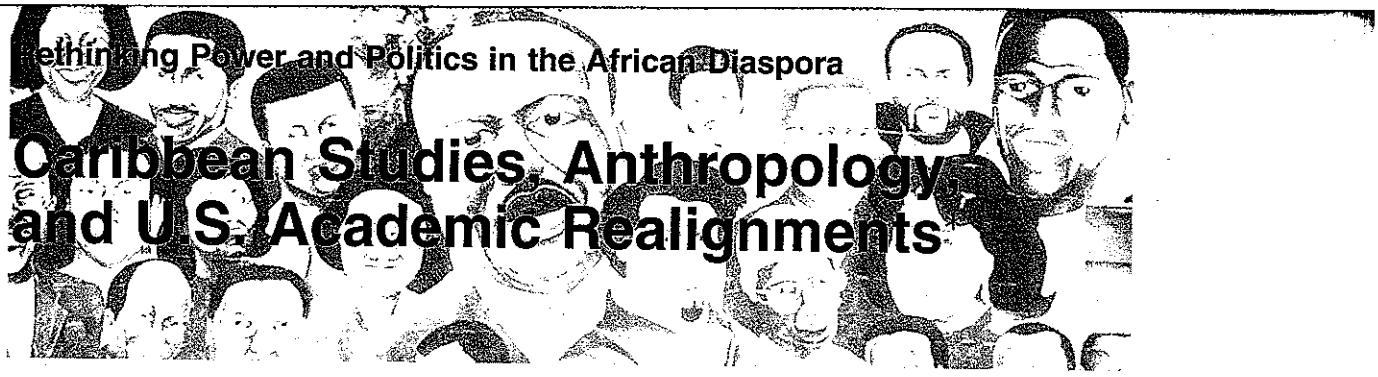

Caribbean Studies, Anthropology, and U.S. Academic Realignments*

Deborah Thomas and Karla Slocum

Framed around a set of questions, this article traces the scholarly, institutional, and geopolitical trajectories shaping the shifting locations of Caribbean Studies within U.S. cultural anthropology over time. Drawing in part on ideas developed through their collaborative project on Caribbeanist anthropologies, the authors argue that: (1) Caribbean Studies often has held a peripheral and liminal position within U.S. academic institutions, constructions of area studies, and anthropology, at the same time that concepts and categories from the sub-field have attracted and been used by scholars in other fields at different moments, (2) the foci, "objects" and categories engaged by U.S. anthropologists' Caribbeanist research have been situated within American economic, political, and socio-cultural relations and projects with the region as well as within the U.S. over time, and (3) contemporary institutional structures and politics as well as new global technologies may shape possibilities for where Caribbean Studies is located institutionally as well as the sorts of Caribbeanist research projects and collaborations that U.S. scholars conduct. By way of conclusion, the authors propose possible institutional spaces (e.g., Africana Studies, Atlantic Studies) around which Caribbean Studies and Caribbeanist anthropologies may be most fruitfully situated.

Keywords: area studies, Caribbean studies, cultural politics of knowledge, U.S. Cultural Anthropology

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As an area studies field, Caribbean Studies has held liminal positions within U.S. academic formations and inquiries. In many cases, the field has been paired with Latin American Studies; sometimes it has been part of Black or Africana Studies departments and programs; and occasionally it has been encompassed within American Studies or Atlantic Studies units.[1] But, in all cases we know of, the Caribbean has not been centered in any of these institutional spaces and rarely has Caribbean Studies stood on its own as the sole or primary focal point for intellectual engagement within a program, department, institute, or center. Paradoxically, however, scholars working within specific disciplinary frameworks increasingly foreground the Caribbean (as an area) to think through critical conceptual issues for which, it is assumed, the region is particularly revelatory. This includes issues actively interrogated across disciplines today, such as creolization, colonialism, plantation societies, post-colonialism, and migration and transnationalism. In other words, to use Aisha Khan's (2001) formulation, the Caribbean has often been seen as a "master symbol" for more general contemporary processes, leading scholars to turn to the region. But, as Khan points out, approaching the Caribbean for these purposes simultaneously and problematically essentializes the region, cordoning off its theoretical contributions to particular topics and themes.

In this essay, we will explore the place of the Caribbean, institutionally and theoretically, within colonial and postcolonial scholarly attempts, particularly within cultural anthropology, to rethink the theoretical and methodological understandings of and approaches to that location. Putting forward a series of questions for which we offer provisional responses, our interest is in examining the intersecting scholarly, institutional, and geopolitical trajectories shaping where and how Caribbean Studies has been situated as an academic line of inquiry in the U.S. Our thinking on this subject emerges from our collaborative project on Caribbeanist Anthropologies, that is, the various forms and foci of Caribbeanist research conducted by anthropologists over time. Broadly, the project has involved examining what Caribbeanist Anthropologies can tell us about both the politics of the discipline of anthropology and the politics of specific area studies fields, as well as the ways that the two sorts of politics may be mutually constitutive. Since 2002, we have drawn together approximately fifty scholars working in and through various disciplinary frameworks for conference panels, roundtable discussions, a working group, and mini-conferences or symposia. These gatherings have generated rich dialogues from which we have been fortunate to glean perspectives from both U.S.-based researchers and scholars teaching in the Caribbean and beyond. Our remarks here focus especially on anthropology since this discipline made unique contributions in the placing of Caribbean Studies on the U.S. academic map.

Caribbeanist Research Within U.S. Anthropology

In an engagement with the various recently published retrospectives about the Caribbean region, Bill Maurer somewhat derisively comments that "Caribbean Studies' collective angst can be summed up in terms of its proprietary claims to key concepts and its temporal claim to the priority of key world historical developments" (2004:325–326). For Maurer, the main problem in thinking through the relationship between Caribbean Studies and Area Studies within U.S. academic contexts is "one of the dynamic between generalizability and distinctiveness: the generalizability of analytical apparatuses developed for or in one 'region,' or 'above' regions; the generalizability of disciplinarity; the distinctiveness of disciplinary techniques; and the distinctiveness of place" (2004:338).

When beginning our project, we also wanted to think through this relation. We wanted to ask questions about the generalizability of Caribbean concepts to other areas of the world, the particularity of Caribbean experiences and conceptual tools, and the ways

particular disciplinary projects framed the region as an area of study. Although we felt certain that Caribbeanist research had been vital to theorization within anthropology, in 2002 we were moved to start our work together because we felt a persistent sense of Caribbeanist marginalization within the discipline. In graduate school, one of us had been cautioned by a senior anthropologist against doing research in the Caribbean because, the professor contended, it would compromise finding employment after receiving the doctorate. And shortly after we had first met and discovered our mutual interest in Caribbeanist anthropologies, we noted that there had not been one panel addressing the Caribbean at the 2001 American Anthropological Association (AAA) meetings. These observations and experiences were particularly irksome to us since we believed that many of the foci within contemporary anthropology were long-standing themes within Caribbeanist research.

We alluded to our irritation in a draft of a paper that we prepared for the 2002 AAA annual meetings.[2] In the paper, which we circulated to the twelve senior scholars who agreed to participate in that first panel, we attempted to flesh out the historic and contemporary relation between Caribbean Studies and anthropology. We referenced what we perceived as a proliferation of work on the Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s—particularly in relation to kinship and family studies—and we wrote something along the lines of feeling that this "heyday" of Caribbeanist research seemed to be behind us. Were we taken to task for this statement—especially by some of the region's anthropological pioneers! But, really, our point was that the Caribbean continues to represent a peripheral fieldsite within the discipline, despite increased general attention to major Caribbeanist themes at specific moments. And although we have nuanced our thinking since listening to the perspectives of those participating in the dialogues we have hosted over three years, we maintain a sense that there has been a constant—albeit shifting—marginality to Caribbeanist research within U.S. anthropology, particularly based on its relative representation as a geographic area of focus within anthropology departments and among the interests of anthropology faculty in U.S. institutions.[3] This peripherality illuminates the institutional and intellectual politics that have contextualized the emergence and acceptance of Caribbeanist Anthropologies at different moments.

Early Twentieth Century

Before the twentieth century, formal or systematic investigations of the Caribbean region did not emerge from academic institutions, but rather were the result of various aspects of European imperial projects. Anthony Bogues, one of our dialogue participants, noted that the earliest production of knowledge about the Caribbean was really a form of "colonial knowledge," since written documentation of the region not only tended to focus on the physical and social environment, but also proferred a gaze through which African slaves were not considered human (see also Sheller 2003). Missionaries and other travelers also provided accounts of social, economic, political, and cultural processes occurring throughout the region, and to the extent that some of this work dealt with "customs" and "beliefs," it had an anthropological orientation. Nevertheless, ethnographic studies of the Caribbean were not yet formalized, and U.S. researchers in particular were sparse until after the Second World War, when Britain was in the process of relinquishing its empire and American policy-makers wanted to know what kinds of territories and populations were soon to become part of the U.S. "backyard" (Constance Sutton personal communication).

By the beginning of the 1900s, however, some U.S. scholars based both within and outside of academic institutions undertook a few studies. In part, this was the result of the end of the Spanish-Cuban-American War—through which the U.S. acquired Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines—and the 1917 acquisition of the formerly Danish Virgin Islands

(St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix). Following other imperial models, the U.S. proceeded to take a scholarly and policy interest in its emergent empire. Jorge Duany (2001) has documented several government-funded fieldwork efforts by the Bureau of American Ethnology, the U.S. National Museum, and the Smithsonian Institute that took place between 1898 and 1945 in Puerto Rico, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad—all areas where, in the early twentieth century, the U.S. was beginning formal political and economic relations and, in many cases, uninvited or quasi-invited military interventions. Researchers attached to these institutions produced studies on race (especially eugenics and the phenotypic dimensions of racial "traits"), folklore, cultural variation among groups in the region, and the impact of the physical environment on culture and race.

These topics were emphasized in part because of the influence of prominent anthropologists such as Franz Boas, who, despite being best known for his work among Native Americans, actually conducted early research in Puerto Rico and trained several scholars who ended up working in the Caribbean. Thus, their work melded anthropological questions already of interest to studies conducted elsewhere in the world and "imperial knowledge," since this research was formulated through the U.S. government and government-funded institutions. While much of this work had important political and intellectual (anthropological) implications, at a conference we hosted at the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS) in 2003, Jorge Duany pointed out that anthropologists working in this way sometimes reluctantly supported the imperial projects through which they were funded, leaving them in an uncertain position as simultaneous critics and collaborators within colonial/imperial pursuits (see also Duany 2001). We argue, therefore, that much of the initial anthropological attention to the region reflected and was situated within the context of early twentieth-century American economic, political, and socio-cultural expansion into the region. This was an expansion that in some cases resulted in instances of direct forms of U.S. colonialism (as in the United States Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and, for a time, Cuba); in others, periodic military occupation (as in Haiti and the Dominican Republic); and in still others, indirect forms of neocolonial influence (as in, for example, Trinidad and Jamaica).

The work of Melville Herskovits and Zora Neale Hurston, two well-known university-based Caribbeanist anthropologists during this period, provided important theoretical and ethnographic material on the region, but their work was largely ignored until the late 1960s and 1970s. As a result, it did not become central to the formation or building of Caribbean Studies. In part, this is due to a particular politics surrounding knowledge production about Afro-descended populations in the New World during the 1920s and 1930s. Herskovits's research on religion and family structures among Afro-Caribbeans in Haiti and Trinidad fit within his broader interest in documenting the retentions, reinterpretations, and syncretisms of African cultural traits among New World Africans and their descendants (1930, 1941). For him, the Caribbean was one site in which one might explore questions about diasporic Afro-American cultures. Yet his emphasis on cultural continuities became the flashpoint for his persistent debates with sociologist E. Franklin Frazier (about which we say more below).

For her part, in the 1930s Hurston examined religious beliefs and ceremonies in Haiti and Jamaica. She was inclined to position voodoo especially as an aspect of resistance to the U.S. military occupation of Haiti at the time, but was also a product of her political moment. As literary scholar Annette Trefzer has pointed out, "Hurston seems caught between defending U.S. imperial 'possession' of Haiti and simultaneously critiquing it by highlighting spiritual possession of Haitian voodoo rituals as a strategy of resistance to colonial politics" (Trefzer 2000:299). Moreover, Hurston's work did not follow a widely-used systematic positivist approach. Instead, she employed a narrative writing style that included an honest presentation of her own personal perspective and experiences while in the field. Because of this, some scholars have more recently argued that her work counts among the earliest examples of

postmodern approaches in anthropology (Robbins 1991; Boxwell 1992), but clearly she was ahead of her time. As has been well-documented, Hurston, who never completed her Ph.D. and was very marginal within anthropology, was not remembered or celebrated for her contributions to the discipline until nearly a half century after her work came out. Thus, when taken together, Herskovits's and Hurston's work is critical to the foundations of Caribbean studies in anthropology, even though neither scholars' research was an *immediate* and recognized catalyst for building the sub-field.

We can also trace the peripherality of Caribbean Studies in anthropology during this period to a conceptual issue that several dialogue participants have highlighted. At the time, the taken-for-granted anthropological objects were "communities" that were understood to be bounded, "primitive," and homogenous. Of course, these early disciplinary tenets have been roundly critiqued both in terms of their substantive and ideological bases. Nonetheless, focus on communities defined by these criteria constituted the Caribbean as existing outside the regular purview of anthropology until after World War II (Mintz 1977). The specific reasons for this exclusion have been extensively chronicled (Maurer 2004; Mintz 1977, 1996; Trouillot 1992), but we will repeat two here: (1) because everyone who populated the region came from somewhere else, anthropologists viewed Caribbean territories as lacking true "natives" who shared an easily discernable and unified cultural ethos; and (2) far from being isolated, pristine, and uncorrupted by modernity, the region had extensive political and economic relations with Europe and North America because of its history of colonialism, slavery, and plantation-based export-oriented agricultural production. In short, the Caribbean was not comprised of "primitive others," and the region was thus seen as distinct from other areas that anthropologists studied, particularly in terms of its composition and also scale of social, political, and economic "development."

Mid-Twentieth Century

In the mid-twentieth century, Caribbean Studies, as an area of concentration within anthropology, began to take off. The Rockefeller Foundation and the Center for Social Research at the University of Puerto Rico (founded in 1947) were instrumental in developing a new research agenda in Puerto Rico and elsewhere in the region after World War II. In fact, the 1940s could be said to represent the beginning of modern ethnographic fieldwork in the Caribbean, with research underway for Julian Steward's pioneering study on national sub-cultures in Puerto Rico (ultimately published in 1956), Morris Siegel's unpublished study *A Puerto Rican Town* (1948), and Madeline Kerr's study on culture and personality in Jamaica (1952).[4] During the 2003 NYAS conference mentioned earlier, Lambros Comitas, another of our dialogue participants, termed the post-war era a "Middle Period" of Caribbeanist anthropologies. By this he meant the decades between 1950–1980, before which attention to the region was sparse and during which a shift of interest was underway. As he noted, "[t]he Caribbean was now beginning to be seen not as a region of broken cultures, but one that contained an appetizing pool of politically distinct societies... each different but sharing many commonalities in history and structure and epitomized by cultural, social and racial complexity." No longer were the lack of "primitivity" and pristine-ness seen as drawbacks to Caribbeanist research; societal complexity had become an attraction. Of course, this interest was also helped along by several features of the mid-twentieth century that were important for the Caribbean: industrialization, migration, the Cuban Revolution, and the subsequent intensification of the Cold War. The U.S. had a new level of geopolitical and economic interest in the region and the increase in anthropo-

Additional institutions—such as the New York–based Tropical Institute for the Study of Man (TISM, now the Research Institute for the Study of Man or RISM) and the University of the West Indies–based Institute for Social and Economic Research—helped make this mark and define the region as emblematic of particular anthropological concerns or "problems." Dialogue participant Anthony Bogues reminded us that during the 1950s, TISM sponsored a conference that focused on the role of plantations in Caribbean societies. The plantation society model (Wagley 1957) that was developed and explicated there became important to many disciplines, including anthropology. And ISER, based in Jamaica, cultivated local social scientists while also drawing on British and American scholars in order to conduct research on social and economic issues in the region, especially during the postwar period leading up to independence (for Jamaica, in 1962) and immediately afterward.

Particular research projects also put the Caribbean on the scholarly map. Principal among them was the above-mentioned collaborative study led by Julian Steward, *The People of Puerto Rico* (1956). This multi-sited project conducted by a team of ethnographers addressed the ways particular productive sectors of Puerto Rico's economy helped shape both social relations and subcultures within the various regions in which they predominated. The resulting classic monograph provided an ethnographic demonstration of Steward's cultural ecology theoretical model, that privileged ecological adaptation in the development and modification of cultural practices.[5] *The People of Puerto Rico* also helped solidify anthropologists' emphases on Caribbean agro-proletarians and peasants, national integration, and economic development strategies, topics that foreshadowed many of the changes that were to come, both on the ground in the region and in terms of how scholars imagined the object(s) of anthropological research. Indeed, we now have a rich body of literature on plantations, economic development, and nationalism within Caribbeanist anthropology and beyond.

And of course, an extensive body of research developed in the mid-twentieth century on Caribbean family arrangements. This research had implications for both the development of models of social integration and the development of gender studies more generally, and we address each of these literatures more fully below.

Late Twentieth–Early Twenty-First Century

Through the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, anthropologists began to think through how one might engage the complexities of the contemporary world ethnographically. As a result, the focus of the discipline changed, both theoretically and methodologically. Long-term fieldwork is still our mainstay, but the ways in which we conceptualize how and where this field research is conducted have changed because our subjects (whether individuals, families, communities, corporations, or capital) are now acknowledged to be moving targets. In other words, despite the fact that Caribbean people began to move abroad en masse both permanently and temporarily in the late nineteenth century, scholars have accounted for this kind of mobility more substantively in contemporary research than in the past. In part, this is because anthropological notions of place and space (and often scale) have transformed. This is, of course, a transformation that has also occurred within other fields, and is one that has prompted some scholars to look for earlier moments in which this kind of wholesale transformation occurred—hence, the new focus on Atlantic worlds and, more specifically, the rediscovery of the Caribbean, which we have suggested above and discuss in more detail below, has not always led to an interrogation of the region in its own right.

Important Questions Raised by Caribbean Studies: Within and Beyond Anthropology

Anthony Bogues, in an interdisciplinary conversation we hosted at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill in 2004, stated that he preferred the term "transdisciplinarity" over "interdisciplinarity" because the latter entails centering oneself in a given discipline and merely borrowing methods or theoretical constructs from another. Transdisciplinarity, by contrast, means "[becoming] engaged in the using of multiple optics in thinking about a question . . . a simultanaeity in a scholars' operations as he/she grapples with questions." Bogues' definition here takes us beyond more conventional and usual practices in which concepts and methods are borrowed from one discipline, subfield, or theoretical framework and applied in another. Indeed, as several scholars have argued, although the Caribbean is being "mined" for theory (as the region has been mined for other exports over the centuries), little interest seems to have been generated into the specifics of the processes delineated by particular theoretical constructs within the Caribbean itself over time (Khan 2001; Munasinghe 2006; Sheller 2003). That is, even though the Caribbean could now be seen as generally "sexy" anthropologically speaking, this sexiness has not necessarily (1) translated into greater analytic attention to the region itself, thus, curiously extending earlier anthropological conceits that marginalized the archipelago as an appropriate location for ethnographic study; or (2) led to more critically engaged analyses of the theoretical tropes being appropriated.

This second claim is, in part, a result of attempting to find ways to unleash ourselves from what many consider to be the "straitjacket" of nationalism. Anthropologists and others have often done this by latching onto concepts such as "globalization," "transnationalism," "diaspora," and, finally, "creolization." Indeed, creolization is the main culprit here, as Aisha Khan (2001), Mimi Sheller (2003), and Viranjini Munasinghe (2006) have forcefully argued, since anthropologists working in other regions have tended to elaborate the "hybridizing" or "cosmopolitan" effects of creolization rather than either the incredibly violent conditions that produced its possibility or the processes of exclusion that are at its foundation (e.g., Clifford 1997; Hannerz 1989). When considered together with anthropologists' earlier approaches to the region, it is troubling to see how we have moved from a notion of creolization as emblematic of "broken cultures" to one of creolization as cosmopolitanism, as both conceptual constructs fail to account for the complexity of experiences the term embodies.

But while creolization has caught the general anthropological eye—suggesting as it does processes of interculturation, movement, migration, and therefore globalization, transnationalism, diaspora, and a whole host of now popular research concerns—it has by no means been the only, or even the most politically critical, "master symbol" that has attempted to account for social change at various levels. Another, and the one that for us seems most pressing in terms of both the history of scholarship and the present political reality of Black populations in a variety of locations, has to do with the discourse of deficiency that emerged in the 1940s and that developed into a theoretical emphasis (both negative and vindicationist) on cultures of poverty (Lewis 1965), and now cultures of violence. Implicit within the extensive literature on the organization of Afro-Caribbean families from the 1940s through the 1970s were concerns regarding the political futures of the Black Caribbean at the dusk of empire. This is a story that has been told well by Caribbean feminist scholars like Christine Barrow (1998) and Rhoda Reddock (1994). To briefly recapitulate, after the late-1930s labor riots throughout the West Indies, a British Commission was sent (as was so often the case in the aftermath of "disturbances" in the region) to determine the causes of discontent and to suggest ameliorative policies. In this instance, the Moyne Commission (as it was known) found that Caribbean family

structures were dysfunctional, almost pathological in relation to norms of paternity in particular, and that this dysfunctionality caused a lack of economic productivity and motivation, and therefore also a lack of ability to participate politically in an engaged and thoughtful way. Interestingly, this ideology about the dysfunctionity of Black families was also reproduced in Senator Daniel Moynihan's 1965 report, *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action.*

We retell this part of the story to demonstrate how the focus on Caribbean family structures dovetails with the U.S. anxiety about African–American families, the so-called American Dilemma, and the culture of poverty rhetoric (Myrdal 1944; Lewis 1965; U.S. Department of Labor 1965). In part, this focus emerged from the elaboration of the "New World Negro" as a social and theoretical problem within the United States (Herskovits 1930), and the subsequent debate between Herskovits and E. Franklin Frazier regarding the extent to which Black people in the Americas might share cultural "stuff," and might be able to trace this cultural "stuff" to particular African practices. While the Herskovits model has been extensively critiqued—not least for being excessively classificatory and culturalist in its formulation—the implications of his acculturation model were also political, in that the model was directed toward understanding what was politically possible for Black Americans in the aftermath of the failure of Reconstruction in the U.S. south. This is a project that has institutional implications as well, since, as Bill Maurer has noted, a new version of U.S. racial ideology was being elaborated in tandem with "the rise of both the welfare state and the modern academic disciplinary system" (2004:328). It also was a research program that linked the projects of African–American Studies and Caribbean Studies, and ultimately for Herskovits, African Studies. Frazier, on the other hand, emphasized the cultural "stripping" that was the result of the Middle Passage in order to argue that African descendants—former slaves—were fully assimilable into American culture and therefore deserved the rights and responsibilities associated with full membership in the U.S. polity.

The early work on Caribbean kinship patterns reflected a Frazierian bias, addressing more specifically the question of whether and how African descendants adapted to Euro–American patterns of family formation (Smith 1956; Clarke 1966; Rodman 1971; Safa 1974). In some cases, an observation of women's central ("matrifocal") role as decision-makers and disciplinarians in domestic units, the seemingly marginal role of men to family life, and "unstable" (non-legal marital) unions between men and women provided implicit—and sometimes explicit—evidence for Caribbean families' inability to adapt to Western society (as it did in Frazier's work), although scholars differed in their assessments of the causes for these practices. For Edith Clarke it was lack of access to land for African descendants, for Raymond T. Smith it was the general peripheral status that Black men held in the wider society, for Hyman Rodman it was an adaptation to poverty, and for Helen Safa it was structural inequality.

This work fit squarely within family and kinship studies carried out elsewhere in the world in anthropology and sociology, and must be credited with considering household sexual divisions of labor and the patterning of male–female partnerships through the prisms of structural inequality (Safa 1974), the legacy of slavery (Smith 1956; Clarke 1966), intersections of gender with race and class (Martinez-Alier 1974), and (implicitly) the impact of post-slavery colonialism (Clarke 1966; Smith 1956). In these ways, Caribbeanists were always committed to exploring a wider context in order to elucidate how and why men and women do what they do. Moreover, this work often depicted Caribbean women as strong, resourceful, and resilient mothers, an image retained in studies that succeeded them. Further, the connection to these early family studies and Carol Stack's (1974) still important *All Our Kin* and to Norman Whitten's (1970) *Afro–American Anthropology*, revealed an important cross-over between studies on the Black American and the Black Caribbean experience in a variety of contexts.

Despite its many innovations, early Caribbeanist work on kinship was heavily critiqued by feminist Caribbean nationals and North American feminist scholars. Critics cited its implicit Eurocentric bias in understandings of family structure and gender roles (see Mohammed and Shepherd 1988), as well as its failure to consider women's extra-domestic roles. Indeed, many 1980s feminist scholars from a variety of disciplines began analyzing women's household and family behavior as "adaptive" or as "survival strategies" as they looked at the ways that women managed their families against economic odds and through a variety of (women-centered) social networks (Massiah 1983; Barrow 1986). Others looked at systems of gender stratification in the Caribbean, in some cases exploring social and historical factors surrounding Afro–Caribbean women's levels of relative equality in Caribbean societies (Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow 1977; Safa 1986). Thus it was in response to 1940s–1970s Caribbeanist anthropology that the feminist path for gender and Caribbean studies was born and blossomed in the 1980s, and has continued through the present, with scholars exploring fields as diverse as gender and political economy, gender and religion, gender and representation, women and market trade, and globalization.

Within the Caribbean, the family literature also led to a focus on structuring principles and models of societal (dis)integration. We outlined this in more detail in the essay we published after that first panel of dialogues that we organized (Slocum and Thomas 2003), but here we can briefly state that debates about the nature of West Indian societies gained critical importance because the hegemonic view of social systems in the 1960s and 1970s held that they needed to be integrated around a common value system in order to thrive without an external system of power and control. The idea that West Indian societies exhibited an incompatible sociocultural pluralism (M.G. Smith 1965) was counterposed with ideas about a creolized stratification (Braithwaite 1953; R.T. Smith 1967) and such analyses were used to assess the potential success or predict the foreseeable failure of nationalist projects designed to unify diverse sectors of West Indian populations. As in other regions across the globe, these debates became platforms for the development of a cultural politics of race, class, and gender during the mid-twentieth century and tied in with the agendas of emerging postcolonial political parties where race and class figured prominently (Slocum and Thomas 2003: 555).

Caribbeanist labor studies have also included interrogations of politics and constructions of social identity and location by exploring how race, class, gender, and place shape laborers' historic and contemporary experience. At a broader level, other questions in labor studies include: What are the relations of labor to capital, colonialism, and now, globalization? Under what conditions did a peasant and quasi-peasant class develop and survive? Among North American anthropologists, Sidney Mintz led Caribbean studies of labor in particular through his life history of a Puerto Rican plantation worker (1960) and study of Caribbean peasantries (see especially Mintz 1974). The latter work was foundational to anthropological inquiries into the existence, status, and development of a Caribbean peasant class at the same time that it informed work on this subject by historians (many of whom used Mintz's and others' Caribbean research to think through North American peasant-plantation dynamics). Mintz's idea was that in the post-emancipation period an emerging Afro–Caribbean peasant class drew upon its work experiences under plantation slavery to engage autonomous crop production, sometimes in lieu of plantation wage labor. Drawing on Mintz's arguments, other Caribbeanists explored Caribbean ex-slaves' post-emancipation "resistance and adaptation" labor and extra-labor strategies (Olwig 1985), as well as how post-emancipation Afro–Caribbean peasant production and consumption practices featured in contemporary producers' labor set-ups, shaped in part by the demands of foreign capital (Trouillot 1988). Thus, labor-related research has been important to the broader field of Caribbean political economy for both its detailed histor-

as attention to the role of foreign capital in late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century labor arrangements. Studies concerning this latter focus are well-represented in Caribbeanist anthropology today, often with consideration of how transnational corporations draw upon Caribbean labor in ways that are gendered, classed, and/or raced (e.g., Freeman 2001; Yelvington 1995).

Another focus in the literature on labor is designed to complicate ideas of globalization as homogeneization, as is the case with studies of how Caribbean men and women employed by transnational corporations or tourists (via sex work) use the work context to punctuate local and national meanings in diverse ways (see for example: Yelvington 1995; Freeman 2001; Gregory 2007). Indeed, Carla Freeman's (2001) book, *High Tech and High Heels*, is a prime example of research situating women's labor within the intersection of transnational corporations' gender ideologies and the class and gender constructs and identities of the region. Interestingly, however, this study has had wide appeal beyond Caribbean Studies for its instruction about globalization, gender, and labor, but has had less so for its insights about the Caribbean. This is true despite the longstanding research on gender and culture in the Caribbean that the study clearly engages and accentuates. Thus, it provides another case of scholarly uses of Caribbean research for particular analytical constructs without equal consideration of the research's contribution to area studies.

An additional key theoretical trope that has figured prominently within Caribbeanist research, and one that is related to the very early examination of national societies (rather than "isolated" communities) within the Caribbean context is that of respectability and the various models of cultural dualism that have been put forward to explain Caribbean societies. The work of anthropologists Peter Wilson (1973), Roger Abrahams (1983), Antonio Lauria (1964), Barry Chevannes (2001), Chandra Jayawardena (1963), and Danny Miller (1994) especially comes to mind here. Many of these scholars situated the emergence of dualistic cultural patterns within colonialism, and as such attempted to understand the role of the past in the present. This is also a main theme in relation to more recent research on nationalism and the links posited among race, colonialism, and national identity. By now, there has developed a vast literature on this subject.[6] Additionally, the scholarship on respectability has also broached the relationships of gender and sexuality to nationalist struggle and exclusion (e.g., Alexander 2005; Reddock 1994).

Finally, research on migration—and in particular the "transnational migration" paradigm that emerged in the late 1970s and developed through the 1980s and early 1990s—has been another topic of research that Caribbeanist anthropologists (and especially those living or working in New York City) pioneered.[7] Their original impetus to think through what was new about post-1965 migration ultimately ended up challenging the assimilationist ideals of the U.S. and the assumptions of previous migration theory. They did this by borrowing the term "transnational" from the corporate world and putting it in dialogue with world systems theory, (among other tools) in order to look at both how Caribbean people maintained socio-cultural, political, and economic links to two or more nation-states, and at how these links generated circulations of capital, products, and ideas (even movements) that created transnational socio-cultural spheres (Sutton and Chaney 1987; Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton-Blanc 1992; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton-Blanc 1994). This research built on earlier work dealing with how Caribbean immigration was related to U.S. involvement in the economic and political development of the region (Bryce-Laporte and Mortimer 1976; Dominguez 1975), a topic that was itself later developed in relation to the experiences and understandings of diseases (Farmer 1992) as well as underdevelopment and security (Deere et al. 1990). The migration/diaspora literature is vast and growing, and has been another way that anthropologists have engaged with processes of globalization, the changing role of the state, labor, and transformations within the categories of subject-making (race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, generation, etc.).[8]

Caribbean Studies: Challenges and Possibilities Within Area Studies

Recent critical analyses of area studies have examined the historical and contemporary politics and practices that contour the geographic boundaries of scholarly knowledge production.[9] However, here we are especially interested in how the institutionalization of area studies prompted two important kinds of collaboration. First, it encouraged (and continues to encourage) significant interdisciplinary conversations (Trouillot 1997). And second, it prompted U.S.-based scholars to collaborate on research projects with partners in the region, leading as well to various kinds of institutional collaboration. More senior scholars, including some who participated in the dialogues that we organized, argue that this kind of collaboration was more of a focus in the earlier days of Caribbeanist research than it is now. If this is true, it may mark a disciplinary shift within Caribbean Studies in response to the emergence of postmodern scholarship, and especially its critique of nationalism. This shift has, in part, moved the field away from ethnographic social science and more toward the humanities, and especially toward literary and cultural studies where collaboration among researchers is less common (Carnegie 1992).

The decline in collaborative research may also be related to the changing demographics of Caribbeanist researchers, as increasing numbers of Caribbean scholars come to be based in U.S. universities, possibly diminishing opportunities for the sorts and degree of intra-Caribbean collaborations that existed in earlier moments. Finally, and relatedly, changing institutional requirements within U.S. academies may obviate against collaborative work among U.S.-based Caribbeanists and between U.S.-based and Caribbean-based Caribbean scholars, given the intensified pressures in the tenure process, the emphasis on single-authored publications, and the higher value attached to work that is published with U.S. university presses and journals as well as with U.S.-based scholars. Nevertheless, these same processes have prompted new kinds of institutional collaboration that are also facilitated by the new technologies in which we are all enmeshed, and there is evidence that Caribbeanists in the U.S. and the Caribbean are taking advantage of the spaces opened up by these developments by, for example, inaugurating online international journals. Conferences such as the Caribbean Studies Association (CSA) annual meetings, the Caribbean Women's Writers' Conference, the Association of Caribbean Historians, and the Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) are also rich and active sites for collaboration and intellectual engagement across disciplinary, regional, and national borders.

Yet, we have often wondered about the institutional (im)possibilities for the location of Caribbean Studies in the U.S. When we began our project together, we were both based on two different campuses in North Carolina that share a vibrant Latin American Studies program and a healthy interest in post-colonial studies more generally. Nevertheless, we struggled to find interest among faculty for a Caribbean Studies working group. Based on our own initial research into where the majority of Caribbeanist scholars are situated within the U.S. academy (New York and Florida predominantly), we developed the impression that where Caribbean immigrant populations are large, Caribbean Studies proliferates, but where Caribbean immigrants are few, it does not. While this may reflect a desire on the part of universities and colleges to serve the populations that surround them, this is not necessarily the case with all area studies programs. For example, the Latin American Studies Centers at Duke and the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill existed long before the Latino populations of these areas expanded exponentially in the mid-1990s. Thus, we have been moved to think about Caribbean Studies in relation to the broader field of area studies and to ask questions about the historical, political, and institutional factors that support *particular* area studies fields in particular spaces.

as the place of area studies within the recent marketization of the university. Part of this focus fits with newer literature, exploring area studies against, alongside, or in concert with emerging global studies, international studies, cultural studies, postcolonial/poststructuralist studies, and a post–September 11th context (for example, see: Gibson-Graham 2004; Guyer 2004; Malini 2007). It is also our impression that a bulk of the literature engaging area studies in particular areas today does so through an exploration of Asian Studies (indeed, half of the chapters in Miyoshi and Harootunian's volume focus on Asian contexts). For Caribbean Studies, we find only a handful of scholarly articles over the past 10–15 years, many of which are cited here (e.g., Maurer 2004; Slocum and Thomas 2003; Mintz 1996; Trouillot 1992).

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At the same time, we acknowledge that one problem of institutionalizing area studies concerns scale. What does the Caribbean include, exactly? Jamaica, we suppose, but New Jersey? Toronto? Bahia, even? And how do we link the Caribbean to other world regions as well as other world regions to the Caribbean? Through historical colonial relationships? Migrations? New global financial relationships that, in the case of offshore banking, for example, might tie St. Lucia more directly with Hong Kong than with either France or the United Kingdom (Maurer 2004)? As it has happened in the U.S., where there are bona fide Caribbean Studies programs, they have tended to include colonies and former colonies of the U.K., France, and the Netherlands, but not Spain. Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba therefore have tended to fall under the auspices of Latin American Studies, even if they are acknowledged to be part of the Caribbean or are simultaneously grouped under Caribbean Studies. This is, of course, not true of every program at every university, but where it is true we might see it as a response to the frequent exclusion of Anglophone, Francophone, and Dutch Caribbean Studies within many Latin American Studies programs. Because of this kind of bifurcation, we want to end by arguing that one of the important institutional roles Caribbean Studies can play in the academy is as one axis around which Africana Studies, Latin American Studies, American Studies, and Atlantic Studies programs might interact. These interactions can be contentious, especially given problems with respect to resources, and, as we have pointed out, they can also be limiting if the conceptualization of and attention to the areas making up these programs is not carefully thought out. However, such interactions are key to developing a kind of hemispheric perspective on the legacies of imperialism, both past and present, and the broader issues that face us all today.

Notes

1. Interestingly, the Dutch Royal Institute for Linguistics and Anthropology pairs Caribbean Studies with Southeast Asian Studies, though not as a comparative field of study. This, of course, is due to the exigencies of Dutch colonial interests in both Indonesia and the Caribbean—thus, East Indies and West Indies co-exist as objects of study.

2. This paper ultimately was revised and published in *American Anthropologist* (Slocum and Thomas 2003).

3. We see this peripherality at an institutional level. It is only within the past two years that the Society for Latin American Anthropology formally included the Caribbean within its scope. Additionally, in the American Anthropological Association's guide to institutions and scholars, faculty listing the Caribbean as a geographical area of interest are least represented when compared with those listing Africa, Asia, North America, or Latin America. Finally, looking beyond U.S. academic institutions, during our 2003 dialogue at the annual conference of the Caribbean Studies Association, anthropologist Catherine Benoît underscored that Caribbeanist anthropology is practically nonexistent in mainland France, where there are no university anthropology courses that examine the Caribbean, nor in French Caribbean universities, where anthropology faculty positions created within the past 15 years required that new hires teach no more than 15 hours on the French Caribbean. Benoît situated the marginality of anthropology and Caribbean Studies within French colonialism which, she pointed out, did not develop critical social sciences, especially studies that would engage questions of power relations and politics between the French Caribbean and the metropole.

4. We thank Jorge Duany for urging us to include and refine these points.

5. See Lauria-Perrecelli (1989) for an historical exegesis of the context and concepts shaping the project and for an assessment of its major findings.

6. See Slocum and Thomas (2003) for a review of some important works.

7. Again, see Slocum and Thomas (2003) for a review of important early works.

8. There are many others, of course—women and factory work, women and informatics work, contract labor migration, offshore financing, tourism, etc.

9. Of course, a classic critique of area studies was Edward Said's (1978) *Orientalism*, which inspired a critical and expansive body of literature on area-focused knowledge production that is too voluminous to detail here. One of the more recent critical engagements with area studies is Miyoshi and Harootunian's (2002) *Learning Places: After Lives of Area Studies*, in which contributors examine the limits of area studies paradigms as well

as the place of area studies within the recent marketization of the university. Part of this focus fits with newer literature, exploring area studies against, alongside, or in concert with emerging global studies, international studies, cultural studies, postcolonial/poststructuralist studies, and a post–September 11th context (for example, see: Gibson-Graham 2004; Guyer 2004; Malini 2007). It is also our impression that a bulk of the literature engaging area studies in particular areas today does so through an exploration of Asian Studies (indeed, half of the chapters in Miyoshi and Harootunian's volume focus on Asian contexts). For Caribbean Studies, we find only a handful of scholarly articles over the past 10–15 years, many of which are cited here (e.g., Maurer 2004; Slocum and Thomas 2003; Mintz 1996; Trouillot 1992).

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