

The Violence of Diaspora: Governmentality, Class Cultures, and Circulations

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One of the problematics haunting much of the scholarship on the African diaspora has to do with how, when, and why questions regarding the state often seem to drop out of our analytic frames. This is not to say that there has not been a long history of diaspora scholarship that has taken the political economies of black folks' relations to particular states as its foundational rubric. Think here not only of classic texts such as W. E. B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* (1935) or *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), for example, but also of canonical histories of black Marxisms and even of contemporary explorations of particular sites of pan-Africanist or internationalist mobilization.¹ Of course, one of the points of using diaspora as a rubric for analysis is to get outside the limiting framework of nation-states for understanding modes of communication and the creation of political and cultural communities.

Yet what is often missing in these accounts is a sense of the transnational, indeed transimperial, dimensions of particular governmental projects. This sense is also absent from the bulk of culturalist scholarship that became hegemonic in African diaspora studies in the mid-twentieth-century United States. This body of work, on the one hand, elaborated an analysis of cultural continuities, retentions, and syncretisms—in other words, an analysis of Africanisms within American societies. On the other hand, it focused on comparative diasporic cultures, the kind of “black folk here and there” approach often associated with St. Clair Drake.²

Radical History Review

Issue 103 (Winter 2009) DOI 10.1215/01636545-2008-032

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I argue here that a focus on modes of governmentality across empires helps us (1) maintain a critical dialogue between the two registers in which we mobilize the term *diaspora*—both as an instantiation of a worldwide black community that is the result of the transatlantic slave trade and as the community formations resulting from contemporary transnational migrations; and (2) clarify how particular state projects were imagined and developed transnationally. A better understanding of these two dimensions would clarify the ways gender and sexual norms are mobilized by states in ways that reproduce class hierarchies through the idea of “culture.” The specific project that will concern me in this essay has to do with the attempts to characterize and manage diverse class cultures within black American populations by way of the discourse of dysfunction that arose in relation to black family formation in the United States and the West Indies in the post-World War II period. I am interested in this discourse first, because of what it can tell us about how links were posited—and institutionalized through policy—between the economy, family, and political participation for communities of African descent in a range of locations at a particular moment. Second, I want to investigate how these links have produced a kind of epistemological violence that continues to pervade contemporary popular analyses of actually existing violence among black populations at home and abroad, even though the political and economic basis for these links has shifted fairly radically.

Specifically, I want to think through the proliferation of discourse about the so-called culture of violence seen to characterize particular Caribbean societies and to accompany migrants from these societies into diasporic locales. I will argue that the culture of violence discourse has its roots in the earlier mobilization of the culture of poverty trope, itself the result of a culturalist approach to understanding inequality that became solidified in the aftermath of World War II. This is an approach in which difference is mapped in terms of culture, and culture itself then becomes reified, a static term that is seen to determine the behavior, outlook, and potential of entire groups. I will show that the development of culturalist discourse vis-à-vis black family formation was transnational, having particular but related effects among different diasporic (in the sense of worldwide black community) populations and that this discourse also moves with people as they create diasporas (in the sense of transnational migrant communities). Ultimately, my aim in this essay is to build on the work of scholars like Hazel Carby, M. Jacqui Alexander, Ann Stoler, and Elizabeth Povinelli to show how the classed and gendered dimensions of state projects are entangled, and that this entanglement is both reproduced by and reproduces culturalist-oriented scholarship, even in the face of much transformed ways of organizing global relatedness in economic and political spheres.³ That is, I am interested in black people’s relationships to states across imperial and generational moments, and specifically in how the movement from a mid-twentieth-century emphasis on state-centered industrial modernization to a late twentieth-

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early twenty-first-century movement toward global neoliberalism has affected the ways black masculinity and black family formation are positioned in relation to development paradigms.

Discourses of Depravity: Jamaicans and the Culture of Violence

Let me start with two true stories. Early in the morning on Good Friday 2005, a close friend of mine called Vinny was killed, ambushed by gunmen at the gate of his yard as he was on his way out to pasture his goat.⁴ Vinny was someone I had come to know very well during my initial PhD fieldwork in a rural hillside community just outside Kingston in the mid- and late 1990s, and he was someone with whom I had kept in close touch ever since. The gunmen had come for his licensed firearm to fuel the unprecedented gang war that had quickly enveloped the community over the previous year or two. When Vinny did not produce the gun immediately, the three youth pulled their own, eventually shooting him eight times and dumping his body in the gully behind the house. They took the gun and ran off, leaving Vinny's family to search for his body. I flew to Jamaica to help Vinny's wife, Winsome, prepare for his funeral and for the nine-night celebration that would precede it.⁵ We went up to the house (which, after Vinny's murder, had been abandoned by family members who had scattered for safety) to pack up some of Vinny's personal things and then traveled to the funeral home to drop off his burial clothing. As we waited to see his embalmed body, we watched as the police brought in a body attached to a wooden cross. It was not clear whether the person had been killed before the de facto crucifixion or not, but the specter of his dangling, bloody limbs was obviously meant to serve as a public example and warning. This kind of exemplary spectacularity was repeated in a different form over the weekend, as two men were murdered and their bodies set ablaze beneath a heap of rubber tires in an open lot in West Kingston. For a national community becoming lamentably accustomed to these sorts of performative acts of brutality, the following incident — my second example — nevertheless provoked alarm and outcry.

On October 5, 2005, several armed men firebombed a dwelling in southwest St. Andrew near downtown Kingston, possibly as part of a feud between men from two areas in the district. Four people were killed in the blaze; they were unable to escape the burning house due to the padlock that secured the veranda's iron grille. One of these four was ten-year-old Sasha-Kay Brown, who spent her last moments pleading for help from her neighbors. "The little girl climbed up on the grille and called out the names of almost everybody who lived on Barnes Avenue, begging them to come and help her," one woman recalled. "But when we ran out of our houses and tried to assist her, the gunmen fired at us. The last thing we heard the little girl said [*sic*] was that the fire was burning her, then her voice just faded."⁶ The gunmen also shot and killed the family's dog, whose body was later found in the burnt-out yard.

For Kingstonians inured to the day-to-day violence that surrounds them, this quadruple murder was nonetheless stunning. For many newspaper and radio-show commentators, it marked a new level of brutality and cruelty—“cold and ruthless death squads” using children in the settling of scores between grown men. Cedric Wilson, an economist and a guest columnist for the *Gleaner* (one of two daily newspapers in Jamaica), argued that the quadruple murder signaled a new phase of war. “The ruthlessness of the crimes being committed are the acts of twisted supermen,” he stated. “This is [a] new breed of criminals without soul or conscience, evil men for whom the conception of good and evil is irrelevant.” Garth Rattray, a frequent columnist for the *Gleaner*, went a step further, arguing that by devaluing each other’s humanity in such dramatic ways, we are no better than the imperialist slave masters of yore:

These murderers exhibit the same brand of selfish, insular, tribal thinking that landed our forefathers here in the first place. . . . We used to enslave each other for conquest; now we enslave each other out of lust for power. We used to sell our fellowman to the Europeans for baubles, glass and metal; now we sell out our fellowman to crime bosses for drugs and money. We may not like to admit it, but as long as people have to live in fear, as long as people are internally displaced by violence, as long as people are being eliminated, we are still an enslaved nation.⁷

Of course, these two examples are not the only ones I could have cited, but they are the kinds of spectacular killings that are usually given as evidence of Jamaica’s culture of violence. This phrase itself is so taken for granted that it is commonly used as if its meaning were universally understood and agreed on. In the Executive Summary of 2005’s National Security Strategy green paper, for example, it appears thusly: “The continuous growth in the number of violent incidents causes many Jamaicans at home to live in fear, and influence [*sic*] those in the diaspora to abandon their dream of resettling on the ‘rock.’ It is now conceded that Jamaica has spawned a culture of violence in its most negative form, which is abhorrent to its values and stands in the way of every kind of social progress.” For many commentators, Jamaica is seen as a “killing society,” to use the words of Hermione McKenzie, the president of the Association of Women’s Organizations in Jamaica, and crime is seen to be a way of life in which the gun constitutes a symbol of manhood. By corollary, sexual violence, according to Women’s Media Watch, is normalized as a part of an overall “inner-city” culture of violence characterized by political violence, drugs, and gangs, a culture that is then glorified through the media and thereby reproduced.⁸

Though it now extends across the country, this violence is understood as having initially been concentrated in the capital city of Kingston and its surrounding areas. This is, in part, because the so-called inner-city communities whose names

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evoke the landscape of political and drug-related violence that is ordinarily a defining feature of gang warfare in Jamaica — Southside, Grants Pen, Tivoli Gardens, August Town — are located there. Historically, these communities have been referred to as “garrisons,” a term originally used by the demographer Carl Stone to denote political strongholds led by “top rankings” in which any significant social, economic, or cultural development only occurred under the auspices of the dominant party leadership and where residents seeking to oppose or organize against the dominant political party risked suffering personal injury and property damage. Most analysts trace the development of garrison communities to post-World War II urbanization and the disruption of traditional social orders and networks. With the urban economy unable to absorb the rapidly expanding labor market, unemployment rose dramatically, and growing discontent among new migrants was fueled by what Stone called an “expectations gap.” The new population of “sufferers” became vulnerable to politicians who discovered that they could be enticed to become party loyalists with promises of political spoils. As the opposing parties built their cadres of supporters willing to win elections by any means necessary, political gangs with the intention of intimidating voters and of cementing political garrisons also appeared. Leaders of these gangs maintained close links with politicians, creating a situation of democratic clientelism also known as political tribalism.⁹

By the mid-1970s, the “sufferers’” physical neighborhoods were polarized, as units in newly constructed large-scale housing developments downtown were given only to supporters of one or the other political candidate; thus, Tivoli Gardens developed as a Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) enclave, and Arnett Gardens, for example, developed as a People’s National Party (PNP) enclave. Within these communities, party activists pushed out minority party supporters, in many cases forcing them to set up squatter communities elsewhere. Since residents of garrison communities operate with a profound distrust of the police, the “dons” or area leaders become the political authorities in the area, performing statelike functions such as security, the mediation of domestic and other disputes, and the determination of guilt and punishment; they also help with access to health care and education. This kind of assistance is crucial in spaces where the neoliberal state has abandoned people to what one resident in a World Bank-funded study on violence in inner-city communities termed “bare survival.” In other words, as several academic and editorial commentators have noted, “the hard core garrison communities exhibit an element of autonomy, in that they are states within a state. The Jamaican state has no authority or power except in as far as its forces are able to invade in the form of police and military raids.”¹⁰

Though the locations of the original so-called garrison communities have remained constant through the years, the social organization of crime began changing in the mid-1970s. At that time, the more intense export trade in ganja coincided with the oil crisis and the foreign exchange and balance of payments crises. The con-

comitant implementation of structural adjustment policies also worsened patterns of inequality and increased poverty. During the late 1970s and the early 1980s, growing unemployment and an increased cost of living prompted a move from political partisan violence to turf violence. In other words, people became less beholden to politicians, though they still remained loyal to their party. In part, this was because after the 1980 elections, which were particularly bloody (over eight hundred of the almost one thousand murders that year were attributed to political campaigning), several area dons were sent abroad, while others began pursuing full-time criminal activity in Jamaica. The clamping down on the ganja trade and the newly transnational organization of political gangs led many to go into cocaine and crack distribution, both in the United States (principally in New York and Miami) and in Jamaica. The hard-drug business also generated a trade in illegal high-powered weapons, which has ensured easier access to guns for the general population.¹¹

This new organization of violence has had a major effect on the residential location patterns of the urban poor, many of whom are forced to flee deteriorating war zones and the destruction of their homes and places of employment. Because rival politically affiliated gangs continue to challenge the state's claims to legitimacy and authority (already challenged, of course, by various leaders' own involvement in the industries of violence in Jamaica), several crime-reduction plans have been initiated in the past decade, and task forces have been commissioned to write reports and give suggestions about how to reduce political and gang violence. Despite these efforts, however, by 2004 the murder rate in Jamaica reached 60 per 100,000 people, the highest in the world. Moreover, by the end of 2007, 843 murders had been committed compared to 756 during the comparable period in 2006, an increase of about 14 percent. In July alone within the capital city of Kingston and the two surrounding parishes of St. Andrew and St. Catherine, 89 people were killed, an 82-percent increase over July 2006, which saw 49 murders. Part of this increase might be attributed to political campaigning, as general elections were held on September 3, 2007.¹²

Crime and violence have thus become an integral part of the fabric of day-to-day life in Jamaica—not only within the so-called inner-city communities that were first politicized during the 1960s and then mobilized by drug dons in the 1980s but throughout society as a whole. As a result, some Jamaicans and outside observers alike have come to understand violence as a primordial aspect of Jamaican culture, an essentialist view in which it is “not merely that the violence has an internal semiotic (and therefore to understand the violence one has to understand the culture),” as David Scott has written, “but that the semiotic of the culture is—at least in part—violence, and *therefore* to understand the culture, one has to understand the violence.”¹³ In other words, the notion of a culture of violence presupposes a kind of savagery that hearkens back to earlier scientific racisms. This is a vision not only held by Jamaicans in Jamaica but also by those living abroad, a point made clear by the

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fact that crime was one of the biggest agenda issues during the June 2006 Jamaica Diaspora Foundation conference in Kingston — where overseas Jamaicans identified crime as the number one factor inhibiting their own return and their ability to conduct business in Jamaica — and by the decision in late 2005 to stop reporting weekly crime statistics in the newspaper and to remove crime reportage from the front page of the *Gleaner*. This last action was taken in part because Jamaicans living abroad complained that constant front-page coverage of murders not only made foreigners wary of visiting Jamaica but also made U.S. citizens discriminate against resident Jamaicans on the basis of hailing from such a violent nation. Their concerns highlight how, for many U.S. nationals, the association of violent crime with particular immigrant groups intensifies the nativist and anti-immigrant sentiment that has played so large a role in class and racial formation in the United States.¹⁴

The sense that Jamaica is a hotbed of out-of-control violent crime is not confined to the U.S. context, but also extends to other Caribbean migrant destinations. For example, in April 2007, Tony Blair publicly stated that “the spate of knife and gun murders in London was not being caused by poverty, but [by] a distinctive black culture,” one characterized, in part, by bringing up youth “in a setting that has no rules, no discipline, no proper framework,” and no father. This comment ran counter to analyses given by others in his administration, who stressed that black youth were disproportionately impoverished and therefore disproportionately represented within the criminal justice system in England. Blair based his statement on the comments of a black pastor, who later argued that his remark to Blair — “When are we going to start saying this is a problem amongst a section of the black community and not, for reasons of political correctness, pretend that this is nothing to do with it?” — was taken out of context. Blair also advocated an “‘intense police focus’ on the minority of young black Britons behind the gun and knife attacks,” leading many community leaders to fear heightened police profiling and discrimination. Finally, he argued that “we need to stop thinking of this as a society that has gone wrong — it has not — but of specific groups that for specific reasons have gone outside of the proper lines of respect and good conduct towards others and need by specific measures to be brought back into the fold.”¹⁵

In Toronto, Canada, another Caribbean immigrant destination, an exploration of blogs and newspaper editorials that address the 9 percent increase in the city’s homicide rate in 2005 reveals a similar anti-immigrant stance. For many of these commentators, and especially for those on the more conservative end of the political spectrum, Jamaicans were seen to be responsible for 80 percent or more of the city’s gun crime and certainly for the bulk of the city’s murders, although they constituted only 7 percent of the city’s population of 2.5 million. Jamaica, in these accounts, is seen as the “birth place for the gang culture now taking hold of the city,” and Jamaicans are thus positioned as “utterly ruthless and remorseless psychopaths” who come from “fatherless homes.” These Jamaicans bring to Toronto

a “‘born fi’ dead’ culture” that is proliferating because of “poorly screened immigration and multiculturalism policies that encourage immigrants to hang onto their culture no matter how dysfunctional or destructive.” In this view, Jamaicans are born into a pathological culture of violence that they carry with them as they migrate to Toronto, infecting an otherwise peaceful, tolerant, and by some accounts overly generous Canadian ethos. Yet it is not only within metropolitan centers that the discourse of the Jamaican culture of violence is mobilized. In early twentieth-century Cuba, there was a general criminalization of black migrants who came to work the sugar estates, and recent escalations of violence in Trinidad and Guyana are sometimes anecdotally discussed in terms of the ways local patterns might be becoming “Jamaican-ized.”¹⁶

Violence, in these types of accounts, is not only racialized but also sexualized. This is because the cases I focus on here foreground the impression that black youth have been raised in households that deviate from the normative pattern of sexual relations and family formation and infer that this is one of the principal causal factors of the violence. Even more critical, here violence is positioned as external to the formation of states like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, rather than as constitutive of them. However, as anthropologists, historians, and other social theorists have by now convincingly demonstrated, violence is and has been part and parcel of nationalism — both in the initial struggle for statehood and in the ongoing efforts to construct a notion of citizenship.¹⁷ This is true not only for European states, many of whose consolidation was the result of imperialist expansion and slavery, but also for new states formed in the post-World War II period as the result of anticolonial movements. But by positioning violence as external to the process of state formation, certain commentators reproduce a notion of violence as cultural rather than structural (even though they may identify factors such as poverty as producing violence in particular contexts). They also perpetuate analytic discourses that position New World blacks as culturally deviant and therefore as ultimately unassimilable to the nationalist ideals that characterize the states in which they find themselves. In other words, existing violence both generates and reproduces a particular epistemological violence — one that has become the dominant framework through which many understand the place of black people in relation to states.

Diasporic Silences: The Violence of Discursive Elisions

Because the contexts of knowledge production influence the kind of knowledge that is pursued, most scholars would readily agree that the political, economic, and sociocultural issues and assumptions current at any given moment shape the questions we ask, the arguments we make, and the concepts we use. Brent Edwards’s 2001 *Social Text* essay, “The Uses of Diaspora,” lays out a genealogy that clarifies some of the context shaping the scholarly turn to diaspora and discusses how uses of

the term have changed over time. In the discussion below, I pick up on a few of his points to push us in another direction.

Edwards contends that the use of the term *diaspora* entered scholarly literature in the United States during the 1950s as African American scholars became interested in the transnational black influences on anticolonial movements in Africa. Diaspora, on the one hand, became a way for U.S. scholars to think through differences of opinion regarding "the political scope of *Pan-Africanism* in the independence moment," as well as a way to explore the question of origins. It was thus a concept that was, in his words, "resistant or exorbitant to the frames of nations and continents" in relation to both cultural politics and realpolitik. However, as the Cold War gained speed and as African nations gained independence, diaspora became reduced to its cultural aspects, "rather than precisely a means to theorize both culture and politics at the transnational level."¹⁸ The question of origins became a question of culture, at which point anthropology entered the picture.

While St. Clair Drake advocated a comparative analysis of diaspora populations that was oriented toward the goal of coordinating action to, in his words, "complete the worldwide task of Black Liberation," earlier comparative scholarship on blacks in the New World was shaped by a Boasian focus on acculturation and the diffusion of particular cultural traits across what were then known as "culture areas."¹⁹ Melville Herskovits, Franz Boas's student, was particularly interested in the different degrees to which New World black populations retained, adapted, and reinterpreted cultural practices understood as African in derivation. Friends with many of the Harlem Renaissance bigwigs (Zora Neale Hurston was one of his research assistants), Herskovits felt that clarifying the African derivation of African American cultural practices in particular would counter the claims of those who asserted that black Americans had no significant cultural legacy and therefore contributed nothing culturally or politically to the United States. Herskovits's idea was that providing evidence of this cultural legacy through "scientific" study would not only bolster African American self-esteem but also lessen racial prejudice. The model he developed—the "scale of Africanisms"—has been understood by critics and sympathizers alike as more of a classificatory scheme than a theory. Nevertheless it provided one blueprint for imagining that New World black populations might share a common history and, by implication, might be able to construct a common future.²⁰

While the kind of culturalist analysis that Herskovits mobilized provided the basis for a cultural politics that countered the denigration of "things African," it also heralded, as Penny Von Eschen has argued, a "shift from the vocabulary of political economy to the language of moralism." In part, this shift was also due to the move away from biologically based theories of racial difference and toward a framework "that defined differential racial and ethnic characteristics as matters of learned cul-

tural norms"—a move that was itself the result of the post-World War II racial liberalism spurred by the emergent civil rights movement and the Cold War. Yet there were two conservative effects of the anticommunist fervor of the early Cold War period. First, sociological analyses of race and class began to privilege a focus on culture over a focus on socioeconomic inequality. This had both academic and practical effects. Academically, it supported a liberal view of development that naturalized capitalist competition and that positioned the cultural (and sexual) practices of middle-class white Americans as normative. Moreover, racism was then portrayed as "an anachronistic prejudice and a personal and psychological problem, rather than as a systemic problem rooted in specific social practices and pervading relations of political economy and culture." Practically, the cultural model put forward by intellectuals like Michael Harrington (whose book *The Other America* was said to provide the impetus for President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty) and Daniel Moynihan and Nathan Glazer (whose *Beyond the Melting Pot* was also taken up in policy circles) directed attention away from the overall political economy of American capitalism and of how it "uses, abuses, and divides its poorly organized working class" and toward psychologically oriented assimilationist strategies for eliminating poverty.²¹ These strategies emphasized self-help, but not the kind of self-help that looks like grassroots political organization among a class *for itself*.

The second conservative effect of early Cold War anticommunism was that activism toward black liberation began to privilege a focus on nationalism over a focus on internationalism. In Von Eschen's analysis of how the Truman Doctrine and Cold War politics led black Americans to become increasingly exceptionalist to secure their demands for equality in the United States, she argues that liberal African Americans eschewed a previous emphasis on the oppression of black peoples worldwide to secure particular kinds of rights "at home."²² Of course, as she shows, this was not necessarily a freely made choice among black activist circles; anticolonial activists experienced significant repression at the hands of the government during the early Cold War period. Yet to legitimate the emergent sense that the United States should lead the "free world" and to shape international perceptions of American race relations, the Truman administration and the State Department offered a compromise that narrowed the scope of what constituted a black community.²³

Herein lies the root of the epistemological violence generated by the turn to culturalist analysis. The question of where black populations stood in relation to states (an important question for black Americans after the failure of Reconstruction and for colonial blacks especially after World War II) became secondary to the question of how blacks in the West were connected to roots, to Africa. And though the language of cultural politics has enabled a critique that is antinationalist, it abandons the impetus within internationalism toward imagining alternative ways to constitute political community.²⁴ It also derails a more global political economic analysis that would frame violence in Jamaica within a more historical and relational context.

That is, a culturalist analysis of diaspora tends to obscure a focus on how some imperial and nationalist projects have been developed transnationally, producing similar challenging effects for black populations in the diaspora. Chief among these projects is that which concerned African American family formation and sexuality and which resulted in a discursive labeling of both African American and black Caribbean communities as sharing a culture of poverty as a result of faulty familial organization.

The Culturalization of Poverty and Violence

In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War in the United States, the Freedmen's Bureau—a federal agency established in 1865 to protect and aid emancipated slaves in the South—began to concern itself with family formation. Newly emancipated slaves were not only encouraged to marry but were faced with imprisonment and in some cases denied pension payments if they decided not to. In this way, Roderick Ferguson reminds us, the bureau played an active role in the attempt to “rationalize African American sexuality by imposing heterosexual marriage upon the freedman through the rule of law and as a condition for citizenship.”²⁵ In doing so, the burden of responsibility for former slaves was shifted from the government and former slaveholders to the patriarchal husband, now seen as legally responsible for the well-being of the household. This federal attempt was short-lived, however, as the bureau was discontinued in 1869, though its educational activities continued for an additional three years. Nevertheless, the groundwork was set for linking patterns of family formation to legitimate economic and political participation in a newly united nation-state.

In the West Indies—and in Jamaica in particular—the situation was somewhat different as the colonial state did not involve itself in Afro-Jamaican family formation until much later. Baptists and other missionaries, however, were very much interested in creating respectable Christian blacks out of the masses of freed people after full emancipation in 1838. They imagined legitimate family formation through marriage as an integral part of a series of reforms that would remake former slaves into a nascent middle class, one modeled on middle-class Englishmen—in other words, a middle class that embodied the values of independence, thrift, moderation, modesty, and education.²⁶ If slavery had created “an unnatural phenomenon, male slaves who were entirely dependent on their masters,” in the missionary communities developed after emancipation in Jamaica, black men were now to have the opportunity to be *real* men by casting off dependency and by taking charge of their now legitimate households. As in the United States, because the Jamaican colonial state had depended on the plantations to provide welfare during slavery, this was also a move to socialize in newly freed people the values of working for wages and of paying for medical care and education. In both cases, family structure became a way to measure progress and civilization (that is, assimilation into the postemancipa-

tion state), and white heteropatriarchal, middle-class families became the standard against which African American and Afro-Jamaican families were judged. As Ferguson argues, the "demand for a racialized heteronormativity released polymorphous exclusions targeting women, people of color, and gays and lesbians at the same time that it became a regulatory regime, working to inspire conformity among women, people of color, and homosexuals."²⁷

Notably, however, black family structure in the West Indies did not become a concern of the imperial government until after the labor rebellions that swept through the region during the late 1930s. Prior to that time, as historian Lara Putnam has demonstrated, Afro-Jamaican promiscuity and the high rates of children born to unmarried women (approximately two-thirds from the period of emancipation through the present) were understood by observers either as signs of blacks' irredeemable savagery and immorality or as the result of victimization and disadvantage. By the 1920s and 1930s, some uplift-oriented middle-class Afro-Caribbean men and women began to pay more attention to family formation and parenting practices. Furthermore, they wrote about their concerns in the West Indian publications that were emerging within Afro-Caribbean migrant destinations throughout Central America in particular. This is significant because migration in this case seems to have prompted a black middle-class activist concern with family patterns among poorer West Indians, just as it did in the United States in the wake of the Great Migration north. Nevertheless, these concerns did not immediately translate into policy recommendations. According to Putnam, despite interest in the sexual mores of Afro-Caribbean populations among observers, missionaries, and Colonial Office bureaucrats, "there was little emphasis placed on the social, cultural, or psychological consequences of Afro-Caribbean domestic forms."²⁸ Yet by the aftermath of the worldwide economic depression, regionwide labor riots, and the beginning of World War II, West Indian family formation became newly situated as a policy concern in the Colonial Office, and a link was created between poverty and what looked like parental irresponsibility to British middle-class government officials and social welfare workers. This was also the case in the United States.

In part, this shift in policy-oriented attention to lower-class black families in the United States and the West Indies resulted from a move away from the biologically driven understandings of race that undergirded various strands of scientific racism throughout the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and toward anthropologically and psychologically oriented analyses of human difference. Equally important to this shift, however, was the newly hegemonic industrial-development ideology that positioned the patriarchal family at the heart of economic productivity, the reproduction of labor, and educated consumption.²⁹ In this context, one that stretched across the Atlantic, the roles were clear—men labored and women reproduced their labor by seeing to the health and welfare of the household—and deviating from this norm was seen as a cultural rather than structural problem, not

only in the West Indies but also in the United States. As Ferguson explains, "Within a national context that has historically constructed the heteropatriarchal household as a site that can absorb and withstand material catastrophes, African American poverty was often explained by reverting back to the question of African American intimate relations and denying the irresolvability and historicity of state and capital's own exploitative practices."³⁰ Studies commissioned at the time reproduced this view, and implicit within these studies were concerns regarding the political futures of African Americans and black Caribbeans at the dusk of the British Empire.

One of these studies, Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation and ultimately published in 1944, was geared toward examining the causes of the continued inequalities between blacks and whites in the United States. Myrdal focused on a number of institutional dimensions of social, economic, and political life, but undergirding his analysis was a concern with the so-called disorganization of African American family structure, a disorganization that "constructed African Americans as figures of nonheteronormativity who could potentially throw the American social order into chaos."³¹ Similarly, the West India Royal Commission sent to the West Indies after the labor riots that swept through the region in the late 1930s produced a report (also known as the Moyne Report, after the head of the commission) stating that one of the causes of the region's labor problems was a dysfunctional family structure among poor and working-class black West Indians. This structure was characterized by high rates of illegitimate births, a "loose" family organization, and the "careless" upbringing of children. For the authors of the report, dysfunctional families generated a lack of economic productivity and motivation and therefore also a lack of ability to participate politically in an engaged and thoughtful way. The report ultimately recommended a movement toward independence for the West Indian colonies, as well as the establishment of an Office of Colonial Development and Welfare that would not only see to improvements in housing, education, public health, and land resettlement but would also foster more responsible parenting and sexual restraint.

In Jamaica, the sociologist Thomas Simey became the head of the Office of Colonial Development and Welfare in 1941. His conviction was that sociological studies would lead to a broader understanding of the problematic familial institutions that were prevalent among the majority of the population and, therefore, also to the development of solutions to the problems to facilitate a transfer from crown colony government to self-rule. Simey's own survey of social conditions in Jamaica—*Welfare and Planning in the West Indies*—set the pattern for future family studies by delineating types of mating practices and by arguing that there seemed to be a close correlation between color, occupation or economic level, and family type. These findings were echoed, though modified in various ways, by scholars who Simey invited to study social conditions in the region, including Edith Clarke and Madeline Kerr (whose 1952 study was also influenced by the functional-

ist psychologically oriented studies of family life in the United States).³² Of course, later studies modified the value bias and Eurocentric stress on male dominance and the nuclear family by suggesting that lower-class family forms were creatively adaptive and represented solutions to problems faced in other spheres of their lives. Lower-class people, while sharing the general values of the society, also were able to “stretch” these values to make them fit their own circumstances.³³ What is key for my purposes here, however, is that family formation was seen as an issue related to the viability of statehood, and thus black peoples’ sexual practices and family organization became problems to be addressed at the highest levels of government, as they also were in the United States during the same period.

In fact, in addition to the emphasis on scholarship, one of the first activities of the Office of Colonial Development and Welfare staff in the West Indies was to visit the mini–New Deal programs of the Roosevelt administration in Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands, visits organized by the Rockefeller Foundation. Unlike Great Britain, the United States did not initially adopt a welfare approach to issues of social development. Instead, U.S. officials took a scientific approach, establishing a policy of population control and institutionalizing home economics education. The home economics movement emerged in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century and was designed, as Rhoda Reddock has argued, to draw households “into relations with the market as a consumption unit and to bring housework in line with capitalist modernization, stressing rationality, professionalism, and scientific principles.” By the mid-1950s, based on research conducted in Puerto Rico and Jamaica funded by the U.S. Conservation Foundation, the general agreement was that overpopulation (the result of promiscuity and high illegitimacy rates) was the main reason for the region’s economic problems, and the Puerto Rican model (sterilization among lower-class women) was put forward as a solution. Laura Briggs has argued that these kinds of collaborative investigations should direct our attention to the syncretisms between overseas development and domestic welfare or poverty policies. In other words, in both the U.S. and West Indian sociological literature, a link was made between “the poor” (or, in the case of the West Indies, the “lower classes”) and “sex patterns,” patterns that ultimately became proxies for race. These patterns, then, constituted poor black people as unassimilable to the national mainstream and therefore excluded them from the normative categories of citizenship.³⁴

Thus, by the time Oscar Lewis coined the term *culture of poverty*, the sexual and kinship patterns that constituted poor black people as deviating from the idealized cultural norms of the United States and Jamaica were already elaborated through research and policy. However, the traits Lewis listed as characteristic of a culture of poverty—simple language; a great need for sex and excitement; a propensity to rage, aggression, and violence; an inability to be alone and a constant need for sociability; a high incidence of early sexual unions outside of the context of marriage and thus of

illegitimate children; an emphasis on appearances; a lack of participation in the major institutions of the larger society (with the exception of jail, the army, or the public welfare system); an orientation to the local and an inability to see beyond immediate problems; and a value on “acting out more than thinking out, self-expression more than self-constraint, pleasure more than productivity, spending more than saving, personal loyalty more than impersonal justice” — served to further entrench the culturalist view of social inequality, in part because his books were published by popular presses and in part because his ideas were reproduced by those in the U.S. policy arena, such as Moynihan.³⁵

I am rehashing some of this terrain to point out similarities in terms of how poor black people were positioned in relation to the U.S. government and the newly emergent states within the British West Indies around the same time period. In both the United States and the West Indies during the mid-twentieth century, because “stable” families with male breadwinners were seen as the motors of modern, industrial economic growth, regulating the sexuality of lower-class blacks — and especially of urbanized, industrialized, lower-class blacks — became a key aspect of the state’s relationship to black populations. Thus African Americans and Afro-West Indians whose families deviated from the normative model of heteropatriarchy were seen as “reproductive rather than *productive*, heterosexual but never *heteronormative*.” They were therefore subjected to a discursive regulation that ultimately, according to the logic of mid- and late twentieth-century development paradigms, blamed them for their own poverty and, after the dismantling of the welfare state in the United States and the implementation of structural adjustment programs in Jamaica, abandoned them to the whims of the market.³⁶

Within the current neoliberal moment, however, the family is no longer hegemomically viewed as the engine of economic growth. Instead, growth is believed to be powered by entrepreneurship. And though gendered notions of respectability, as Carla Freeman reminds us, still operate to delimit who might or might not be seen as a legitimate entrepreneur, the entrepreneur *is* a figure that can be — to a degree — extricated from the context of family.³⁷ This means that the family unit is no longer seen as the most critical factor in relation to economic production, as it was during the mid-twentieth century.

Of course, this does not mean that black family formation — and especially black masculinity — has somehow suddenly become a political nonissue, both in relation to contests for the state in the United States and Jamaica and in terms of the various kinds of black nationalist “common sense” that have emerged in both locations.³⁸ Instead, as we have seen, the culture of poverty discourse (in which black males are irresponsible, selfishly status-seeking, and incorrigibly undomesticated) has given way to the culture of violence discourse (in which black males — because they have been undomesticated — are susceptible to the pull of gangs and the street, through which they become pathologically incapable of exhibiting empathy

or human compassion). Black men have become problematic in new ways, their marginality defined in relation to new institutional configurations. In the first instance, poor black men are “problems” because they are not household heads, stable breadwinners, and actively present (patriarchal) fathers to their children. In the second, poor black men are “problems” because they cannot gain a significant foothold in legitimate entrepreneurial activities (because they were fatherless) and are therefore responsible for the violence that perpetuates poverty and insecurity. In the first case, their pathology is diagnosed in relation to their roles in the family; in the second, it is diagnosed in relation to their roles in the economy. Either way, faulty black masculinity is to blame for economic underdevelopment and persistent poverty.

Nevertheless, there is a real opportunity here. If, due to the nature of global economic shifts, the family is no longer the primary unit of economic productivity and political engagement and a late nineteenth-century sexual division of labor is no longer idealized in the same way that it was during the mid-twentieth century, then (1) we must abandon the idea that the nuclear family is the primary unit through which populations can engage the state; (2) we could successfully chip away at the hegemony of culturalist discourse regarding family formation and faulty black masculinity, even in the face of Christian Right attacks on, among other things, the *Roe v. Wade* decision in the United States, and despite the emergence of the male marginalization discourse in the West Indies; and (3) we must be able to look again at new ways of organizing our political and economic loyalties and of formulating our notions of how transnational and diasporic alliances and commitments are forged, broken, and remade. To do the latter, however, we need more finely honed analyses of how gender, class, generation, race, nation, sexuality, and—yes—the political economy of governmentality constitute each other in diaspora. Otherwise we risk reproducing the hegemony of the kinds of nonholistic culturalist frameworks that are mobilized by popular observers, as well as by some journalists and scholars. As I have attempted to show here, these kinds of frameworks are impoverished lenses through which to analyze social inequality and can only perpetuate discursive violence against black people worldwide.

Notes

1. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward the History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966) and *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). For more on varieties of black Marxism, see Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990). Discussions of other forms of internationalism and pan-Africanism include Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Brent

- Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in America, 1900–1932* (New York: Verso, 1998); Erik McDuffie, “[She] Devoted Twenty Minutes Condemning All Other Forms of Government but the Soviet: Black Women Radicals in the Carvey Movement and in the Left during the 1920s,” in *Diasporic Africa: A Reader*, ed. Michael A. Gomez (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 219–50; Michelle Ann Stephens, *Black Empire: The Masculine Global Imaginary of Caribbean Intellectuals in the United States, 1914–1962* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
2. St. Clair Drake, “The Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective,” *Black Scholar* 7 (1975): 2–14; and “Diaspora Studies and Pan-Africanism,” in *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, ed. Joseph E. Harris (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1982), 341–402.
 3. Hazel Carby, *Cultures in Babylon: Black Britain and African America* (New York: Verso, 1999); M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); “Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization: An Anatomy of Feminist and State Practice in the Bahamas Tourist Economy,” in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, ed. Chandra T. Mohanty and Alexander (New York: Routledge, 1997), 63–100; and “Redefining Morality: The Postcolonial State and the Sexual Offences Bill of Trinidad and Tobago,” in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra T. Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 133–52; Ann Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Empire of Love: Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
 4. I am calling the youth “gunmen” here—an anonymous and ominous term—as that is how they would come to be described in the newspaper and radio reports of the murder. Yet, as in many small-scale face-to-face communities, these youth are known to people, and their families are long-standing community members. In fact, one of the gang leaders (who has since been assassinated) participated in a theater group I ran briefly out of the community center in the village.
 5. A “nine night” is a Jamaican funerary ritual, an extended wake that takes place for nine nights after death during which time mourners sit up all night to celebrate the life of the deceased with food, music, and (often) drumming.
 6. Glenroy Sinclair, “Thugs Torch Family of Four—Ten-Year-Old’s Wail Dies in Blaze,” *Daily Gleaner*, October 6, 2005.
 7. Betty Ann, Blaine, “Death and the Death of Outrage,” *Jamaica Observer*, October 11, 2005; Cedric Wilson, “Broken Windows and Young Minds,” *Sunday Gleaner*, October 16, 2005; Garth Rattray, “Are We Dying in Vain?” *Daily Gleaner*, October 11, 2005.
 8. “A National Security Strategy for Jamaica,” *Sunday Gleaner*, May 7, 2006; Hermione McKenzie, qtd. in Glenroy Sinclair, “Gunmen Murder Six Women in Four Days—One Hundred and Nineteen Since January,” *Daily Gleaner*, September 29, 2005. Similar formulations were given in Phyllis Thomas, “Reversing the Culture of Violence in Jamaica,” *Sunday Gleaner*, May 2, 2004; in Barry Chevannes, *Learning to Be a Man: Culture, Socialization, and Gender Identity in Five Caribbean Communities* (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001); and in “Why Jamaican Men Rape,” *Sunday Gleaner*, March 19, 2006.

9. On the development of garrison communities, see Carl Stone, *Class, State, and Democracy in Jamaica* (New York: Praeger, 1986); *National Committee on Political Tribalism* (Kingston: Government of Jamaica, Constitutional Reform Unit, 1997); Barry Chevannes, "The Formation of Garrison Communities" (paper presented at the symposium "Grassroots Development and the State of the Nation," University of the West Indies at Mona, November 16–17, 1992); Carlene Edie, *Democracy by Default: Dependency and Clientelism in Jamaica* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991); and Carl Stone, *Democracy and Clientelism in Jamaica* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1980); Carl Stone, "Crime and Violence: Socio-political Implications," in *Crime and Violence: Causes and Solutions*, ed. Peter Phillips and Judith Wedderburn (Mona, Jamaica: Department of Government, University of the West Indies, 19–48); Bernard Headley, *A Spade Is Still a Spade: Essays on Crime and the Politics of Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: LMH, 2002).
10. Christopher Charles, "Garrison Communities as Counter Societies: The Case of the 1998 Zeeks' Riot in Jamaica," *Ideaz* 1 (2002): 29–43; Horace Levy, *Urban Poverty and Violence in Jamaica: Report on Research* (Mona, Jamaica: Center for Population, Community, and Social Change, Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of the West Indies, 1995), 43; The quote is from *National Committee on Political Tribalism*, 12.
11. On the transformation of gang violence, see Stone, *Crime and Violence*; Anthony Harriott, "The Changing Social Organization of Crime and Criminals in Jamaica," *Caribbean Quarterly* 42 (1996): 61–81; and "The Jamaican Crime Problem: New Developments and New Challenges for Public Policy," in *Understanding Crime in Jamaica: New Challenges for Public Policy*, ed. Anthony Harriot (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2004), 1–12; Levy, *Urban Poverty and Violence in Jamaica*; Charles, "Garrison Communities as Counter Societies," 32; Headley, *A Spade Is Still a Spade*, 72.
12. On the spatial effects of violence, see Alan L. Eyre, "Political Violence and Urban Geography in Kingston, Jamaica," *Geographical Review* 74 (1984): 24–37; and "The Effects of Political Terrorism on the Residential Location of the Poor in the Kingston Urban Region, Jamaica, West Indies," *Urban Geography* 7 (1986): 227–42. Jamaican murder statistics are from Tara Abrahams-Clivio, "Let's Renounce the Title of Murder Capital," *Jamaica Observer*, October 20, 2005. To compare, the murder rate in the United States in 2005 was 5.6 per 100,000 (*Crime in the United States* [Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, US Department of Justice, 2005], www.fbi.gov/ucr/05ucis/); in Canada, it was 2 per 100,000 (*The Daily*, November 8, 2006); and in England (and Wales), it was 1.4 per 100,000 people (Alison Walker, Chris Kershaw, and Sian Nicholar, "Crime in England and Wales, 2005/2006," *Home Office Statistical Bulletin*, 2006, www.crimereduction.gov.uk/statistics/statistics50.htm [accessed September 4, 2007]). The latter figure is a count of murders occurring in England and Wales and includes the fifty-two victims of the July 7 subway bombings. See also Mark Beckford, "Murder on the Increase," *Jamaica Gleaner*, August 24, 2007.
13. David Scott, "The 'Culture of Violence' Fallacy," *Small Axe* 1 (1997): 146.
14. Karen Brodtkin, "Global Capitalism: What's Race Got to Do with It?" *American Ethnologist* 27 (2000): 237–56.
15. Patrick Wintour and Vikram Dodd, "Blair Blames Spate of Murders on Black Culture," *Guardian*, April 12, 2007. There is, of course, a long history to this kind of discourse in Britain, a discourse that proliferated especially after the report on the Brixton Riots written by Sir Leslie Scarman (*The Scarman Report: The Brixton Disorders, 10–12 April 1981, Report of an Inquiry* [New York: Penguin, 1981]). See also Paul Gilroy, "There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack": *The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of

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Chicago Press, 1987). I thank Mary Chamberlain and Faith Smith for directing me to these sources.

16. See John Chuckman, "City at Risk," chuckman.blog.ca/?tag=guns (accessed October 2, 2006); John Macfarlane, the editor of *Toronto Life*, qtd. in Lorrie Goldstein, "Stop Blaming Jamaicans for Gun Crime," *Toronto Sun*, May 7, 2006; Eugene Rivers, "The Sins of the Fathers Are Visited on Black Youth," *Globe and Mail*, December 2, 2005; Bruce Garvey, "Jamaica's 'Born fi Dead' Culture," *National Post*, October 27, 2005. On the animalization of black migrants in early-twentieth-century Cuba, see Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), chap. 3.
17. See Carole Nagengast, "Violence, Terror, and the Crisis of the State," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994): 109–36, for an early review essay on the topic.
18. Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of Diaspora," *Social Text* 19 (2001): 49, 55, 52, 55. See Kevin A. Yelvington, "The War in Ethiopia and Trinidad, 1935–1936," in *The Colonial Caribbean in Transition: Essays on Postemancipation Social and Cultural History*, ed. Bridget Brereton and Yelvington (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 189–225, for a more nuanced discussion of how the question of origins, or of ethnic subjectivity, is dialectically and mutually constituted by the question of class.
19. St. Clair Drake, "Black Diaspora in Pan-African Perspective," 11.
20. Melville Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper, 1941). See also Kevin A. Yelvington, "The Invention of Africa in Latin America and the Caribbean: Political Discourse and Anthropological Praxis, 1920–1940," in *Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora*, ed. Yelvington (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 2006), 35–82. Other anthropologists critiqued the notions of acculturation and syncretism and the typology Herskovits developed. Sidney Mintz and Richard Price argued that instead of identifying particular cultural traits that might link New World blacks to African societies, it would be better to conceptualize these linkages as "unconscious 'grammatical' principles" and to analyze the political economy surrounding peoples' efforts to make their worlds by holding on to particular cultural practices and by adapting others to their new circumstances (*The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* [Boston: Beacon, 1992], 9). Indeed, Herskovits's vindicationist research agenda and ideas were not politically popular during the 1930s and the 1940s, when many African American leaders contending with the failure of Reconstruction were emphasizing not cultural difference from the American mainstream, but cultural similarity to promote the goals of assimilation, integration, and the extension of the rights of citizenship to the descendants of slaves. In the late 1960s and 1970s, however, Herskovits's ideas were picked up again and applied to the study not only of religion and expressive culture but also of patterns of land tenure, inheritance, and family formation.
21. The quotes about the changing language of race are from Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 162. For similar analyses of these transformations, see Laura Curran, "The Culture of Race, Class, and Poverty: The Emergence of a Cultural Discourse in Early Cold War Social Work (1946–1963)," *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 30 (2003): 18; and Kāmari M. Clarke, *Mapping Yoruba Networks: Power and Agency in the Making of Transnational Communities* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004). On the development of normative ideas on family formation, see Lara Putnam, "Parenthood at the End of Empire: Great Britain and Its Caribbean Colonies, 1910–1940" (paper presented at the Latin American Labor History Conference, Duke University, Durham,

- NC, May 4–5, 2007), and Roderick A. Ferguson, “Nightmares of the Heteronormative: *Go Tell It on the Mountain* versus *An American Dilemma*,” in *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 82–109; and Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 157. The quote about American capitalism and the working class is from Anthony Marcus, “The Culture of Poverty Revisited: Bringing Back the Working Class,” *Anthropologica* 47 (2005): 47; Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962; New York: Penguin, 1981); Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1963).
22. The quote is from Von Eschen, *Race against Empire*, 3. Many black intellectuals rued these changes, E. Franklin Frazier chief among them. While Frazier himself deployed a culturalist frame for viewing African American family life (despite the fact that he also emphasized sociostructural factors in his analysis of African American family organization), he saw in the move away from internationalist anticolonial politics a diminished inclination to critique Western society and culture. He also felt that the turn from an analytic framework that privileged the language of political economy inhibited the elaboration of a model of black modernity that was inspired, at least in part, by African independence (see Kevin Gaines, “E. Franklin Frazier’s Revenge: Anticolonialism, Nonalignment, and Black Intellectuals’ Critiques of Western Culture,” *American Literary History* 17 [2005]: 506–29). Frazier’s *Black Bourgeoisie*—written and first published in France before being published in the United States in 1957—articulated as scathing a critique of U.S. black middle-class intellectual and political leaders as did Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* of the newly postcolonial political leadership. Both saw in bourgeois nationalism a narrowing of focus and an emphasis on culture and assimilation, rather than an impetus toward the radical transformation of the relationships among black people, capitalism, and nation-states (E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie: The Rise of a New Middle Class* [New York: Free Press, 1957]; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington [New York: Grove, 1963]).
23. St. Clair Drake also identified the Cold War as inspiring a move away from internationalism, but he suggested that it was the *success* of anticolonial movements in Africa that played such a decisive role in turning African Americans away from coordinated political action. He argued that once African countries became nations, the sense of a unity of purpose fractured: “The period of uncomplicated united struggle to secure [African] independence from the white oppressor had ended for each colony as it became a nation. Diaspora blacks had to decide which of various political factions, if any, within the new nations they would support” (Drake, “Diaspora Studies and Pan-Africanism,” 351).
24. It is also this antinationalist sense that pervades the use of *diaspora* within British cultural studies, though here we see the maintenance of explicit attention to class and political economy, at least until the publication of Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). This is because within this context, diaspora became a way to identify the relationships between racism and British nationalism.
25. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 85–86.
26. On “Christian blacks,” see Diane Austin-Broos, “Redefining the Moral Order: Interpretations of Christianity in Post-Emancipation Jamaica,” in *The Meaning of Freedom: Economics, Politics, and Culture after Slavery*, ed. Frank McGlynn and Seymour Drescher (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992), 221–44. On postemancipation village and family formation, see Catherine Hall, “Gender Politics and Imperial Politics:

- Rethinking the Histories of Empire," in *Engendering History: Caribbean Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Verene Shepherd, Bridget Brereton, and Barbara Bailey (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1995), 48–59; and *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
27. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 85.
 28. Putnam, "Parenthood at the End of Empire," 1. For similar analyses of the way migration influenced family structure, see E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
 29. M. G. Smith, introduction to *My Mother Who Fathered Me: A Study of the Family in Three Selected Communities in Jamaica*, by Edith Clarke (1957; London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), i–xliv; Rhoda Reddock, *Women, Labour, and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago: A History* (London: Zed, 1994).
 30. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 85.
 31. *Ibid.*, 88; Myrdal Gunnar, *An American Problem: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1944).
 32. Thomas S. Simey, *Welfare and Planning in the West Indies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946); and Clarke, *My Mother Who Fathered Me*; Madeline Kerr, *Personality and Conflict in Jamaica* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1952). For early family studies in the United States, see John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1937); Hortense Powdermaker, *After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South* (New York: Viking, 1939); Oliver Cox, *Caste, Class, and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1948); Alison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); Lloyd Warner, Buford Junker, and Walter Adams, *Color and Human Nature: Negro Personality Development in a Northern City* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1941).
 33. In fact, Simey was himself encouraged to read the sociological literature on African American family structures that was emergent in the United States at the time (Lara Putnam, personal communication, October 12, 2007). For modifications of earlier family research, see Robert Dirks and Virginia Kerns, "Mating Patterns and Adaptive Change in Rum Bay, 1823–1970," *Social and Economic Studies* 25 (1976): 34–54; Nancie Gonzalez, "Towards a Definition of Matrilocality," in *Afro-American Anthropology: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Norman Whitten and John Szwed (New York: Free Press, 1970), 231–44; Sidney Greenfield, *English Rustics in Black Skin: A Study of Modern Family Forms in a Pre-industrial Society* (New Haven, CT: College and University Press, 1966); Hyman Rodman, "On Understanding Lower-Class Behavior," *Social and Economic Studies* 8 (1959): 441–50; and *Lower-Class Families: The Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); Hymie Rubenstein, "Conjugal Behavior and Parental Role Flexibility in an Afro-Caribbean Village," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 17 (1980): 331–37; and "Caribbean Family and Household Organization: Some Conceptual Clarifications," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 14 (1983): 283–98; Carol Stack, *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974). A more recent perspective has also developed that returns to

- Herskovits's position that West Indian family forms are modifications of West African forms. See, for example, Virginia Kerns, *Women and the Ancestors: Black Carib Kinship and Ritual* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Niara Sudarkasa, "African and Afro-American Family Structure" in *Anthropology for the Nineties*, ed. Johnnetta Cole (New York: Free Press, 1988), 182–210; Constance Sutton, "Africans in the Diaspora: Changing Continuities in West Indian and West African Sex/Gender Systems" (paper presented at the "New Perspectives on Caribbean Studies: Toward the Twenty-First Century" conference, August 29, 1984).
34. Reddock, *Women, Labour, and Politics*, 225. For mid-1950s U.S. research, see Judith Blake, *Family Structure in Jamaica: The Social Context of Reproduction* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1961); J. Mayone Stycos and Kurt Back, *The Control of Human Fertility in Jamaica* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1964). For critical perspectives on this research, see Laura Briggs, *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 178, and Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*.
 35. Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (1959; New York: Basic Books, 1975); and *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty—San Juan and New York* (New York: Random House, 1965). The quotes are from *La Vida*, xxvi. See also *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 1965). Of course, Lewis's ideas have been widely criticized. Anthropologists and others have taken issue with his use of the culture concept, with the ways his own data sometimes contradicted his theoretical assertions, with the ways he contributed to a racialization and sexualization of poor people, and with the sense that despite his various disclaimers, he ultimately took up the culture of poverty thesis as a way to blame the poor for their own poverty and marginalization. For these critiques, see Eleanor Leacock, ed., *The Culture of Poverty: A Critique* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971); Rodman *Lower-Class Families*; Charles Valentine, *Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter-Proposals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Briggs, *Reproducing Empire*; Micaela DiLeonardo, *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, American Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); also, "Book Review: The Children of Sanchez, Pedro Martinez, and *La Vida* by Oscar Lewis," *Current Anthropology* 8, no. 5 (1967): 480–500. While Lewis's own solutions for poverty tended to emphasize collective action and political protest geared toward achieving the rights and responsibilities of true citizenship, those who took his ideas and ran with them were seen as offering up solutions that emphasized self-help and government nonintervention (see Lewis, *La Vida*, xlvi, 1).
 36. Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black*, 85.
 37. Carla Freeman, "The 'Reputation' of Neoliberalism," *American Ethnologist* 34 (2007): 252–67.
 38. Wahneema Lubiano, "Black Nationalism and Black Common Sense: Policing Ourselves and Others," in *The House That Race Built: Black Americans, U.S. Terrain*, ed. Lubiano (New York: Vintage, 1998), 232–52.