

Continuing Perspectives on the Black Diaspora.
Revised Edition. Eds. Aubrey W. Bonnett and
Calvin B. Holder. (Landam, MD: University Press of
America, 2009). vii-xxi, 263 pp., \$38.00 paper.

As a follow-up to their *Emerging Perspectives on the Black Diaspora* (published in 1990), authors/editors Aubrey Bonnett and Calvin Holder have given another serious treatment of the African diaspora. In this new volume, they take on new trends, ones that are often underappreciated or neglected within the scholarly community. *Continuing Perspectives* proffers an examination of some of the “new and nuanced challenges which forcibly test the themes of persistence and resilience” of the black diaspora communities (xvii). As the authors proclaim in their introduction, “the essays in this volume [. . .] try to look back, assess current positions, and project into the future and, as such, attempt to make an ongoing contribution to the scholarship and pedagogy in this multi disciplinary, academic field” (xvii). With this objective in mind, these authors have fallen short at times through this book.

The book is divided into five sections (excluding an introduction) which address various geographic regions around the world (i.e., Europe and Asia, the Caribbean, North America-Canada/U.S.A, respectively), discuss

unique aspects of the diaspora, and posit theoretical ideas about the diaspora seen through media and political sovereignty. All sections are subdivided into two research essays each, except for the part devoted to North America which receives three essays. The organization of this book provides a detailed evolution of thought regarding the diaspora and its impact across the globe. In particular, by concentrating on regions, the editors have included evaluations of the diaspora in geographic regions that are often overlooked in research.

Despite this design of the collection, one is reticent to proclaim this book an outright success. The biggest drawback to the book is its lack of empirical research. Most of the essays simply synthesize disparate sources for their own means, ignoring more salient and statistical evidence. While there can be value in synthesis, this collection struggles in this area because of the inconsistency in research. For example, several essays cite research varying across four decades, sometimes from the mid 1940's to late 1980's. This information garnered from this research is not presented as comprehensive or historical; instead, the information is proffered as if in a vacuum without context to the social, political, and/or economic forces at work that created the research. It appears that many writers in the volume simply make passing references to their sources without fully developing arguments and/or synthesis from them. This approach creates several problems for the reader, especially one who is familiar with the claims taken from sources and thus disapproves of the shallow treatment of the theory or evidence. Those new to the field, particularly students, that approach can be dangerous and misleading, sending a novice kayaker into a class-five rapid of debate that he/she is unable to grasp hold of. Subsequently, this reviewer would benefit more from pointed research that deals with specific incidents or circumstances that affect the diaspora rather than generalities and loosely summa-

rized trends or perspectives. Beyond this problem, the book's editors or those editors at the publisher missed a number of grammatical and/or typographic errors and mistakes. While one may be able to overlook these at times, I feel that they contribute to the difficulty in recommending this book.

On the other hand, one can begin to see the true value of this book through its academic endeavor to explain and formulate the emerging discipline of African diaspora studies. Even though some essays fall flat (and others succeed—notably James W. St. C. Walker essay tracing the circumstances of early black Canadians, Calvin B. Holder's essay concentrating largely on Garveyism, and Walter F. Edwards's essay comparing Tupac Shakur and Bob Marley), the collection as a whole functions as a measuring stick for the research done and the work yet to be accomplished both within and out of the academy. Indeed, while many of the essays never claim definitive knowledge and scope, they do contend to present questions and concerns about historical racism, cultural separation(s), and economical inequalities that plagued diasporic communities and that still haunt many today. Readers should be selective and cautious as to the validity of some claims made within this volume, yet readers can glean the need for more exploration and answers for such ideas.

Matthew Miller
University of South Carolina, Aiken