

Nicole N. Aljoe and Ian Finseth, eds. *Journeys of the Slave Narrative in the Early Americas*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014. 239 pages.

The essays in *Journeys of the Slave Narrative in the Early Americas* reflect a diversity and multiplicity of scholars, which encourages speculative analysis and introduces new characters and geographical locations of the African experience in the Americas.

Additionally, this volume enhances the existing historiography of slave narratives in the Atlantic world during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The contributors represent an unorthodox shift in the conventional interpretation of the texts of slaves and fugitives.

One of the noteworthy features of the book is the frequent comparative analysis. This is evident in Gretchen Woertendyke's "Trials and Confessions of Fugitive Slave Narratives" whose analysis draws references to the British Romantic form, including works of Charles Lamb. Readers would also appreciate the inclusion of voices of the enslaved in Spanish America and the Caribbean. These include R. J. Boutelle's "The Most Perfect Picture of Cuban Slavery," which reveals the literary genius of Juan Manzano; also, the chapter entitled "Seeking a Righteous King" by Jose Guadalupe Ortega deals with three runaways who fled from Bahamas to Cuba.

There are two chapters on the life and experiences of Briton Hammon who produced the first published slave narrative in United States. The first chapter by Jeffrey Gagnon's "'They Us'd Me Pretty Well': Briton Hammon and Cross-Cultural Alliances in the Maritime Borderlands of the Florida Coast," is an analysis of an ex-slave who created "transnational bonds" (76) among Native peoples in Florida. The second chapter on Hammon is by Robert Green who compares the publication of the first slave narrative published in America with that of the Native American captivity narratives. Green relates African American bondage within a wider context which includes transnational captivities involving different bondage agents and various locations of captivities. The comparative aspect is also applied in treating with noteworthy ex-slaves, as James Gronniosaw and Venture Smith.

One of the drawbacks of this compilation of essays is the absence of the female narrative voice, despite numerous examples from which to draw. An interesting aspect of *Journeys of the Slave Narrative in the Early Americas* is that contributors such as Jeffrey Gagnon and Kristina Bross recognise that the original testimonies and narratives are edited and often adjusted to avoid offending certain persons in the higher rungs of society.

Nicole Aljoe, one of the book's editors, is accurate in noting that, "the hybridity and polyvocality of the testimonies of slaves illuminates the fluid parameters and heterogeneous origins of the slave narrative form" (12). Undoubtedly, this volume of essays will allow researchers and readers to re-evaluate marginalized voices and the historicization of the early slave narratives.

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