



R. Price

S. Price

Migan

In: *New West Indian Guide/ Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 68 (1994), no: 1/2, Leiden, 123-133

This PDF-file was downloaded from <http://www.kitlv-journals.nl>

MIGAN¹

Our friend Charlemagne (a.k.a. Émilien), who lives down the road and considers himself a breadfruit connoisseur, says that there's only one other tree in southern Martinique whose fruit compares with ours. From our back porch, during the tree's several flowerings each year, we can reach out and pick low-growing fruit by hand, or with a knife-and-pole contraption cut down a milk-flecked orb from higher up in the broad green leaves. This particular tree may even be descended from the oldest breadfruit in the Caribbean, for Martinique was already blessed with trees, transported from "L'Île-de-France" (Mauritius), by the time Captain Bligh made his 1791-93 voyage from Polynesia, "bringing breadfruit from what was seen to be a Tree of Life in the islands of Paradise ... the very symbol of a free and unencumbered life ... to feed slaves, the living dead of the Caribbean" (Denig 1992:4, 11).

Because breadfruit can't travel (spoilage a day or two after it's picked), it hasn't become as well-known in New York, Toronto, Paris, Amsterdam, or London as have other tropical delights such as mangos and star-apples, and is often absent from Caribbean cookbooks published for external consumption. And because of its associations in Martinique with old-fashioned country living – eating breadfruit or rootcrops, all classed together as "*légumes*," isn't considered modern or French – many people in their thirties or forties say they don't like it, or that they were fed so much of it as children that they no longer appreciate it, and prefer imported rice or potatoes. So this food, at first rejected by the enslaved Africans for whom it was destined (perhaps in part because it was almost forced upon them), embraced by them after emancipation as their own and made an important staple, and now increasingly viewed by their present-day, modernizing descendants as "country" and "down-scale" (even "folkloric"), has come nearly full circle. But for the

families of Martiniquan fishermen or peasants, not fully engaged in the rush to modernity, it's still a special treat when served at the midday meal, whether eaten with a *court bouillon* of fish or as *migan*.

The noun *migan* and the verb *miganné* are common in Martiniquan and Guadeloupean Creole but don't, according to the scholars we've asked (or dictionaries we have at hand) appear in Haitian or St. Lucian. Apparently derived from Brazilian *migau* ("wheat or manioc pap; [fig.] something very watery or sloppy" [*Pequeno Dicionário Michaelis*]), its French Antillean meaning is "purée" (usually of breadfruit but also sometimes of plantains or of *chou caraïbe* [*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*]) as well as "mixture" or "confusion." As a verb, it can be used to speak straightforwardly of "mixing" ingredients in food preparation but it can also refer, disapprovingly, to socio-sexual activities – a man's life, to cite a common example, may be said to be *miganné*: mixed up with more women than he's able to handle.

For those readers fortunate enough to live in breadfruit country, here's our version of the recipe, as it's prepared in the fishing village where we live:

a very ripe breadfruit, peeled and cut into 5-cm chunks
 three pig tails or snouts in brine (*salaison*)
 a small diced onion
 two cloves garlic, crushed
 several sprigs of parsley, chopped
 salt, black pepper, and thyme to taste
 one hot pepper, preferably *bonda-man-jak* ("Madame Jacques's
 derrière" – "scotch bonnet" in the Anglophone islands)
 juice of half a lime
 1-2 tablespoons oil

Cook the breadfruit and meat in water to cover until the breadfruit begins to be tender (15 minutes or more, depending on the breadfruit). Add all other ingredients except the juice and oil and continue to simmer until the breadfruit is soft. Add the juice and oil and cook several minutes longer until the breadfruit pieces are suspended in a thick, creamy sauce. Taste frequently after adding the hot pepper so you can take it out when the sauce is sufficiently spicy.

And now to books, beginning with overdue reviews. Several scholars, slightly tardy, have written pleading not to be put on the list of delinquent reviewers that is becoming an annual tradition in these pages, and promising their reviews forthwith. We respect their good intentions and list only those who have, despite reminder letters, apparently shelved the books in their personal libraries, thus depriving both readers of this journal and the

authors of the books the pleasures of public review. Here then is a listing of those books that (as of press time, January 1994) we have been unable to review because those scholars who agreed to do them (identified here by initials in square brackets) have neither provided a review nor returned the books so they might be assigned to someone else. As in the past, this listing may serve as a kind of backlist "books received." (And as always, we would still welcome the submission of any of these reviews, however tardy.) *Cuba After Thirty Years: Rectification and the Revolution*, edited by Richard Gillespie (London: Frank Cass, 1990, cloth £18.00) [J.F.]; *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Woman's Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940*, by K. Lynn Stoner (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991, cloth US\$ 42.50, paper US\$ 16.95) [M.N.-A.]; a grouping of three books on education: *Utilization, Misuse, and Development of Human Resources in the Early West Indian Colonies*, by M. K. Bacchus (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1990, paper US\$ 19.95), *Forging Identities and Patterns of Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Harry P. Diaz, Joanna W.A. Rummens & Patrick D.M. Taylor (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991, paper n.p.), and *Colony and Nation: A Short History of Education in Trinidad & Tobago, 1834-1986*, by Carl C. Campbell (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1992, paper US\$ 19.50) [L.C.]; *London Calling: V.S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin*, by Rob Nixon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 35.00) [J.T.]; *Development Strategies as Ideology: Puerto Rico's Export-Led Industrialization Experience*, by Emilio Pantojas-García (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 1990, cloth US\$ 34.00) [L.A.]; *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*, by Sidney W. Mintz & Richard Price (Boston: Beacon, 1992, cloth US\$ 25.00, paper US\$ 12.00) [K.A.A.]; *Caribbean Asians: Chinese, Indian, and Japanese Experiences in Trinidad and the Dominican Republic*, edited by Roger Sanjek (New York: Asian/American Center at Queens College, 1990, paper n.p.) and *Asians in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Bibliography*, by Lamgen Leon (New York: Asian/American Center, Queens College, 1990, paper n.p.) [B.G.]; *A Photograph Album of Trinidad at the Turn of the Century*, by Gérard Besson (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Paria, paper n.p.) and *Free Mulatto*, by J.B. Philippe (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Paria, 1987, paper n.p.) [D.T.]; *Stedman's Surinam: Life in an Eighteenth-Century Slave Society. An Abridged, Modernized Edition of Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam, by John Gabriel Stedman*, edited by Richard Price & Sally Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 60.00, paper US\$ 19.95) [I.P.]; a grouping of three books by Bernardo Vega on the twentieth-century Dominican Republic (all Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana): *Eisenhower y Trujillo* (1991,

paper n.p.), *Kennedy y los Trujillo* (1991, paper n.p.), and *Trujillo y el control financiero norteamericano* (1990, paper n.p.) [P.G.]; *Fyffes and the Banana, Musa Sapientum: A Centenary History 1888-1988*, by Peter N. Davies (London: Athlone, 1990, cloth £ 17.95) [M-R.T.].

We begin our annual roundup of books that deserve brief mention with reference works. *Latin America and the Caribbean: A Critical Guide to Research Sources*, edited by Paula H. Covington (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1992, cloth US\$ 115.00), is a useful NEH-funded state-of-the-art survey written by a team of distinguished scholars, each presenting research trends in a particular discipline: anthropology, art & architecture, history, literature, the performing arts, women's studies, and so forth; despite occasional misspellings (e.g., Derx for Derkx) and misattributions (Moreno Fragnals's *The Sugarmill* to Stanley Stein), the scholarship is impressive and the annotations in the extensive bibliographic sections are especially helpful. The Quincentenary is represented by the two-volume, illustrated *The Christopher Columbus Encyclopedia*, edited by Silvio A. Bedini (London: Macmillan, 1992, cloth £95.00), for which a stellar cast of international authorities have contributed readable essays on everything from Astrolabes and Burial Places of Columbus through Cannibalism and Icelandic Sagas to First Visual Impressions in Europe. *Women in the Caribbean: A Bibliography 1986-1990*, by Irene Rolfes (Leiden: KITLV, 1992, paper NLG 35.00), follows upon similar volumes published by the same research unit in 1979 and 1985; it presents a single alphabetical listing of 1585 relevant works, covering the diaspora as well as the islands and including unpublished theses, all without annotation. *Scholars' Guide to Washington, D.C., for Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, by Michael Grow, second edition revised by Craig VanGrasstek (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, paper US\$ 19.95) provides useful practical details on local libraries, archives, map collections, foreign embassies, international organizations, and even bookstores that feature Caribbean publications; indispensable for Caribbeanists planning a stay in Clintonville. The two-volume *Writers of the Caribbean and Central America: A Bibliography*, by M.J. Fenwick (New York: Garland, 1992, cloth n.p.), moves through the broad region alphabetically, "country"-by-"country," to list writers with titles and dates of selected publications but no annotation of any kind; claiming to be a research tool that brings together literatures long separated by colonial and national barriers, the work reads more like a computer printout and contains numerous errors – we are told, for example, that "Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique and St. Martin are still French colonies," that Suriname's poet Dobru (Robin Ravales), who died a decade ago, is alive, and that André Schwarz-Bart was born in Guadeloupe.

Three dictionaries and a historical gazetteer have come our way. *Dictionary of St. Lucian Creole. Part 1: Kwéyòl-English, Part 2: English-Kwéyòl*, compiled by Jones E. Mondesir and edited by Lawrence D. Carrington (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992, cloth DM 298.00) is an impressive achievement, the thirty-year-long painstaking compilation of a St. Lucian educator which has been expertly revised by a leading creolist; the entries are rich in grammatical examples and convey much of the liveliness of St. Lucian daily life and lore. *Wortubuku ini Sranan Tongo (Sranan Tongo – English Dictionary)* and *Wortubuku ini Sranan Tongo (Sranan Tongo – Nederlands Woordenboek)*, each edited by John Wilner (Paramaribo: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1992, paper n.p.), are dictionaries-in-progress, still very partial after five years of work, and published to elicit comments and improvements; a serious, long-term project that deserves encouragement. *Historisch-Geografisch Woordenboek van Suriname*, by A.J. van der Aa, edited by René Janssen & Okke ten Hove, with Wim Hoogbergen (Utrecht: Bronnen voor de Studies van Afro-Surinaamse Samenlevingen, 1993, paper NLG 20.00), is a modest work that includes relevant excerpts from Van der Aa's 13-volume gazetteer of the vast Dutch empire, published 1839-49, here mainly brief entries organized by names of Suriname plantations.

Several general works on the region. *Caribbean World: A Complete Geography*, by Neil Sealey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, paper £7.95) is a textbook designed for secondary schools but covers a wide range of basic information on natural systems, populations, and economy. *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and the Carib to the Present*, by Jan Rogozinski (New York: Facts on File, 1992, cloth US\$ 24.95), presents a whirlwind tour, from "the gentle Arawak" and "warlike Carib" to Operation Urgent Fury, piling unproblematized "fact" upon "fact" without references or suggestions for further reading, for what audience or to what end remains unclear. *Britain's Dependent Territories: A Fistful of Islands*, by George Drower (Aldershot, Hants: Dartmouth, 1992, cloth £32.50), points out that in terms of numbers of "dependent territories" – what used to be called "colonies" – Britain still has the world's largest empire, from Pitcairn, Gibraltar, the Falklands, and Hong Kong to (closer to home) Anguilla, Bermuda, the BVIs, the Caymans, Monserrat, and the Turks & Caicos; the book examines individual cases as well as more general policy implications. *The Golden Quest: The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, by Michael Anthony (London: Macmillan, 1992, paper £5.95), is an unpretentious retelling of the familiar story, apparently for West Indian (high-school level?) consumption, best when its cadences graze the calypsonian. *Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean*, by Jenifer Marx (Malabar FL: Krieger, 1992, cloth US\$ 32.50), is a lively, intelligent popular history.

Several reprints have appeared. We report the reissue (in facsimile) of *Christopher Codrington 1668-1710*, by Vincent T. Harlow (New York: St. Martin's, 1990, cloth US\$ 39.95), the standard biography of the Governor-General of the Leeward Islands at the dawn of the eighteenth century, originally published in 1928. *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave, Esteban Montejo*, by Miguel Barnet (London: Macmillan, 1993, paper £13.95), includes a useful new introduction and bibliographical essay by Alistair Hennessy that helps contextualize this important literary work. *Atlantic American Societies: From Columbus through Abolition 1492-1888*, edited by Alan L. Karras & J.R. McNeill (London: Routledge, 1992, cloth US\$ 55.00, paper US\$ 16.95), anthologizes – presumably for classroom use – eight articles published by historians during the last two decades.

Miscellanea worthy of note: *The Material Culture of the Wapishana People of the South Rupununi Savannas in 1989*, by Janette Forte, Laureen Pierre & Desrey Fox (Georgetown: Amerindian Research Unit of the University of Guyana, 1992, paper n.p.), the fruit of a several-week-long expedition, constitutes a Cook's tour of contemporary Wapishana life and problems, including their complex relations with the world outside. A different perspective on Guyana is provided by *Observing Guyana's Electoral Process, 1990-1992*, report of The Council of Freely Elected Heads of Government (Atlanta: The Carter Center, 1993, paper n.p.), which chronicles the role of international observers in monitoring the Jagan victory. *And I Remember Many Things ... Folklore of the Caribbean*, compiled and edited by Christine Barrow (Kingston: Ian Randle, 1992, cloth US\$ 10.95), is a collection of stories and reminiscences, little poetic gems, illustrated with charcoal drawings by Wendy Donawa, and intended as an antidote for Caribbean children growing up in a world of television and fast food.

A major historical work, winner of the 1992 Elsa Goveia prize, reached us too late for review, but merits mention: *Sugar is Made With Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba*, by Robert L. Paquette (Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988, cloth US\$ 30.00, paper US\$ 16.95). Despite repeated attempts, we regret that academic politics have prevented us from finding a scholar willing to review *Voodoo and Politics in Haiti*, by Michel S. Laguerre (New York: St. Martin's, 1989, cloth US\$ 35.00). *Het gedrukte woord in de Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba*, by J. Hartog (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1992, paper NLG 39,50), lovingly traces the history of two centuries of Dutch Antillian printing, libraries, and bookstores, providing details on collections in both the Caribbean and the metropole.

A trip to Belize acquainted us with three recent travel books: *Inside Belize*, by Tom Barry (Albuquerque: Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource

Center, 1992, paper US\$ 9.95), an excellent tour through local society, politics, economy, and culture; *Belize Guide*, by Paul Glassman (Champlain NY: Passport Press, 1991, paper US\$ 13.95), a reliable Baedeker; and *The Very Rich Hours: Travels in Orkney, Belize, the Everglades, and Greece*, by Emily Hiestand (Boston: Beacon, 1992, paper US\$ 12.00), which spins brief encounters with Belizean nature and people into delicate prose. We were also introduced to Belize's premier publishing house, Cubola Productions (located in Benque Viejo de Carmen, right next to the border with Guatemala), whose books deserve wider international attention and distribution. Among their recent publications of Caribbeanist interest, still in stock in 1993, are: *Heart Drum: Spirit Possession in the Garifuna Communities of Belize*, by Byron Foster (1986, revised edition 1994, paper n.p.), which summarizes the author's Cambridge dissertation; *The Baymen's Legacy*, by Byron Foster (1992, paper US\$ 11.00), a historical introduction to Belize City, characterized on the jacket as "Dickensian London on the shores of the Caribbean"; *Party Politics in Belize, 1950-1986*, by Assad Shoman (1987, revised edition 1994, paper n.p.), political analysis by a leading Belizean intellectual; and four works of literature – *Old Benque: Erase una vez en Benque Viejo...*, by David N. Ruiz Puga (1990, paper US\$ 9.00), short stories in Spanish; *On Heroes, Lizards, and Passion*, by Zoila M. Ellis (1988, paper n.p.), a first book of short stories; *Pataki Full: Seven Belizean Short Stories*, by Colville Young (1991, paper US\$ 9.00), the Belizean creolist; and *Shots from the Heart: Three Young Belizean Poets*, by Yasser Musa, Kiren Shoman & Simone Waight (1991, paper US\$ 9.00).

Several books on religion merit note. *Doctrina para negros: Explicación de la doctrina cristiana acomodada a la capacidad de los negros bozales*, by Nicolás Duque de Estrada, transcribed and introduced by Javier Laviña (Barcelona: Sendai, 1989, paper n.p.), publishes a late eighteenth-century Cuban manuscript from the Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, with a rich historical introduction. *Kerkwandel & lekenhandel: De rooms-katholieke kerk op Curaçao*, edited by B. Boudewijnse, H. Middelbrink & C. van de Woestijne (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1992, paper NLG 29.50), presents six anthropological and historical essays on the influence of the R.C. Church on daily life in Curaçao. *Descubrir a Dios en el Caribe: Ensayos sobre la historia de la iglesia*, by Armando Lampe (San José, Costa Rica: Editorial DEI, 1991, paper n.p.), presents essays on Curaçao and Haiti by this Aruban cleric-historian. *Mission in Chains: The Life, Theology and Ministry of the Ex-Slave Jacobus E.J. Capitein (1717-1747), with a Translation of his Major Publications*, by David Nii Anum Kpobi (Zoetermeer: Boekcentrum, 1993, paper NLG 45.00), focuses on the life of this eighteenth-century man, born on the Gold Coast, who after serving as a child-slave, studied as a freedman in the Netherlands,

and became Dutch Reformed minister for the West India Company at Elmina Castle.

A callaloo of cookbooks and related works. *Chilies to Chocolate: Food the Americas Gave the World*, edited by Nelson Foster & Linda S. Cordell (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 24.95), presents a series of readable scholarly essays on tomatoes, potatoes, vanilla, maize, beans, capsicums, and a host of other New World contributions to world diet. A paean to pre-revolutionary upper class privilege (as well as the good life in Miami), *Memories of a Cuban Kitchen*, by Mary Urrutia Randelman & Joan Schwartz (New York: Macmillan, 1992, cloth US\$ 25.00), offers some excellent recipes, served up with wit. There are a number of slimmer culinary volumes. First a pair, *Creative Jamaican Cooking & Menus* and *Creative Bahamian Cooking & Menus*, both by Elsa Miller & Leonard "Sonny" Henry (and both Kingston: Kingston Publishers, 1991, paper US\$ 6.95), which share many of their relatively simple recipes. Then three more ambitious cookbooks from The Crossing Press (Freedom CA): *Jerk: Barbecue from Jamaica*, by Helen Willinsky (1990, paper US\$ 10.95), filled with helpful hints for fiery backyard barbecues, *Callaloo, Calypso & Carnival: The Cuisines of Trinidad & Tobago*, by Dave DeWitt & Mary Jane Wilan (1993, paper US\$ 10.95), which mixes travel tips and recipes, and *Caribbean Deserts*, by John DeMers (1992, paper n.p.), whose author knows his sweets, from street vendors to hotel kitchens – we're hoping our fruit ripens before Christmas so we can try his "chocolate-glazed soursop cake." Finally, *Cooking with Caribbean Rum*, by Laurel-Ann Morley (London: Macmillan, 1991, paper n.p.), despite its featured ingredient, has that *Family Circle* magazine look and too many glazed and canned pineappled concoctions for our taste.

Three oversized photo books. *Isles of Eden: Life in the Southern Family Islands of the Bahamas*, by Harvey Lloyd (Akron OH: Benjamin, 1991, cloth US\$ 65.00), juxtaposes breathtaking, often-moving images (mainly portraits) with sparse verbal fragments from out-islanders. *Caribbean Camera: A Journey through the Islands*, photos by Oliver Benn and introduction by Lennox Honychurch (London: Macmillan, 1992, cloth £19.95), collects images from here and there, but without any apparent point. *The Black Trans-Atlantic Experience: Street Life and Culture in Ghana, Jamaica, England, and the United States*, by Stephen Marc (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1992, cloth US\$ 49.95), is a rich, multifaceted album by an African American fine-art-oriented documentary photographer.

Literary works that we've received include: a beautiful bilingual edition of the long poem, *The Indies/Les Indes*, by Edouard Glissant (Toronto: GREF, 1992, paper n.p.); an excellent and nicely representative anthology, *Green Cane and Juicy Flotsam: Short Stories by Caribbean Women*, edited

by Carmen C. Esteves & Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991, paper US\$ 11.95); a wonderful celebration of the cultural richness and diversity of Suriname, *Sirito: 50 Surinaamse vertellingen*, compiled by Michiel van Kempen with Jan Bongers (Paramaribo: Kennedy Stichting, 1993, paper n.p.); a new edition of a standard anthology that keeps all the original selections and adds half again as many new ones, *Caribbean Poetry Now*, edited by Stewart Brown (London: Edward Arnold, 1992, paper US\$ 10.95); two original books of Caribbean poetry (both London: New Beacon, 1992, cloth £10.95, paper £5.95), written from opposite sides of the Atlantic, *Examination Centre* by Mervyn Morris and *Eyelets of Truth within Me* by John La Rose; a Belizean novel, *In Times Like These*, by Zee Edgell (Oxford: Heinemann, 1991, paper £4.99), that pivots around the moment of independence but in our view lacks the passion of her earlier *Beka Lamb*; and a collection of important political writings, with a fine introduction by Franklin Knight, *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings 1920-1972*, edited by W. Burghardt Turner & Joyce Moore Turner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, paper £ 16.50).

Literary activity in Martinique has continued apace. French publishers are still refusing to send us review copies, so the following comments are limited to those works we happen to have bought ourselves. Each of the most active local novelists made a contribution this year, some achieving fame and riches as a result. Patrick Chamoiseau won the Prix Goncourt for *Texaco* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992, paper FF 120), an epic covering the last two centuries of Martiniquan history from the perspective of the twentieth-century urban neighborhood in the book's title. Raphaël Confiant won the Casa de las Americas prize for *Ravines du devant-jour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993, paper FF 85), a muscular memoir of his childhood, following on the heels of his Prix Novembre for *Eau de café* (Paris: Grasset, 1991, paper FF 115). Xavier Orville published *Coeur à vie* (Paris: Stock, 1993, FF 98), continuing his highly precious series of fantasies about the island. With *Fenm Dèwó* (Schoelcher, Martinique: Éditions M.G.G., 1993, paper n.p.) Tony Delsham added another to his popular quasi-pulp novels aimed largely at Martiniquan women. *Éloge de la créolité / In Praise of Creoleness* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993, paper, FF 78) is a bi-lingual edition of Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau & Raphaël Confiant's 1989 manifesto; the English text, originally published in the journal *Callaloo*, is filled with malapropisms and errors, but the arrogance and frequent ignorance of the original are faithfully retained. And, saving the best for last, Édouard Glissant has just published *Tout-Monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993, paper, FF 160), a richly-layered, poetic, self-referential novel that, while anchored in Martinique, takes the world as its subject.

Finally, a lavish art catalogue touches our own expertise and merits brief comment: *Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas*, by Robert Farris Thompson (New York: Museum for African Art, 1993, paper US\$ 39.50). A characteristic mixture of visionary, flamboyant prose, insouciant scholarship, inadequate citations, and parachute ethnography, this massive catalogue covers large swaths of the black Atlantic world. It bristles with ideas and images, many of them stimulating and conducive to further historical research. But as RFT once reflectively remarked to us about his work, “Let the others dot the i’s and cross the t’s!” As far as Suriname is concerned, we note here only that Thompson (in an exoticizing move like that of the New York ice-cream executive who made up the Scandinavian-sounding name “Häagen-Dazs” for his product) renames the Ndjuka “Ndjuká”; that he freely uses the periodization of Saramaka art history, which the two of us created after long-term fieldwork, without ever citing the book where it is developed (Price & Price 1980, an omission repeating that in his well-known *Flash of the Spirit*, which also drew significantly on that work); that he places in his exhibit at the Museum for African Art what are labeled “Two Tapanahoni River Flag Altars” (with small photos of the originals in situ), one of which is in fact in the Saramaka capital, many river days removed from the Tapanahoni; and that the latter altar (a “representation” according to one label, an “evocation” according to another) has its cloths hung backwards, its doors opening in the wrong direction, and no space for people to sit, pour libations, or communicate with the ancestors (which is what the original altar is for). Thompson’s claim (p. 129) that a section of the book is designed to “honor Richard Price’s research” is ultimately less than flattering. For much of the scholarship is reminiscent of the classic openwork Saramaka door that Thompson installed in a Yale Art Gallery exhibition twenty-five years ago, backlit, at eye-level, and identified as a window (an architectural feature absent among Saramakas). Like his earlier work, as described in a balanced and detailed review by Arnoldi & Karp (1985)², this ambitious book is “a curious amalgam of insights and unsubstantiated assertions” in which, to bring us back to a culinary metaphor, “the successful [trans-Atlantic] comparisons are the raisins sparsely populating the rice pudding of failed speculation.”

NOTES

1. This end-of-year review continues the tradition of culinary metaphors begun by its predecessors: “Caribbean Pepper-Pot” (*NWIG* 58:89-98), “Callaloo” (*NWIG* 66:95-99), and “Run-down” (*NWIG* 67:101-8).

2. We quote Arnoldi & Karp's original text which they sent us in typescript; the printed version was edited to remove the rice pudding.

REFERENCES

ARNOLDI, MARY JO & IVAN KARP. 1985. Review of *Flash of the Spirit*, in *Art in America* (November):23-27.

DENING, GREG. 1992. *Mr Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

PRICE, SALLY & RICHARD PRICE. 1980. *Afro-American Arts of the Suriname Rain Forest*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

RICHARD & SALLY PRICE
Anse Chaudière
97217 Anses d'Arlet, Martinique