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Anne W. Gulick. *Literature, Law, and Rhetorical Performance in the Anticolonial Atlantic.* Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2016. xi + 258 pp. $34.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8142-5213-0.

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Anne W. Gulick's *Literature, Law, and Rhetorical Performance in the Anticolonial Atlantic* is a very important work which explores the paradox that Pan-African postcolonial states and intellectuals have experienced since the early nineteenth century. The quandary lies in the fact that such states and scholars freed themselves from their previous colonial oppressors only to become confined by the legal and intellectual legacies of their former imperial subjugators. Gulick explains one of the main causes of this ambiguity: "The legal texts and institutions that helped grant decolonized nations their political autonomy were usually crafted by a small elite in conjunction with the country's former rulers, and often did little to reconfigure colonial economic and political power relations" (p. 1). Gulick's thesis statement is pertinent since, whether they are in Africa or in the Caribbean, postcolonial nations continue to experience both legal duality and contingency. For instance, as Gulick points out, "law has served both emancipatory and oppressive functions in Africa and the Caribbean, offering newly independent states and their citizens the means of asserting political legibility while also reinforcing colonial structures of rules and fostering new forms of economic and political dependency in a decolonized, but hardly postcolonial, world" (pp. 1-2). To understand the seriousness of the predicament that Gulick describes, one has to wonder why, for example, Haiti is still suffering from dire economic, social, and political conflicts although it was the first modern independent black nation. Moreover, this is the country that, as Gulick argues, provided through its independence movement "an alternative vision of the meaning of legal authorship and authority not just for Haiti but also for the postcolonial international community yet to come" (p. 17). Yet it is shocking to see that Haiti, which is a nation that has contributed so much to the fundamental importance of basic democratic freedom and modernity, as evidenced in Toussaint L'Ouverture's and Jean-Jacques Dessalines's republican victories over French imperialism, became after 1804 a postcolonial nation that did not completely sever itself from the legal traditions of its previous oppressor. As Gulick writes, "the challenge Haiti faces in the present is an anticolonial challenge of the sort that Frantz Fanon would describe 150 years later in ***The Wretched of the Earth*** [1961]" (pp. 26-27). There lies the strongest part of Gulick's book, which is its articulation of a problem that formerly colonized blacks are still unable to resolve. This problem is that black liberation movements become extremely weakened when they are co-opted by the former or current oppressors and when their elites' postcolonial vi-

sions and minds are modeled after those of the previous imperial powers.

Yet Haiti's past revolutionary movement was and remains relevant since it provided the legal and rhetorical performance that has empowered anticolonial resistance in black African and Atlantic cultures since the 1960s. Yet this revolutionary consciousness was often inspired by what Gulick calls "First World law's texts," which includes legal or intellectual traditions that Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Hannah Arendt, and other thinkers have provided in defense of poor and oppressed people (pp. 48-49). According to Gulick, these figures' doctrines especially influenced the black Trinidadian scholar C. L. R. James to develop and inspire "a romance of revolutionary rhetorical performance" that has endured in the Atlantic world, enabling blacks to demand their rights in both colonial and postcolonial contexts (p. 49). This is an excellent argument since it reveals how black transnationalism and the Negritude movement to which it gave birth were forms of Atlantic revolutions. By perceiving Negritude and especially Aimé Césaire's classical book-length poem ***Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*** (***Notebook/Journal of a Return to My Native Land***), as a pivotal moment in these revolutions, Gulick writes the Caribbean into a history in which it has not been sufficiently studied.

Yet, as Gulick suggests, black intellectuals such as James and Césaire allowed the Caribbean to have a strong presence in the study of Atlantic revolutions. First, according to Gulick, James and Césaire wanted to help blacks gain a freedom that Western-inspired legal traditions were not likely to provide them. Doubting the League of Nations' and the United Nations' ability "to address the racial and economic violence carried out by empire and capitalism" and "the political and economic structures these institutions were of course designed to uphold," James, Gulick argues, "was deeply invested in imagining alternative modes of political organization and participation, and how new political communities might form and assert their authority through revolutionary means" (pp. 48-49). Césaire echoed a similar weariness toward Western-based legal institutions since he found strength in Negritude as a means to provide alienated communities of African descent the global human rights traditions to which L'Ouverture and other black revolutionaries had contributed. In this sense, Gulick interprets Césaire's ***Cahier*** "as a radical supplement to the Universal Declaration, a necessary mode of imagining —and performatively iterating—global justice through an engaged internationalist politics at the moment of the birth of a universal human rights movement riddled with conservative and depoliticizing tendencies" (p. 79).

Another strength of Gulick's book is its comparisons of African forms of decolonization movements. Without delving into the whole history of such forms, Gulick, however, reveals that constitutions of a few African nations were similar in their urgent needs to be different from those of their colonial oppressors. Gulick shows the independent nations' constant efforts to make their foundational and legal texts be free from the ideologies of their former imperial hegemonies. Citing examples of Kenya and Algeria where "postcolonial constitutions were discarded and replaced with new, dramatically different constitutions within a short period of time," Gulick writes: "Africa did not take long after independence to start looking for constitutional forms better suited to the continent" (pp. 153-154).

The plight of blacks in South Africa was not dissimilar to the plight of other formerly colonized people. First, during and after their fights against apartheid, South African blacks and other oppressed people had to consider accommodating the democratic conception of resistance as a movement necessitating cross-racial alliances. The Freedom Charter provided oppressed South Africans the legal and ideological framework that made such alliances possible. According to Gulick,

"the Charter—and the Congress of the People, the mass meeting at which the document was formally approved and endorsed in 1955—solidified the anti-apartheid movement as a mass resistance struggle dependent on solidarity across racial, ethnic, and ideological lines." It might be possible to see this cross-racial and ethnic solidarity as limited since, as Gulick points out, "the text's profession of racial inclusivity alienated some of the ANC's [African National Congress] more committed Africanists, who would go on in 1958 to form the Pan Africanist Congress" (p. 122). Yet cross-racial and cross-ethnic alliances remained vital in the anti-apartheid struggles, since, as evidenced in 1994, they were part of the democratic and universalist ideologies that allowed Nelson Mandela and his supporters to positively change the course of South Africa's history. As Gulick also suggests, South Africa's experiment confirms that "revolution's end goal, as the work of James and Césaire attests, cannot be reduced to the constitution of a new legal regime; the real work of revolution lies in the cultivation of a dynamic and radically democratic political community, one equipped to continually reconstitute the nation in the present" (p. 123).

Additionally, Gulick's book examines connections that most scholars of black studies assume exist but often fail to explore. These links include those between the Kenyan writer and critic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and the Martinican poet, novelist, and essayist Edouard Glissant. First, Gulick opens up new avenues for scholarship in black Atlantic studies by lamenting the limited work on the relations between such kinds of black Anglophone and Francophone intellectuals. She states: "The long-standing and quite formidable disciplinary divide between francophone and anglophone literature means that as of Glissant's death in 2011 these two writers had never been in contact, nor had they ever referenced one another in their work." Breaking tradition, Gulick establishes strong connections between Ngũgĩ and Glissant, emphasizing that "both set out to interrogate the depths of the impact of colonialism on culture. Both are prominent theorists of language in postcolonial contexts, heavily influenced by an earlier generation of black internationalist anticolonial thinkers such as Césaire and Fanon.... Most importantly, both champion what I am calling radical multilingualism, a politics of linguistic diversity for the postcolonial world that is also an aesthetics" (p. 189). Through such powerful linkages and assertions, Gulick opens us space for further studies of the relationships between black Anglophone and Francophone intellectuals. Such inquiries will invigorate black Atlantic studies and show the pivotal role that Africa and its parental cultures in the New World have played in the development of ideas of universal freedom that are often perceived as mainly white, Western, and European.

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