

mensely rich, wide-ranging account (except for two insightful pages on Jean Rhys's last novel). Are women to be understood as altogether exempt from the changing constructions of Englishness over two centuries? What are the costs of such an occlusion? How might gender considerations enrich the readings of the discursive or material texts that are discussed? Some discussion of nineteenth-century English women's travel writings (Emily Eden, Mary Kingsley) or twentieth-century fiction (Woolf, Mansfield) might have been apt, as would some justification of why these particular six male writers were chosen. My second concern is that while *Out of Place* most valuably draws attention to how place was central to the construction of English identities, it omits a consideration of the interplay between discourses of place and race in the period that it charts. If, as Baucom concedes in the introduction, the idea of race as a determinant of identity coexisted with the localist one even in the nineteenth century (or perhaps even predominated, as Robert Young's work suggests), and if race became more important than place after postcolonial immigration to the metropolis, then a clearer account throughout the book of these two concurrent ways of defining identity might be more enlightening.

Such caveats apart, *Out of Place* is nonetheless an astonishing feat — for its creative and important argument, subtle readings, breadth of reference and research, historical grounding, judicious critiques of earlier critics, imaginative use of theory, and polish and elegance of each sentence, unhampered by the mechanistic jargon or clutter that frequently beleaguers contemporary academic prose. It should prove — substantively, methodologically and stylistically — a valuable and timely model for contemporary postcolonial scholarship.

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Kwame Dawes. *Natural Mysticism: Towards a New Reggae Aesthetic*. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1999. Pp. 280. £12.99.

Reggae is one of the most influential musical forms in the Caribbean Basin, both because of the way it speaks to a specific cultural, economic, and political history, and because of the way it has framed the challenge of cultural identity in what is popular in the international

public sphere. Defining an origin for reggae and indeed characterizing the depth of its influence have always been difficult tasks, however, because its aesthetic provenance has roots in several narrative and musical traditions. The standard view is to read reggae as primarily a Jamaican phenomenon, consisting of protest song and rhythms that developed in the 1960s as part of a Black Nationalist discourse. Thanks to works like *Natural Mysticism* by Kwame Dawes, a richer, more complex sense of reggae aesthetics is emerging that retains the seed of this origin, but stretches its purview in useful ways.

For Dawes, reggae represents a deeply-felt cultural experience and much of *Natural Mysticism* is in the form of memoir rather than in cultural exegesis. Personally, I find this approach refreshing since it eschews the rather staid academic jargon of authenticity for the affective embrace of the music that is the book's touchstone. This is, however, a difficult gambit in music criticism and cultural history as Dawes himself acknowledges in his suggestion that we read his work with a musical accompaniment. Writing about reggae always measures a certain insufficiency in language itself that constantly requires the objective correlative of music to sustain its veracity. Perhaps the ideal reggae book would be a kind of "version" or even "re-version" in that the words would be a dub of the music that inspires them: they would trace the absence of sound by beating it out in the "dread riddim" of language itself. Of course, the reference here is to dub poetry and it is somewhat ironic that Dawes singles out dub poetry for criticism as a "branch" of reggae in contrast to the innovative styles of deejay talkover, for it is the rhythm-filled language of dub that allows one to glimpse or hear the variegations of reggae on a page. To say, for instance, that dub poetry is limited by the back-beat rhythm of reggae is to underestimate seriously the range of articulation in its form, as a cursory reading of, say, Linton Kwesi Johnson's "Two Sides of Silence" or Michael Smith's "Me Cyaan Believe It" would underline.

Where Dawes' book is obviously at its strongest is in elaborating the vibrant multiplicity of reggae for everyday life and forms of identity. In his nuanced sense of diasporic postcolonial subjectivity (which geographically moves from Ghana to England to Jamaica to the United States, yet simultaneously evokes "crossings" in other modes and directions, from the sedimented history of the Middle Passage to the ideology of return in Rastafari), Dawes suggests that reggae provides an expressive aesthetics, in music, in poetry, in fiction, and indeed in cultural criticism, that exists as a moving or mobile archive of the possible in Caribbean identity. Whether one agrees or not with his assessment of the reggae lyric as a literary model, the cultural intervention of Dawes' book is its sensitivity to the quotidian influence of Marley, or Burning Spear, or Lee "Scratch" Perry that is a work in progress in contemporary literary and cultural studies.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in Dawes' book is in separating the places where he elaborates a more general aesthetic provenance for reggae from those that are the subjective components of his own poetics (he is an accomplished poet, and the text features several of his poems). Given the subtlety of, for example, Bob Marley's oeuvre (Dawes' opening discussion of "Natural Mystic" captures this wonderfully) there are parts of the book where Dawes is much too eager to shuffle himself in with the reggae standouts at the expense of a sustained reading of other people's work (his own index entry is second only in length to that for "reggae" itself). Indeed, one could argue that ultimately Dawes' intensely personal attachment to reggae occludes the value of *Natural Mysticism* as a reference tool on Caribbean aesthetics (it has neither the research range of Mulvaney's *Rastafari and Reggae*, nor the polemical innovativeness of Brathwaite's *History of the Voice*). For instance, while the Pan-Africanist consciousness raising of reggae cannot be denied, it is unclear to me whether Dawes' rather awkward, and frankly masculinist, rendering of the erotic in reggae should stand as a defining topos (surely the women writers he mentions deserve greater space?), or, in another example, whether the mere insistence on reggae's "sheer beauty" proves the case. There is also some sloppy editing (to include *The Arabian Nights* in a list of children's fiction "almost entirely about white children" dilutes the point, unless one wants to acknowledge the collusion of Arabs in African slave trading in the production of a similar tradition of "white mythology", which is another albeit interesting argument). And then there is the question of the reach of "Caribbean" in this aesthetic that, for obvious reasons, elides the tremendous musical and literary traditions of the Hispanic or Francophone Caribbean islands and therefore has no space for the powerful aesthetic statements of, for instance, Benitez-Rojo or Glissant.

Yet these are small points and should not detract from the prescience of Dawes' work, or indeed the publishing efforts of Peepal Tree in general. If one takes seriously Dawes' conclusion that he views this effort as part of a dialogue on Caribbeanness and Caribbean culture, then *Natural Mysticism* succeeds admirably in its aims. In the spirit of call and response, its dialogue must now be enjoined.

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Michael Rothberg. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis and London: U of Minnesota P, 2000. Pp. xi, 323. \$19.95 pb.

On the cover of Michael Rothberg's *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* is a drawing by Art Spiegelman. The drawing, "Saying Goodbye to *Maus*," appears twice, once as a small black and white framed image; the second image serves as a partial, enlarged, and coloured background. The cover design points to what Rothberg identifies as the "question at the heart of this book" (1), a question which is really a double question: how do we comprehend the Holocaust, and what is the relationship between that comprehension and contemporary culture? In the drawing, Spiegelman represents his comic book protagonist, Artie, as a mouse. Standing behind Artie looms a smiling Disney Mickey Mouse; in front of Artie, held in his human hands, is a more realistically drawn mouse. What is puzzling in this drawing is not just the representational status and relationship between the three mice figures, but how we recognize any of them as mice. As Rothberg points out, the third mouse may well be a rat, and Artie, the survivor's son drawn as mouse, despite his stylized mouse facial features, wears human clothes and cradles the mouse/rat with human hands. While a naïve viewer, ignorant of the high value placed on *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* in recent postmodern discussions of Holocaust representation, might wonder at the absence of any Holocaust markers in the drawing, to Rothberg the absence is itself key to the problem of representation that *Traumatic Realism* explores:

This image provides an allegory of the contradictory position of the post-Holocaust artist — an artist who produces formally experimental works about genocide for the smiling, two-dimensional face of the entertainment industry, but everywhere confronts the detritus of the real. (2)

It is not just the uncertainty regarding genre (Spiegelman's well-known objection when *The New York Times* placed *Maus* on its fiction list) that attracts Rothberg's interest.<sup>1</sup> Rothberg uses the drawing from *Maus* to argue persuasively for the need to reflect on the modes of representation in all approaches to the Holocaust, to insist that whatever advantages are gained by studying the Holocaust in isolation, such study can also provide insight into broader cultural questions, i.e., "a more general contemporary fascination with trauma, catastrophe, the fragility of memory, and the persistence of ethnic identity" (3). Wanting to