

New York—but sometimes she relies excessively on personal experience and anecdotes. In focusing on “whiter” middle-class women, this book highlights class and racial dimensions that are often left underexplored in literature on Brazil and eroticism. Despite their class and race status in Brazil, once in the United States, the Brazilian dancers are seen “as sexualized subjects within a colonial framework” (13). However, this book could have benefited greatly from more of a cross-class analysis. For instance, when I read the all-too-brief mention of Janice, a Brazilian dancer from a working class background, who was virtually ignored by the middle-class Brazilian women, I wanted more. Exploring the diversity of class experiences could have enriched this book. Moreover, some of Maia’s arguments run the risk of assuming that issues like agency and choice are the exclusive domain of middle-class women. For instance, she argues that the public debate that “links migrant sex workers and human trafficking, poverty, and oppression,” did not apply to the middle-income women who chose to work as dancers because they saw domestic work as “demeaning to their class status” (9). Working class women may also choose, or not choose, sexual labor over other forms of labor that they may find demeaning for reasons either similar or quite different from those put forth by their wealthier peers.

Maia’s prose is captivating and I enjoyed her account, often finding myself eager to learn more about the complex lives of her interlocutors. However, the number of chapters and parts seemed unwieldy and cumbersome (three parts and eight chapters besides the Introduction, Conclusion, and a pre-chapter introducing the women). Additionally, some of the subsections in chapters were too short and choppy—one even consisted of a one-

paragraph anecdote (93). Nonetheless, Maia has dispelled the one-dimensional images of Brazilian women who work as erotic dancers abroad. She astutely critiques the tendency of literature to reduce immigrants “to a sphere of work, survival, and loss” that fails to “account for their desires, ambiguities, and dilemmas” (194). Moreover, she may surprise many readers by pointing out the agency of Latin American erotic dancers in New York and noting that simplistic arguments about “trafficking” or poverty and political economic “rationality” fail to capture the nuances, or even the general contours, of the global trade in erotic desire. For all these reasons, Maia’s ethnography would be an excellent addition to undergraduate courses on Migration, Transnationalism, Women’s/Gender/Sexuality Studies, and Cultural Anthropology. Yet it also has the necessary rigor to appeal to graduate students and specialists as well.

Black Women against the Land Grab: The Fight for Racial Justice in Brazil. *Keisha-Khan Y. Perry*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 224 pp.

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Black Women Against the Land Grab is a careful ethnography of land tenure, displacement, gentrification, racism, and gender in Salvador, Bahia. Perry’s case study and fieldwork are situated at the theoretical and methodological interface between black feminist thought, the politics of Brazilian racism, diasporic and globalized manifestations of blackness, and activist anthropology. The account begins with a racial encounter that resonates throughout the volume: one in which the very presence of black women

in society, their right to dwell upon land that they have occupied for decades, and indeed to be present and visible in Bahian society is interrogated and eyed with suspicion. In this interaction, the Brazilian state, regional and local governments, real estate developers, businesses, banks, buses, financial institutions, and even the Brazilian Navy, challenge the women of the Salvador neighborhood of Gamboa de Baixo in their struggle to assert rights of title and tenure over their land and dwellings.

Perry locates the friction between residents of Gamboa de Baixo, governmental agencies charged with urban planning in Salvador, and property developers within the ongoing history of displacement and forced eviction of black communities from sought-after real estate to the peripheries of Salvador's suburbs and surrounding environs. Moreover, Perry places these events within broadly nationwide and global patterns of resettlement and displacement of the poor in the face of urban expansion and gentrification of previously undervalued neighborhoods. Perry accomplishes this by framing the agency of the black women activists of Gamboa de Baixo as grassroots leaders who, lacking the political, legal, or financial resources to combat state-sponsored urban redevelopment, have turned to organizing, education and, at times, active resistance. The women leaders of Gamboa de Baixo come together in Perry's ethnography to fight a steady pattern of displacement and eviction from their community by property developers and government. Such intrusions by the state and by business are couched in the language of modernization and the valorization of black and Afro-Brazilian culture that frequently entails the displacement of people. Through their opposition, Perry asserts that the women leaders of

Gamboa de Baixo are rewriting the history of black displacement in Brazil and are ultimately gaining political power for themselves and for other communities throughout the African diaspora. Moreover, this power is rooted not in acceptance or celebration of folklorized culture but in direct, emphatic opposition to a racism that seeks to displace black people—spatially, physically and, ultimately, epistemologically—by rerouting their presence into diffuse, ambiguous and, according to Perry, meaningless racial subtleties that do little more than reinforce white superiority.

From the onset, Perry seeks to do more than simply refute arguments about the construction of race in Brazil as a gradient of color categories related to the “myth” of racial democracy. Rather, she starts with the assertion that blackness is a clear-cut racial category that ultimately precludes gradients. That is, the unmistakable truth about race in 21st century Brazil is that black people—on the whole—are explicitly conscious of a black racial category and articulate opposition and resistance to racist oppression within the context of a de facto racial binary. While this is increasingly true for many black movements in Brazil, Perry herself notes that some in the community of Gamboa de Baixo do not agree with the strategies and tactics of their grassroots leaders or with tactics of active, physical resistance against a violent state and racist police force. Here Perry highlights the point that activist social movements structured around issues of race and strategies for combating racism are rarely monolithic in their treatment of racialized culture and ethnic tradition. Regrettably however, this important point is largely unelaborated in *Black Women Against the Land Grab*.

Perry seeks to place the contestations between her grassroots leaders and the state within an approach to urban development in which access to work, water, and a very place to live are restructured as a consequence of a neoliberal reorganization of property and space. As Perry describes, this is accomplished through the building of walls to block off the neighborhood of Gamboa de Baixo from newer, more affluent communities, through a vocabulary used by urban planners that conflates and euphemizes race with issues of hygiene and sanitation, and through an array of other strategies that seek to place residents of historically black communities in a subordinate and subjugated position.

Beyond issues of survival and the quotidian realities of life in an impoverished urban neighborhood, the true challenge faced by Perry's activists involves making their presence on the land, on the uncertain political and economic terrain of urban redevelopment and, ultimately, as black people in Bahia, felt and recognized by stakeholders both within and without their community. Perry engages this challenge by documenting the ways in which different community leaders strategize and organize protest; how they dialogue with and enfold local politicians into their activities; the coordination, research, and sharing of data that occurs with other community groups in Salvador; and also how they negotiate disagreement and alternative strategies for resistance offered by different constituencies within their community.

Perry asserts that her ethnography explicitly engages the structural racism and global relationships of power and domination that course through the African diaspora. To be sure, her research has generated a convincing and meticulously

researched ethnographic account of precisely these patterns—within the Brazilian context. However, beyond the obvious connections with issues of racism in the United States, this assertion could be augmented by greater reference to the diverse, and frequently multichanneled, ways in which communities interact with the cultures of the broader African diaspora and of Africa.

Perry emphasizes the singular character of black racial consciousness among Afro-Brazilian communities and the black activists of Gamboa de Baixo. In so doing, she must necessarily elide the diverse cultural forms rooted in the varied cultures of black Bahia, Brazil and, ultimately, the African continent. Of course, this is part and parcel of Perry's stated intent. And the sensitivity and detail in the ethnography and the attention paid to activists' voices goes some distance in convincing the reader of the appropriateness of such an approach. Indeed, this decision aligns with the author's insistence that the valorization of varied forms of Afro-Brazilian culture is more a product of state-sanctioned reactions to the existence of racism and cultural diversity than an acknowledgment of the right of black people to be present within the political and territorial space of Brazilian society.

Perry evokes the importance of the ocean and of water to African cosmologies, the women of Gamboa de Baixo, and to other women in Salvador's black communities who actively engage in Afro-Brazilian religious forms. This is asserted not in the idiom of Afro-Brazilian identity, but rather in the context of a unifying experience of blackness and in the experiences of a community facing the violence and domination of a racist settler society. Again, such an approach

may minimize the diversity of the experience. Moreover, denying the presence of “colorism” or Brazilian racial gradations need not diminish the presence of multiple expressions—at times compatible and unified, at times divergent—of blackness in Brazil. While such a denial may serve to unify the approach to race and blackness among the women who stand against the land grab, it would seem to be somewhat incompatible with Perry’s stated goal of understanding antiracist movements across the African diaspora.

Whatever its theoretical and methodological implications, Perry’s approach to race in Brazil reflects a growing sentiment among many community leaders in Salvador. Gamboa’s grassroots activists seek actively to cast off the racial ambiguity of the past and to embrace a binary construction of blackness and race as a direct response to Brazilian racism. Such a move is a fascinating example of the malleability and historical specificity of racial politics and their associated identities. And it is also something made abundantly clear in the superior ethnography in Perry’s work, which represents urban ethnography at its best. Her account is a compelling analysis of issues of race and gender in Brazil. Furthermore, it is a stimulating and well-researched treatment of racialized space that should be of great interest to all scholars working on issues of land and water rights, forced displacement, and gendered, antiracist activism.

Sex Tourism in Bahia: Ambiguous Entanglements. Erica Williams, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013. 207 pp.

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Early on in *Sex Tourism in Bahia*, readers meet Pérola, a sex worker activist who works for the Association of Prostitutes of Bahia (Aprosbá). Pérola has a wife, but she also talks about “the Dutchman,” a gringo client with whom she established a relationship. Until his death, this foreign man had lavished attention and opportunities on Pérola and her son. Erica Williams’ decision to open her monograph—the first book-length ethnography of sex tourism in Brazil—with Pérola’s story is a deft move in that it opens up for readers the complicated affects and tensions that comprise the “ambiguous entanglements” of her text’s subtitle.

Williams’ project is an ambitious one, in which she sets few limits or parameters. She focuses mostly on female sex workers, but male sex workers appear more than occasionally. So too do third party purveyors who blur the categorical boundaries of pimping. Several clients, both straight and gay, also make their way onto the pages of Williams’ complex account. This carries readers into the lives of a rich and illustrative cast who introduce many intriguing ideas. That said, some readers may wish to know a bit more about these entertaining and yet briefly revealed interlocutors. For example, Bel, a light-skinned *morena* migrant sex worker with bleached blonde hair, works almost exclusively with Filipino seafarers because, as she says: “They pay well and treat me well . . . The ships leave and I cry. They are very caring” (128). Bel has learned Tagalog and English to communicate with these visitors, and has a child by one of them. Bel’s story disrupts common assumptions about sex work, travel, and race in Bahia. It may also surprise in relation to ideas about who purchases sex, and from whom, in Brazil’s northeast. But readers do not