

deserves to be read by both specialists and non-specialists. Drake provides an excellent—and in this case, a highly original—interpretation of the postwar situation, one that argues that the colonists' position under royal government was analogous to the Indians' prewar position under Puritan rule. With the exception of his discussion of the Nipmucks, he carefully analyzes the competing interests and contrasting situations of specific Indian groups. Finally, he shows that the older historiography was wrong to see King Philip's War as the inevitable conflict of two racially polarized societies that had long been on a collision course to armed confrontation.

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DONNA MERWICK. *Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999. Pp. xvi, 281. \$35.00.

In Donna Merwick's marvelously told story, the "insignificant" Adriaen Janse van Ipendam's very ordinary life in seventeenth-century Albany is tied inextricably to the very large transfer of power from Dutch to English rule in the colony (p. 233). Successively a schoolmaster, local court secretary, and self-taught notary, Janse eked out a living in the rough frontier by writing down the last wills of neighbors, taking testimony about the small debts of ordinary local people, and occasionally writing powers of attorney for merchants conducting business an ocean away. Most notaries—whether in Europe or the colonies—were "unremarkable" in social status (p. 127) but essential to the life of corporate cities, the smooth functioning of merchants who traveled widely, and ceaseless transfers of property. Janse's "achievement has been to have served well, year after year, in all the small particulars of being a low-level civil servant" (p. 27). He was the "community's tool for ordering the real world" (p. 186).

But, ineluctably, "the particularities of Janse's life were being enfolded by the generalities" (p. 233) of the transition to English rule in the colony after 1664. That transition involved creating a strong imperial power over all of England's dominion abroad, reconfiguring New World land titles, and replacing the negotiating powers of individual merchants and commercial companies with the power of the imperial state. Merwick's purpose is not to explain how this transition actually took place but rather to show its traumatic effects on people whose livelihoods and cultural identities contradicted English imperial intentions: people like Janse, who became increasingly professionally useless when English governors changed the rules by which his community had lived during the Dutch period and altered Janse's role in creating its "memory" (p. 180). Juries and trained lawyers eventually replaced notaries, the common law replaced the "lex mercatoria" of merchants, and the performances of civil servants altered noticeably.

Ironically, for a man whose chosen occupation was to write down the affairs of neighbors, there is a very short paper trail of Janse's notary activities and almost no record of his life among Albany's families. But Merwick keeps him in the forefront of her narrative in two ways. One is by conjecturing about Janse's life through the thoughts and actions of others in his community, his colony, and his home country. The other is to extrapolate from what we know about Dutch inheritance customs, legal practices, commerce, beliefs about death and suicide, commercial practices, and other elements of Dutch social and cultural tradition to Janse's colonial life. We are reminded frequently of the stark contrasts between the poor frontier town of Albany and cosmopolitan Dutch cities, as well as of their abiding connections to each other. As Merwick instructs us about how notaries produce documents, what they must know about the law, how they learn to comport themselves in public and build their reputations for accuracy and honor, we rarely forget that self-made, low-level civil servants on the colonial frontier—men like Janse—were vital components of a far larger imperial system. Some could transfer these roles from the Dutch to the English after 1664; Janse could (or did) not.

Merwick writes her tale primarily in the present tense rather than in "historical time," a choice that will probably irk some scholars. She has also chosen not to footnote her narrative but instead to provide discursive commentary at the end of the book, which is better at elaborating on generalizations than at linking evidence to precise sources of information. Moreover, Merwick often speculates about the internal thoughts and motivations of Janse, powerful landowners, or imperial governors, when in fact there are no proofs for these musings, however entertaining (and even feasible) they often are. The line between history and fiction will, upon some scholars' close scrutiny, appear to be blurred in Merwick's study. Even more important, Albany's fur and grain trades, relationships with foreign merchant communities, links to transatlantic family networks, and intrigues of war are only shadowy foundations for the local drama prominent in this study. Instead, it is Merwick's conviction that by recreating the particular details of Janse's everyday world we will comprehend the hugeness of the transition from Dutch to English rule.

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PHILIP D. MORGAN. *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va. 1998. Pp. xxiv, 703. Cloth \$49.95, paper \$21.95.

Building on an extraordinary scholarly legacy, a prodigious amount of primary research, and a hallowed set of historiographical problems, Philip D. Morgan

has written a book that is destined to be read and reargued for some time to come.

In the first of the book's three parts, Morgan outlines the "contours" of black life in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake and lowcountry: environment; crop regime; rate of slave reproduction; pattern of slave importation; density of white settlement. Combining a nested set of scales of analysis—environmental, economic, everyday—this part of the book represents Morgan's work at its substantial best. In the temperate Chesapeake, tobacco thrived. Because tobacco presented few barriers to entry and offered few economies of scale, most Chesapeake slaves lived on relatively small farms in close proximity to their owners and other whites. And because tobacco required a great deal of care, those slaves were minutely supervised and worked in gangs, usually from sunup to sundown. By 1720, they were reproducing themselves and by the time of the Revolution, Virginia slaveholders had virtually stopped importing African slaves. Cut off from Africa, closely monitored, and surrounded by whites, Chesapeake slaves were, by the end of the eighteenth century, "thoroughly assimilated," dependent on their owners for their material culture, their dress, their language, and their customs.

Things in South Carolina were different. The tropical climate and long growing season of the lowcountry were ideal for rice cultivation. The tremendous investment it took to clear, drain, and ditch South Carolina's swamplands favored those who could make a large initial investment, and rice cultivation offered substantial economies of scale. Consequently, lowcountry slaves generally lived on plantations larger than those in the Chesapeake and they saw a good deal less of white people; the majority of the inhabitants of South Carolina were black as early as 1700, and by 1790 many areas were eighty percent black. Rice was a hardy crop that did not require close supervision, and South Carolina slaveholders generally "tasked" their slaves, assigning them a set amount of work for a week and allowing them the rest of their time to themselves. Slaves often used this time to cultivate food which they used to support themselves and sometime sold, thus accumulating a small "peculium" of their own property. Slaves in the lowcountry lived harder than those in the Chesapeake: they were often ill, undernourished, and brutally punished. Although the birthrate among lowcountry slaves was comparable to that in the Chesapeake, lowcountry slaves died at a much higher rate, and South Carolina slaveholders remained enthusiastic importers of African slaves up to (and in some cases after) the closing of the African slave trade in 1808. In contrast to their Chesapeake counterparts, lowcountry slaves were relatively autonomous and "African": they wore few European clothes, slept in African-styled houses, provided their own food, shared a culture full of African elements, and spoke a dialect (Gullah) that was unintelligible to many whites. The differences between slavery in the Chesapeake and the lowcountry, Morgan concludes, illustrate the tragic

paradox of New World slavery: "an inverse relationship between material conditions and communal autonomy" (p. 665).

Having outlined the material context of slave life in the Chesapeake and Lowcountry, Morgan, in the second part of the book, overlays an account of the structured interchanges between blacks and whites. Over the course of the eighteenth century, Morgan argues, the relations between slaveholders and slaves shifted from an "austere patriarchy," characterized by often shocking brutality and an ideological emphasis on masters' obligations and slaves' duties, to a "mellow paternalism," more concerned with generosity, kindness, and the mutual attachment of masters and slaves. This broad transition occurred earlier and more powerfully in the Chesapeake, where slaveholders had more contact with their more assimilated slaves, than it did in the lowcountry. Likewise, over the course of the century, the relations between non-slaveholding whites and slaves changed from the interracial proximity and occasional cooperation of the late seventeenth century to the racially inflected antipathies so familiar to historians of the antebellum South. Everywhere in the ideology and behavior of whites, however, Morgan finds eddies and "contradictions"—intimacy *and* antipathy, domination *and* dependence, cruelty *and* tenderness, calculation *and* sentimentality, and on and on—enough of them, perhaps, to constitute a catalog of the complexities of human relations.

In this part of the book, Morgan takes up the extraordinarily important question of the psychological dimension of the experience of enslavement. Morgan frames his argument about slave psychology as a realist critique, part of a broader effort to "deromanticize" black history by considering the vulnerabilities and frailties of enslaved people alongside their communal autonomy, human agency, and consistent resistance. As it appears here, the argument consists of three loosely linked propositions: enslaved people derived "self-esteem" by working alongside whites and being considered valuable in the market; slaves "identified closely with their master" and often felt a good deal of affection for their owners; and "the slave community" was vulnerable to external forces and riven by internal strife. Of these propositions, only the last seems susceptible of easy proof, at least by the evidence offered here. Much of the argument about slaves' psychology is couched in peculiarly doubled constructions such as "rubbing shoulders with whites . . . no doubt increased the self-esteem of some blacks" (p. 173) or "the slave was unlikely to remain oblivious to the compliment" (p. 351). What purports to be a hard-headed and historical account of complexity of slave psychology turns out instead to be a set of projections of right-minded twentieth-century notions of "the self" (liberal individualist, integrationist, work-centered) onto a group of people who could be almost unimaginably complex in their own accounting of the relations between people and their working worlds (providential, magical, animist, separatist). Other ele-

ments of the realist critique seem to ignore the context of the production of the slaveholding sources upon which they are based. Surely, slaveholders' own accounts of the enthusiasm with which their slaves greeted them upon their return from long trips or the fealty their slaves demonstrated by sticking around during the Revolution, fraught as they are with projection, self-deception, and the dissimulating purposes of the slaveholders who scripted them out in letters to their white friends, are not the best sources to use when trying to decide which expressions of affection were tactical and which "too effusive to be explained away" (p. 382). In his effort to explore the psychological dimensions of slavery (or rather, of enslavement), Morgan raises questions of extraordinary importance, questions that press at the outer limits of historians' imaginations and their sources. Unfortunately, in these passages, those questions go begging for answers.

In the final part of the book, Morgan turns from the material determinants and social parameters treated in the first two parts to the social relations, family life, and cultural forms that defined "the black world." Morgan begins with the sometimes contentious relations among African groups in the Americas and the equally vexed relations of Africans as a group with their Creole neighbors. The emergence of a Creole majority, first in the Chesapeake and later in the lowcountry, Morgan argues, "facilitated cohesiveness among slaves" (p. 463). Morgan notes, however, that relations between slaves were shot through with conflict along the axes of age and sex and, especially among those with plans of resistance, were characterized by a good deal of suspicion. From the outset, Morgan's account of "the slave family" emphasizes vulnerability. Noting that slave families were often separated by their owners and that slaves had no "legally sanctioned sexual monopoly" of their partners, Morgan suggests that "coresidential consensual union" (p. 499) might be a better word to describe slave unions than "marriage." Nevertheless, slaves actively struggled to keep up family ties in spite of marriage and family-separating estate settlements and sales. "For the most part," Morgan opines, slaves took marriage and parenting "very seriously" (p. 540). In the book's final chapter, Morgan turns to the cultural forms that helped enslaved people resist "dehumanization." Working his way through a remarkable variety of cultural practices—talking, drumming, singing, dancing, playing, joking, conjuring, poisoning, walking, smiling, glancing, dying—Morgan argues that there was a significant African element to eighteenth-century slave culture, but that various African practices were inevitably mixed with one another and with European cultures so that "creativity and innovation far more than . . . any attachment to an indelible cultural tradition" (p. 594) characterized the lives of Chesapeake and lowcountry slaves.

With a few curious exceptions—the work of Margaret Creel Washington and Daniel C. Littlefield on slavery and slave culture in South Carolina and of

Sylvia Frey on slavery and the American Revolution come to mind—Morgan has seemingly attempted to take up every question that has shaped scholarship on slavery since the time of Ulrich B. Philips. The pages of this book are peopled by vital characters and punctuated by incidents by turns fascinating, disturbing, perplexing, and deeply moving. The sheer diversity of the stories that Morgan tells highlights both the strength and the weakness of what is surely the most comprehensive social history of slavery yet written. And yet, the stories in these pages often seem to transcend the historiographical arguments that knit them together. At this point in the historiography of slavery, it may be less important to establish that slaves in the Americas had a culture (African or otherwise) or felt for their families or "preserved their humanity" than it is to explore the complexities of what those things meant in their everyday lives: how cultural forms were actively used, fought over, and redefined in specific struggles; how patriarchy and family life were practically negotiated over hostile terrain; and how slaves' own thoughts about their place in the natural and supernatural order shaped their daily response to slavery. It is, then, as much for the extraordinary stories he tells as for the scholarly arguments he makes that Morgan is to be commended.

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WOODY HOLTON, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Va. 1999. Pp. xxi, 231. Cloth \$39.95, paper \$15.95.

Much debate has revolved around whether the American Revolution is better understood as a fight for home rule or over who should rule at home. Most recent historians arguing for the latter, neo-progressive interpretation have concentrated on the urban north. Woody Holton seeks to revitalize the neo-progressive view of the coming of the Revolution in Virginia. Virginia might appear to be one of the least promising states for such an interpretation: members of the state's well-entrenched gentry led the revolutionary movement, and at least in conventional narratives of the Revolution they faced mild opposition from other free Virginians. Holton makes a strong case for the influence of subaltern "freedom struggles" (p. xxi) on Virginia gentlemen's efforts to win independence from England, in part by broadening the story of the Revolution to include events too often given short shrift, and in part by altering the terms usually used by progressive historians of the Revolution.

This book is divided into four parts that follow a chronological and thematic narrative. Holton begins with two chapters on Virginians' grievances against the British Empire in which he portrays a colonial culture riven below the surface between the gentry and yeo-