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Karen E. Richman, *Migration and Vodou*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005. 356 pp., 65 b/w photos, notes, bibliography, index. CD included. ISBN 0-8130-2835-3 (cloth), US\$65.00.

Migration and Vodou has much to say about the transformative potential of song and ritual in Haiti and its diaspora. Both ethnographic and historical in scope, this book provides a fascinating look at Haitian transnational networks and the spiritual and familial bonds that help to sustain them. Anthropologist Karen Richman tells a story many readers will find both tragic and inspiring. The tragedy is that many Haitians were compelled to flee economic and political hardship in their home country only to be held in prisons or detention centers without access to legal counsel, sent back home to greater social misery, or unmercifully exploited as low-wage laborers in the United States. Many of these men and women risked their lives in 15-foot sailboats (*kanòt*), embarking on a treacherous, 700-mile sea voyage from Haiti to South Florida. What is inspiring is the fact that many of the Haitians who befriended Karen Richman not only survived such a dangerous journey, but also mustered the courage and creativity to meet the

economic and spiritual challenges they face within hostile North American climates. A bulk of Haitian transnational migrants arrived during what the author refers to as the “Canter exodus” from 1979-1982 (p. 65). Canter (*kanntè*) is the name of a powerful truck motor, and it is a term that “signifies power, speed and control—the opposite of the fisherman’s ‘canoes’” (p. 55). This ironic juxtaposition of *kanòt* and *kanntè* is emblematic of the discourses of power, migration, and spirituality which shape the experiences of Haitian workers at home and in the United States. Another source of inspiration, I should add, derives from Richman’s honest and tender portrayal of the Haitians she encountered over approximately two decades, along with the advocacy she has been able to provide during the course of researching and writing *Migration and Vodou*.

Richman’s thick narrative hinges on the contrast between the spiritual forces of “Guinea” (*Ginen*) and “Magic” (*Maji*), which signify two opposing yet mutually reinforcing ethical frameworks. Guinea represents the domestic sphere. It is associated with peasant life at home, veneration of ancestors, and faithful service to inherited spirits (*lwa*), whose *garanti* of protection from mishap is deemed vital to one’s well-being. Peasants who migrate to the United States are also held accountable to the *lwa*, who may withdraw this protection and “deguaranty” a migrant if the latter fail to adequately “feed” the *lwa* through ritual sacrifices (p. 192). The system of reciprocity is such that “protection” is “a *negatively* construed concept. That is, the *lwa* protect the people who ‘serve’ and ‘feast’ them by consenting *not* to chastise them” (p. 189).

Magic, “Guinea’s Other,” represents wage labor characteristic of capitalistic forms of social organization and is viewed by some as a threat to traditional peasant ways of life (p. 17). Among peasants in the Haitian community of Ti Rivyè, where Richman spent a year and a half, finding sustenance through inherited or sharecropped land is a time-honored practice, but “working” for wages incurs a tremendous degree of dishonor. As the author explains, “Wage labor is degrading, and to avoid its extreme stigma, members go outside their communities” when pursuing jobs to support their families (p. 110). Likewise, one would typically go outside of the community to “buy” the services of a professional spiritual practitioner if local solutions to problem seem ineffective. The typical exemplar of a Magic-affiliated worker is the Haitian who leaves home to search for livelihood (*chache lavi*) in the United States. These migrants often find themselves caught in a cruel double bind: They must work within an oppressive system of wage labor in order to send money back home to relatives who, in turn, continue to “feed” themselves along with the spirits. However, the moral ambivalence of Magic renders the migrant’s work abroad open to suspicion of selfish, individualistic ambition. It seems the disdain for wage earning among Haitians at home is projected onto hard-working migrants by the families who nevertheless “eat up” (*manje*) the fruits of those laboring “Over There.” Among those who “serve the spirits,” “Magic,” unlike Guinea, connotes the work of sorcerers, whose traffic in the spiritual realm often involves the buying and selling of spirits known as *pwen*. Often translated as “points” (there is no satisfactory English-language equivalent), *pwen* are also part of a family of indirect signification practices that thrive in many African diasporic communities (p. 17). Over the past decade, creative uses of *pwen* by disempowered Haitians have been discussed by a healthy contingent of scholars (e.g., Averill 1997, Brown 1987, Butler 2005, Dirksen 2006, McAlister 2002). Drawing on Karen Brown’s broad definition of *pwen* as “anything that captures the essence or pith of a complex situation” (Brown 1987: 151-152; Richman p. 15), Richman describes the “pwenification” of people including Ti Chimi and, ultimately, herself, who are “sent” (*voye*), across national boundaries to embody and deliver messages that are “collected” (*ranmase*) by the intended recipients.

Karen Richman explores the dynamics of *pwen* and the complex Guinea-Magic dichotomy through a delightfully vivid account of the life of Haitian transmigrant Pierre Dioguy, known as “Ti Chimi” (“Little Caterpillar”). Ti Chimi survived his Canter Exodus from Haiti in June 1980; and he encounters the author a year later while working at a labor camp in eastern Virginia (pp. 2-3). Like many of the workers at the camp, Ti Chimi is struggling to make ends meet for both himself and a large family left behind in the Haitian countryside. Richman’s description of the relationship between Ti Chimi and his older brother, Se Byen, provides a rich synecdoche for broader transnational process of exchange involving people and expressive culture.

One of the most impressive attributes of *Migration and Vodou* is its incorporation of the eye-witness accounts of Haitian elders, whose oral histories take the form of poetic remembering of yesteryear’s Haiti. The most striking accounts concern the brilliantly ruthless manipulations of wealthy landowner Joseph Lacombe, whose consolidation of peasant lands contributed to “the increasing domination of foreign interest in all sectors of Haitian commerce, the eventual eclipsing of the local entrepreneurs by powerfully connected foreigners, and the ultimate loss of sovereignty to the United States” (pp. 92-93). Richman thus sheds light on an important historical moment at the turn of the twentieth century. The book details Haiti’s socioeconomic transformation from a “reconstituted peasantry,” who acquired land as a means of resistance to the threat of forced re-enslavement, to a society in which land ownership became usurped by transnational corporations and opportunistic loan sharks. This devastating shift both mirrors and precipitates a transition from lay to professional Vodou priests and priestesses. “Today,” Richman asserts, “the priests ‘buy’ their credentials” (p. 121), and this capitalistic turn is seen by many Haitian peasants as a unwanted departure from how things were done in times past, when a democratization of ritual knowledge is understood to have been the norm. Furthermore, as the “perceptions of [foreigners’] expectations reinforced the trends towards codification” (p. 123), “bought” (*achte*) rituals have been recast as “traditional” by those unaware (or unwilling to acknowledge) the relatively recent invention of such approaches to spiritual practice. The increased capitalistic presence, Richman explains, helped to spur the “formalization of new rites of passage” (p. 119), such as the *kanzo* initiation ceremony or rituals to reclaim dead ancestors from “under the water” (*anba dlo*). With regard to ritual history, the author’s personal interviews and field research corroborate the seminal work done by celebrated researchers such as Alfred Métraux and Odette Mennesson-Rigaud.

Migration and Vodou clearly succeeds as a scholarly text. I think it will prove a must-read for anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, and other students of Caribbean expressive culture; and the book’s appeal should extend to those outside of the academy as well. Richman’s writing style makes it easy to become absorbed in the lives of Ti Chimi and his extended family. In particular, the Epilogue is a special treat, as Richman describes her return to Haiti after a seven-year hiatus.

A compact disc is included which contains audio recordings of Haitian Creole cassette-letters sent by Ti Chimi and his older brother, Se Byen. Although this no doubt increases the price of the book, I think it facilitates the reader’s appreciation for the subtly of *pwen* and the affective power of spoken and sung Haitian Creole. Although many readers will not understand the literal meaning of the words, they should nevertheless be able to discern much from the tone and timbre of the voices on the recording. On Track 6, Richman generously shares with us the heart-wrenching cassette-letter she received from Ti Chimi just before his death. While it is perhaps unfortunate that the CD doesn’t include more material, I think its brevity allows and reflects an intimacy between the sender and recipients of the messages contained

on it. I bet Ti Chimi approves. Replete with *Kreyol* translations of the English phrases—or more accurately, *English* translations of words first spoken in *Kreyol—Migration and Vodou* obviously speaks to those fluent enough to benefit from the unarticulated richness of the Haitian language. But it also seems to represent the author's intention to extend her message to the Haitian peasants and transmigrants whose words are contained within. Most poignantly, Karen Richman pays tender tribute to her departed Haitian friend, Ti Chimi, who rightfully serves as the cornerstone of the author's narrative and perhaps continues to send his own *pwen* to all of us from the grave.

Melvin Butler

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Richard K. Wolf, *The Black Cow's Footprint: Time, Space, and Music in the Lives of the Kotas of South India*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006. 352 pp., with 16 pp. of b/w photographs, tables, maps, figures (including musical transcriptions), glossary, notes, bibliography, index. CD included. ISBN 0-252-03116-4 (cloth), US\$85.00.

This book is a welcome addition to the small literature on the musics of Indian communities classified by the Indian government as "tribes" (actually "Scheduled Tribes," or "STs"). Most of this literature consists of articles and book chapters (by Carol Babiracki and Roderic Knight, among others), so a book-length work such as this constitutes an especially important contribution. As so many studies of Indian music have focused on its classical traditions, this book helps fill a lacuna. It is also a highly *musical* ethnography, based on about two and a half years of fieldwork.

The Kotas, numbering about 1500, are one of several tribes who inhabit the Nilgiri Hills in northwest Tamil Nadu. They are reputed to be especially musical, having previously per-