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Haiti and the Americas is a well-written collection of essays that stimulates and enlightens our understanding of Haiti's cultural influence on the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Many of us who study Haiti are aware of the rich body of research on the Haitian Revolution. What the scholars have done in this book is to position the Haitian Revolution as a backdrop to explore new avenues of research not only in history, but also in literature and cultural studies. Pivotal to this project is the premise underscored in the introduction that Haiti is "a crossroads of the Americas" where "art history, film studies, literary analysis, and political theory" intersect (3). The essays in this collection take us through a beautiful and well-documented encounter of Haitian cultural crossroads.

Haiti and the Americas has two major strengths. First, even though the essays discussed in the four chapters that constitute the book are arguably disparate, solid continuities that emphasize the premise of the volume are established throughout. Second, the introduction, nine essays, and afterword offer important insights on modern, but often lesser-known, Haitian works, intellectuals, and trends as well as perspectives on the challenges Haiti faces. Chapter one, entitled "Haiti and Hemispheric Independence," examines the profound impact that Haitian post-revolutionary politics had on the Latin American and Caribbean independence struggles throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the first essay of this section, Sibylle Fischer gives us a greater perspective of the military and social collaboration between Alexandre Pétion, the president of the Haitian Republic, and Simón Bolívar, the Venezuelan military leader regarded as one of the most important figures in the history of Central and South America's struggle for independence from the Spanish Empire. Fischer focuses on the scarce letters Bolívar wrote to Pétion and uses a postcolonial perspective to point out that Haiti was a "safe haven to refugees" swept out by colonial governments as well as a military and financial provider for the insurgents. She convincingly argues that Haiti effectively foregrounded the issue of slave emancipation and put it on the agendas of founders of American republics.

In the second essay, Matthew Casey appropriately highlights the significance of the alliances between Cubans and Haitians. He analyzes cultural networks and political organizations, such as “l’Union Patriotique,” to illustrate Cuba’s and Haiti’s common history and solidarity against U.S. imperialism. He also explores tensions between anti-Haitianism and political activism, and shows how activists circumvented those by incorporating a Pan-Americanism discourse into the tight and inextricable linkage of Cuban and Haitian struggles for independence.

Claiming Haiti as the epicenter of solidarity in the Caribbean, chapter two, “Haiti and Transnational Blackness,” examines the role of Black Haitians’ contributions to a Pan-Africanist critical discourse throughout the Americas. Jeff Karem’s essay focuses on two Haitian intellectuals: Anténor Firmin (1850-1911) and Benito Sylvain, born in 1868 and the author of *Du sort des indigènes dans les colonies d’exploitation*, a book based on his thesis and published in 1901. Karem demonstrates that Firmin’s anthropological and political work, *De l’égalité des races humaines* (1885), was a vital source of inspiration for the emergence of political activism, in particular the organization of the first Pan-African Conference in 1900. The second essay written by David Kilroy shows another side of Black solidarity by analyzing Captain Charles Young’s sojourn in Haiti as the first U.S. military attaché (1904-1907). Rather than just gathering military intelligence on the conditions of the island for U.S. policy toward Haiti, Kilroy notes, Captain Young, born in 1864 near Maysville, Kentucky, and the third African American to graduate from West Point, went beyond his duties and compiled a 294-page monograph on Haitian history, culture, and language. Young saw his career as an opportunity to show his fellow Americans “that racial prejudice was a cancer in American society” (103).

Chapter three, entitled “The U.S. Occupation,” looks at how Haiti continued to be viewed as a courageous and exotic country famous for its country’s revolutionary history, Black consciousness, and religious practices (such as Voodoo), this time within the U.S. American culture. Bethany Aery Clerico’s essay discusses how the first African American fiction writer, Charles Chesnutt, uses Haiti’s history, specifically the Haitian Revolution, in his historical novel *Paul Marchand: Free Man of Color* (written in the 1920s but published in 1998) to explore the local racial conditions in nineteenth-century New Orleans. Clerico shows how Chesnutt seeks to redefine Haiti’s relevance to U.S. racial tensions and prospects while making Haiti’s silenced history visible. In the second essay, Lindsay Twa charts how the U.S. military occupation of Haiti raised popular interest in people of African descent and examines how visual artists engaged with modernist primitivism to represent Black heritage. Twa succeeds in weaving together a contextual artistic analysis of popular images by Austrian American Alexander King and African American Aaron Douglas with her claim that artistic visions representing Haiti “came to dominate and be accepted as ‘authentic’” by the American public (133). Chapter three ends with Nadève Ménard’s essay in which, using a feminist perspective, she deftly constructs a counter-discourse to the stereotypes of Haiti’s culture during U.S.

occupation. The author examines how Haitian female writer Annie Desroy brings the complexities of power and sexual relations between Americans and Haitians into the scope of her novel *Le jong* (1934) to redefine American negative perception of Haiti. Ménard identifies the purpose of the novel to show that “[s]exual liaisons constitute another way of exploring the new and exotic land that Haiti represents for the Americans” (168). She concludes that the stereotypes attributed to Black female characters, such as being “savage” and “unknown,” ultimately come to represent the U.S. occupiers.

Chapter four, entitled “Globalization and Crisis,” concentrates on emerging twenty-first century scholarship on Haiti’s present and more importantly its future. This is the most thought-provoking section of *Haiti and the Americas*. As readers we cannot help but think about the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake and the efforts needed to improve Haiti’s economic and social infrastructures. Simply put, since the devastation of its capital and surrounding cities Haiti has been unable to rebuild public institutions and create jobs. In the first essay of this section, using Asger Leth’s documentary film *Ghosts of Cité Soleil* (2006), Christopher Garland examines Haiti’s desolate state after 2004 when President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was deposed. Central to Garland’s study is the comparison that Leth’s documentary makes of Haiti to the slum Cité Soleil as “the most dangerous place on earth,” which “has come to represent in mainstream Western media all that is wrong with Haiti today: the ineffectiveness of local police, the so-called necessity of foreign military intervention, and the incessant cycle of poverty and violence” (180). Garland’s essay thus explores the preconceived negative representations of Haiti in the documentary’s visual rhetoric. His main concern is that *Ghosts* does not offer an analysis of the political or historical context of the Haitian situation; rather it shows “another crisis in Haiti where foreign intervention is deemed simply necessary” (194). The second essay continues the discussion of a “necessary” U.S. intervention to bring stability to the country. Indeed, it was after the natural disaster of 2010 that a number of international and national figures proposed a “Marshall Plan” to rebuild Haiti modeled on the plan the United States used to help rebuild Europe after World War II. Myriam J. A. Chancy takes to task the proponents of this plan and skillfully outlines the steps Haiti needs to take in order to rebuilt itself and function as an autonomous country. She points out that “if a Marshall Plan were to be created for Haiti, not only would it have to be tailored to provide the small, devastated country with an influx of cash, but it would have to start with a vision, a vision that would reconsider the relationship of the United States and of the global community to Haiti from the historical constitution of the nation as a result of the Haitian Revolution” (207). The catalyst for Haiti’s successful recovery of its independence and sovereignty, according to Chancy, lies in the rebuilding of “education and economic infrastructures” (210). Chancy’s vision for the rebuilding of Haiti shines a light on the new challenges that Haiti faces. One cannot help but feel hopeful that Haiti’s state will improve in the near future. However, we are painfully aware that if a

plan were to be created to reconstruct Haiti, it would take time to come into effect due to the “global entropy” we live in.

Michael Dash’s “Afterword” addresses the way Haiti and Haitians, in particular, need to deal with this “global entropy.” Dash argues that it is by reimagining their Haitian identity – “modern Haitian literature maybe crucial in this regard” – that Haitians will be able to understand and reconstruct their country, an objective that is “as old as the Haitian Revolution” (226-29). Closing thus on a necessary return to the goals of the Haitian Revolution, *Haiti and the Americas* brings the reader back to the centrality of Haiti, at the crossroads of the Americas for over two hundred years, and significantly contributes to the existing scholarship on Haiti by opening up new avenues of research.