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“Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World”

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of the transition from continental expansion to informal global economic empire; my cadets are debating William Appleman Williams in class. But, *Empire as a Way of Life* and *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* notwithstanding, it is hardly clear that the interventions of the Spanish-American War, the World Wars, and the Cold War proceeded from similar motives: There may have been a clarity and cohesion to the motives of continental expansion, particularly once European intervention seemed unlikely, that has been absent in U.S. wars of intervention beyond the North American continent.

Philosophically, *The Dominion of War* is a valuable primer to help general readers think historically. Historiographically and methodologically, it works well until we hit the twentieth century, at which point the situation became even more complex, demanding more contextualization and distinction. Though the authors resolutely avoid preaching or hinting, one cannot avoid reading this book politically, and *The Dominion of War* would make an insightful provocation for ideologically driven policymakers. But “intervention” is a much broader term than “colonization and conflict” or “empires and revolutions.” If some intervention is sometimes justified, as most of us would probably agree, we are debating foreign policy. The authors’ achievement is to place U.S. foreign policy in long-term context, to demonstrate the unpredictability of the consequences when we loose the dogs of war.

SAMUEL WATSON teaches the history of American frontiers at the U.S. Military Academy. He is the editor of *Warfare in the USA, 1784–1861* (London, 2005); his book *Frontier Diplomats*, on the army in the borderlands of the early republic, will be published by the University Press of Kansas in 2009.

Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World. Edited by Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus, and Marcus Rediker. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. Pp. 263. Cloth, \$60.00; Paper, \$24.95.)

Reviewed by Charles R. Foy

As Atlantic history programs continue to proliferate, arguments continue over how best to approach the subject. In a recent forum on Atlantic

history, Alison Games stressed the accumulated experience of European “globetrotters” and these individuals’ cultural assimilation; Philip Stern urged historians to compare connections between colonial empires in Asia and the Atlantic; Paul C. Mapp argued for a consideration of Atlantic history from imperial, continental, and Pacific perspectives; and Peter A. Coclanis advocated that historians engage in what he termed a “conjuncto-atlantic” history. (“Forum: Beyond the Atlantic,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4, 2006), 675–742). *Many Middle Passages* does not settle the disputes among these differing approaches. What it does do is provide a persuasive basis for widening our geographic lens when considering coerced voyages across the Atlantic.

In their Introduction to this collection of twelve essays edited from the 2005 “Middle Passages: Oceanic Voyages as Social Process” conference, Marcus Rediker, whose work has centered on labor and coercion, with his coeditors, Emma Christopher, the author of *Slave Trade Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730–1807* (Cambridge, UK, 2006) and Cassandra Pybus, author most recently of *Epic Voyages of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and Their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston, 2006), provide a strongly argued framework to consider the book’s essays. The editors situate the essays within a set of ideas that Rediker and Peter Linebaugh explored in *Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000). These ideas include the concepts that capitalism forced the migration of millions to the Americas and that “middle passages” (defined by the editors as “the structuring link between expropriation in one geographic setting and exploitation in another”) are a useful tool for considering the social and cultural transformations of a variety of people coercively transported. Additionally, they consider a variety of “prisons” central to these middle passages, and claim that the history of labor transported across oceans is a “thesis-antithesis-synthesis” of terror, resistance, and cultural creativity (2).

Edward Alpers, Iain McCalman, and James Warren use three different perspectives—the enslaved, the third-party observer, and the slave raider—to examine the slave trade in the Indian Ocean, East Africa, and Southeast Asia. Through judicious use of slave narratives, Alpers demonstrates the cultural transformation that young enslaved African boys often underwent even before they left Africa. Iain McCalman uses David Livingstone’s writings of his failed Zambesi expedition to illustrate the inhumanity of the East African slave trade. Piled up on bamboo racks, in

a manner not very different than found on Liverpool slavers, “slaves lay face down in the stifling heat of their own excrement,” as they were transported east to the Indian Ocean (45). James Warren considers the lives of Lanun seafaring warriors who raided widely across Southeast Asia seeking workers for fisheries and rice paddies. Warren demonstrates how both religion and language served as barriers to and openings for captives to work on Lanun ships.

Indentured servitude is the subject of Nigel Penn’s and Lawrence Brown’s essays. Penn illustrates how the Dutch East India Company recruited large numbers of Germans to undergo lengthy difficult voyages to serve overseas. Using the accounts of forty-seven German servants, Penn depicts a group of desperate individuals whose economic plight compelled them to sign indentures that resulted in most dying without ever returning home. Brown’s essay on Melanesians who moved between enslavement and contract labor is perhaps the most fascinating in the collection. Brown reveals a complex labor market where migrant laborers were able at the end of their indenture to find work as seamen on returning vessels and demonstrates that they became vital to the very labor system that first constrained them.

The essays by Cassandra Pybus, Emma Christopher, and Claire Anderson show reformers often turning a blind eye to the poor conditions on convict ships. A meticulous researcher, Pybus paints a vivid picture of black sailor John Martin’s voyage to Botany Bay shackled in a “cramped, dark space,” arriving at a place that had “many of the hallmarks of a slave plantation” (99, 106). Christopher demonstrates that because transatlantic slave captains had financial interests in their passengers, something Second Fleet captains did not, conditions on slavers may have been better than on the Second Fleet voyages. The harsh conditions Claire Anderson depicts on Indian Ocean convict voyages often resulted from convicts’ inability to follow their cultural practices regarding preparation and eating of food on board, making the voyages for many an important element in their punishment.

Scott Reynolds Nelson and Evelyn Hu-Dehart contend that Irish and Chinese replacement workers in the United States and Chinese coolie laborers in Cuba and Peru all experienced a middle passage. Both persuasively argue these workers believed they were free laborers, but by the time they arrived at their new employment destinations they were no longer free. For illiterate workers in Cuba and Peru, crimps and colonial regulations served to limit their freedom, while the liberty of replacement

workers in the United States was largely confined by what Nelson describes as “a new technology of transport, enclosed arrival points, and the railway ensemble” (150).

Julio Martinez, Kevin Bales, and Zoe Trodd extend the book’s middle-passage analogy to the modern day. Martinez considers human trafficking to argue that “coercion remains a constant” in labor markets. Bales’s and Trodd’s afterword notes that middle passages were not merely voyages over water, but rather transformations, a point that Rediker more fully explores in *Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York, 2007).

The editors may believe that comparisons between the transportation of coerced labor and transatlantic slavery are “repugnant,” because transatlantic slavery is “in a class of its own” (8), but in demonstrating capitalism’s global reach in expropriating peoples of one region for coerced labor in another, *Many Middle Passages* will invariably cause readers to compare the varied middle passages and consider how they differed or were similar to the transatlantic slave trade. Such comparisons may lead to more nuanced understandings of coerced labor and migration.

CHARLES R. FOY is an assistant professor at Eastern Illinois University. He is the author of “Seeking Freedom in the Atlantic, 1713–1783,” *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 4, no. 1, 2006, 46–77. His research focuses on slavery in colonial British North America and black mariners.

The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent. By Kathleen DuVal. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. Pp. 320. Illustrations, maps. Cloth, \$45.00; Paper, \$22.50.)

Reviewed by Mark A. Nicholas

The Native Ground rightly takes a spot alongside the groundbreaking works of James F. Brooks, Colin G. Calloway, Steven W. Hackel, Ned Blackhawk, and Juliana Barr.¹ Slavery, the chaotic movement and dis-

1. James F. Brooks, *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002); Colin G. Calloway, *One Long Vast Winter Count: The West Before Lewis and Clark* (Lincoln, NB, 2003); Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian–Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769–1850* (Chapel Hill, NC 2005); Ned Black-