



Black Women Slaves Who Nourished a Nation: artistic renderings of wet nurses in Brazil

by Kimberly Cleveland, Amherst, New York, Cambria Press, 2019, ix + 241 pp., £72.99/\$114.99 (hardback), ISBN: 9781604979596

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to knowledge for both the specialized reader and the interested general audience; it would hopefully also proffer future research along the lines explored in the two books.

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Black Women Slaves Who Nourished a Nation: artistic renderings of wet nurses in Brazil, by Kimberly Cleveland, Amherst, New York, Cambria Press, 2019, ix + 241 pp., £72.99/\$114.99 (hardback), ISBN: 9781604979596

Black Women Slaves Who Nourished a Nation is a compelling and sensitive examination of the visual representation of wetnurses in Brazil from the early nineteenth century to the present day. It is an original topic, which makes a significant contribution to expanding the history of art beyond the Western canon, by providing voice and visibility to a marginalized subject matter, whose lived experience has been largely overlooked to date. To understand these 'invisible' women, the author turns to artistic representations of them, considering how the private activity of wetnursing was rendered public through the artists' hands, whilst questioning the power imbalances between race and class that were exercised within the process. Cleveland examines a wide range of imagery including watercolours, lithographs, paintings, photography and sculpture, and written accounts of the wetnurse, that exist in archives not readily available to audiences situated outside of Brazil. Visual analysis is placed at the forefront, and the author allows images and objects that centre on the figure of the African and Afro-Brazilian wetnurse to take centre stage, opening out a broader discussion that ruminates on the chequered history of race relations in Latin America. This is an accessible, interesting and nuanced examination that recognizes the important role of wetnurses within the history of Brazil as a nation, and aims to reinsert their identities as individuals rather than simply 'types'.

The author writes in a clear and concise manner, grappling with the nuances and complexities of race and ethnicity as a lived experience in Brazil, as well as the white, elite power structures that permeated colonial Brazilian society. Brazil was one of the last countries to abolish slavery, in 1888, and the ramifications persist in the postcolonial present, even as cultural expressions such as *capoeira* and *feijoada* advocate a seamless mixing in the idealistic vein of Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre. Cleveland's text traces the shifting representation of wetnurses from the early nineteenth century to the twenty-first century against this backdrop, exploring how this figure has been documented, memorialized and honoured, from both white and black perspectives. There is some insightful contextualization of the wetnurse that draws on social, economic and medical histories. Wet nursing in Brazil dates to the late eighteenth century, when Portuguese men deduced that the tropical Brazilian heat was too taxing for white women to breastfeed, whereas African women were seen as better suited to the process in hotter climes. By the late nineteenth century, abolitionists had lobbied against the use of wetnurses (although their reasons were, somewhat unsurprisingly, dubious), yet the practice was only completely eradicated in the 1920s. What is clear from *Black Women Slaves Who Nourished a Nation* is that Brazil has much to offer as a case study through which to explore not only the practice

of wetnursing, which was exercised globally until the scientific invention of milk formula in the early twentieth century, but also white/non-white relations more broadly. The author strikes a balance between the particulars and the general. A few more worthwhile comparisons with the legacy of wetnursing in the United States, which was inextricably rooted in the history of slavery and exemplified by the Mammy archetype caricature of the African American woman, would have added to the richness of the analysis.

The main omission in *Black Women Slaves Who Nourished a Nation*, however, is a reflection on the author's identity and how her positionality may have influenced the conclusions drawn. It is crucial that scholars based in the 'Global North' continue to cast their gaze upon histories that are distinct from their own. Doing so is vital to establish an inclusive and diverse field of art history, which speaks to transnational concerns and ensures that histories of the globe are not continuing Eurocentric histories of the West. Yet I was left wondering how Cleveland had unpacked the identities and meanings of the images and objects she encountered, both historically and locally. An impressive array of archives have been engaged with, from the Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia in Salvador to the Museu AfroBrasil in São Paulo. What tools did the author use to decentre her 'foreign' gaze onto the Afro-Brazilian subjects that she examined? What methods, approaches and theoretical frameworks did she employ to problematize the hegemonic influence of Western European and North American scholarship within her subject area? How did the author unpack images as complex sites of interaction and encounter between different races, ethnicities and gazes, not least her own? A stronger theoretical framework containing a broader mix of Afro-Brazilian scholars might have been one way to achieve this. Transparency is, of course, key. A greater discussion of how Cleveland's gender, ethnicity, sexuality, education and 'mother tongue' inevitably had a bearing, whether direct or not, upon her readings of race, would have added to the nuances of the work, whilst providing useful instruction to other scholars inevitably grappling with similar challenges.

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Women and Evacuation in the Second World War: femininity, domesticity and motherhood, by Maggie Andrews, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2019, ix + 222 pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN: 9781441140685

The image of a small child evacuee with label attached, carrying a gas mask and a cardboard suitcase, has become symbolic of both the disruption of war and the resilience of the British. It has played into narratives of nationhood, into Calder's 'Myth of the Blitz', and into notions of victimhood and memorialization. In her recent book, Maggie Andrews argues that in doing so, it has obscured many of the other players in the story of evacuation in Britain during the Second World War, particularly the role of women. This book redresses that imbalance by focusing on the different women and various functions they played in both government-run evacuation schemes and privately managed arrangements. In doing so, it necessarily focuses on motherhood