

supplied new ones. He had wide interests – science, mathematics, history, horticulture, and philosophy – and built up a circle of professional men and small planters who exchanged books and discussed them with one another.

To become a small proprietor he built up a twenty-seven-strong slave jobbing gang, investing shrewdly in a period of rising slave prices, mostly in young African men and women. In 1767 he moved with them and Phibbah (whose owner still insisted on collecting £18 a year for her) to Breadnut Island Pen (66 acres of dry land and 78 acres of swamp), where he raised cattle, goats, and small stock, renting out slaves at harvest and planting. The move improved his social status and allowed him to apply his horticultural knowledge and (perhaps following Voltaire's advice) plant a garden which became a showpiece of tropical botany. As both manager and proprietor, however, his fortunes rested on slave labor.

Burnard deals thematically with all aspects of Thistlewood's life, bringing sound judgment and sound scholarship to locate him convincingly in the Anglo-Jamaican world of his time. Readers might demur at the repeated identification of Thistlewood as a sadist. He was, arguably, just a conformist getting on with his life in a slave society and becoming, as Burnard puts it "a vital cog" in "an oppressive order" (p. 5).

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BOOK REVIEWS

Travels with Tooy: History, Memory, and the African American Imagination.
RICHARD PRICE. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. xiv + 452 pp.
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Ethnography has proved a flexible form over the course of the twentieth century, not only in its presentation, but also in the range and depth of research that it reflects. Despite official invocation of ideals of extended engagement, relatively few ethnographers have produced truly long-term studies of particular groups or communities, even before moving out of villages. And although collaborative approaches enjoy a current vogue amid discussions of method in contemporary American anthropology, the conception of collaboration tends to focus on present interest and political claims rather than longer historical or cosmological trajectory. Richard Price's latest offering, *Travels with Tooy*, is thus a doubly rare and precious thing: the product of extended, historically minded engagement with a people and their worldview, simultaneously cast in a collaborative mode. Featuring Price's multifaceted (and multisited) encounters with a Saramaka wise man and healer, it is intensely personal in terms of both subject and mode of exposition, as well as rich in scholarly detail. The author's commitment to his interlocutor remains palpable on every page, matched only by an equal concern for academic rigor.

Such a level of engagement stems directly from a lifetime of study. For some four decades Richard Price has faithfully returned to visit Saramaka Maroons, first in Suriname, and later, following political conflict and subsequent migration by members of the group, in French Guiana. Although thus geographically anchored, the products of this research (authored both individually and jointly with Sally Price) have been strikingly wide-ranging in terms of topic, conceptual approach, and narrative form. *Travels with Tooy* is no exception; the text manages to be classically ethnographic and experimental at one and the same time. The work contains a treasure trove of mate-

rial related to Saramaka cosmology and esoteric language, all of lasting value in the archival sense to both specialists and the Saramaka themselves. At the same time it illustrates the actual practice of this knowledge by concentrating on the experiences of one óbia-man named Tooy. In presenting his story, Price emphasizes that it is neither unique nor typical, but rather exemplary. Moreover, Tooy is a close friend, in the complicated sense of a distinct, challenging equal, rather than the breezy American euphemism for a pleasant acquaintance. Even as Tooy shares his work with Price the anthropologist, he incorporates him into it, treating him in a parallel role as assistant. As noted in a prelude discussion of authorship (pp. viii-ix), however, though their lives may intertwine, they maintain separate spheres of expertise. In the end it is up to Tooy to prescribe treatments and to Price to write a book.

The complexities of relationship between the protagonists are apparent from the start. Rather than French Guiana or Suriname, Price's adopted hometown in Martinique serves as an initial narrative stage, when the author helps broker an attempted healing by Tooy for a Martiniquan businessman. Arriving by plane to consult with this client, the healer stays at the anthropologist's house and enlists his aid as a translator in performing the initial rituals. But the anthropologist is already deeply involved, connected by extensive village ties to the businessman, by a lifetime of study to the Saramaka, and by long-standing interest to the subject matter. Although the moment may appear extraordinary, as the work continues it grows clear that this is but a minor amplification of Tooy's usual practice in French Guiana. There, a BMW or Mercedes can easily park by his modest shack at the outskirts of Cayenne, its occupant drawn by promised relief from a personal problem, and following a chain of connections, beliefs, and recommendations that lead to this door.

In following and describing Tooy's vocation, Price traces many roots and tendrils, from a page of a *grimoire* worn by a Saramaka soldier in World War II to the multiple plants and gods that infuse this particular óbia-man's practice. It is here that the book most obviously rests on decades of cumulative research, as Price refers to an almost dizzying array of names, events, and story fragments, sorting them into the vast and ever-shifting puzzle of cosmology that informs Tooy's consultations. Moving back and forth between exposition and synthesis, the author allows the reader to share in moments of discovery and realization as well as suggesting underlying patterns. Most critically, perhaps, what emerges is an intricate and partial map, one that suggests both the full measure of his protagonist's knowledge and simultaneously how many gaps and loose ends remain for them both. No individual, not even a master practitioner like Tooy or a lifelong student like Price, can quite claim the whole. Nonetheless, they can certainly master a great deal, as both the healer's practice and the anthropologist's book attest.

In between Tooy's ritual performances, Price recounts other aspects of his subject's life: his political standing in the Saramaka community; a recon-

struction of his chronology; and his everyday relations with family members and friends. However dedicated to knowing gods, spirits, songs, and stories, the healer is very much a worldly man in a Saramaka way, renowned for his sexual appetites. Amid the pantheon surrounding Tooy is a troublesome spirit known as Frenchwoman. Despite warnings from his matrilineage, he fails to come to terms with this spirit before finding himself the subject of a court case, charged with rape from an encounter many years earlier with an underage partner. The ensuing trial, in which Price becomes involved both as a friend and as a cultural authority, is alternately fascinating and disturbing, a mix of minor tragedy and farce in a late colonial context. As Price (p. 177) summarizes, "This is not a pretty story and it has no heroes." In the event Saramaka understandings of sexuality prove incommensurable with those of French law, and Tooy is convicted. The same state that intervenes to punish him, however, ultimately saves his life by diagnosing him with a heart condition and providing medical treatment. Tooy is eventually released from prison on medical grounds, and resumes both his practice and efforts to achieve full recognition as a Saramaka political leader. After chronicling this dramatic moment, Price likewise returns to his cosmological explorations, offering a summation and comparison with other Caribbean religions, appropriately entitled "Reflections from the Verandah."

All said *Travels with Tooy* is a supremely rich and ambitious text. An unapologetic display of serious scholarship, chockablock with careful ethnographic and historical detail, it nonetheless breaks with classic conventions by highlighting personal experience and interweaving multiple threads. Fortunately the writing remains engaging throughout, and the many chapter and section breaks allow the reader to move in nonlinear fashion to check and retrace connections. Although the book lacks an index, it has an extensive coda detailing the esoteric language it references (with audio files accessible at <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/price/>), as well as a helpful list of dramatis personae. But ultimately the work stays true to the classic ethnographic challenge of presenting another worldview: this is Tooy's story, and to follow it we must travel along. It is deeply appropriate, as well as heartening, that *Travels with Tooy* has won the 2008 Victor Turner Prize for Ethnographic Writing.