***Kinship Across the Black Atlantic: Writing Diasporic Relations*,** by Gigi Adair, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2019, 210 pp., £80.00 (hardback) ISBN 978 1 789 62037 5

In *Kinship Across the Black Atlantic*,Gigi Adair furthers the work on diaspora studies of critics such as Paul Gilroy and James Clifford to expand their views towards a necessary “queering of diaspora” (11). According to her, “queering” in this context does not only refer to issues of sexuality, but to transcending the conception that culture and community can only be perpetuated through linear filiation. Keeping in mind that biological kinship is still a powerful mechanism for neo-colonial control, Adair reads six novels across six chapters by authors belonging to black Atlantic traditions that engage in its reconceptualisation. The analyses are organised in three sections around the attempted destabilisation of three key concepts: anthropology, historiography, and diasporic relationality.

In the first chapter, the author analyses Jamaica Kincaid’s *The Autobiography of my Mother* to show how the protagonist fails to transcend the colonial understanding of kinship. In her attempt to escape Western systems of knowledge, her language nevertheless reproduces an epistemology that is pre-given by a “colonial anthropological logic” (38), positing biological genealogy as the only legitimate form of kinship. Adair continues with a close reading of Pauline Melville’s *The Ventriloquist’s Tale*, which she defines as a postcolonial parody of structuralist anthropology. According to Adair, the novel’s post-Newtonian relativist understanding of time opens the possibility of articulating an anthropology that drifts away from colonial notions of either progress or cultural stasis.

In the second section, Adair introduces the importance of creative readings of the marginal traces of colonial historiography in order to recuperate the lost history of nineteenth-century Afro-Caribbeans. Even while taking into account Andrea Levy’s metafictional concerns regarding historiography, Adair identifies in her novel *The Long Song* a pattern of omissions characteristic of colonial nationalist history – omissions that the novel’s protagonist still reproduces in order to tell the story of how she overcame slavery and its legacy of shame. Against this, Adair argues that Dionne Brand’s *At the Full and Change of the Moon* changes the rules for postcolonial history making: instead of reading and exploring “from the margins of the colonial archives” (105), Brand’s novel describes a kind of horizontal kinship that is articulated through the refusal to be part of history and futurity.

Finally, in the book’s third section, Adair analyses Patrick Chamoiseau’s novel *Texaco* as a reflection of the philosophy of Édouard Glissant, focusing on its claim that linear filiation is impossible in the context of the post-plantation. The dislocation of black Caribbeans thus paves the way for an alternative “Relation”, or “a creolized kinship” in Adair’s words (147). Similarly, Adair finds alternative models for transcending state-legalised kinship in Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet*. Adair reads the act of mourning in the novel as a means for creating a diasporic community that grants a previously denied legitimacy to the anonymous lives lost in the course of the black Atlantic’s injustices.

In short, Adair’s book draws on rich and interlinked theoretical paradigms to delineate the historic relationship between kinship and different forms of heteronormative control. As her analysis of these contemporary novels concludes, in a postmodern, rapidly changing, globalised world, a posthumanist understanding of kinship becomes imperative. For Adair, these postcolonial novels become particularly illustrative for understanding the limits of the world and the human as conceptualised through colonial lenses.

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