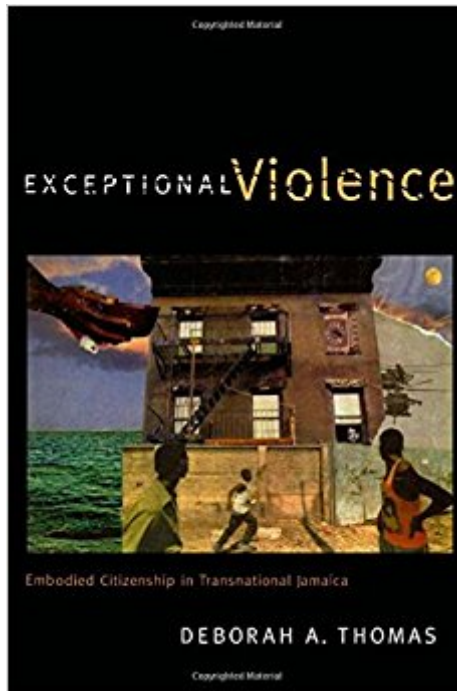




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Exceptional Violence: Embodied Citizenship In Transnational Jamaica



Synopsis

Exceptional Violence is a sophisticated examination of postcolonial state formation in the Caribbean, considered across time and space, from the period of imperial New World expansion to the contemporary neoliberal era, and from neighborhood dynamics in Kingston to transnational socioeconomic and political fields. Deborah A. Thomas takes as her immediate focus violence in Jamaica and representations of that violence as they circulate within the country and abroad. Through an analysis encompassing Kingston communities, Jamaica's national media, works of popular culture, notions of respectability, practices of punishment and discipline during slavery, the effects of intensified migration, and Jamaica's national cultural policy, Thomas develops several arguments. Violence in Jamaica is the complicated result of a structural history of colonialism and underdevelopment, not a cultural characteristic passed from one generation to the next. Citizenship is embodied; scholars must be attentive to how race, gender, and sexuality have been made to matter over time. Suggesting that anthropologists in the United States should engage more deeply with history and political economy, Thomas mobilizes a concept of reparations as a framework for thinking, a rubric useful in its emphasis on structural and historical lineages.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thomas' engagement with the transnational elements of citizenship is impressive. Her chapter on the Coral Gardens "crucifixion" of 1963 is particularly astute and well-researched; and her film on this event is also a good resource for students interested in this topic. However, her thesis linking embodied memory to Jamaica's problems with murder is the most dissatisfying element of this

book. I question the efficacy of research on a social problem that limits data collection to cultural documents and cultural productions; resulting in simplistic and unsubstantiated statements such as "most Jamaicans would casually root the proliferation of spectacularly performed murders in the consumption of North American films." Murder is a serious social problem that requires rigorous field research in the communities most affected by this crime, and it is unfortunate that this did not take place in this study.

You would love this book if you were in a program for a doctors degree. Too hard for the average person to understand unless they are going for a doctors degree.

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