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Peter M. Beattie, *Punishment in Paradise: Race, Slavery, Human Rights, and a Nineteenth-Century Brazilian Penal Colony* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2015), pp. xiv + 337, £18.99, pb.

This book is much more than the history of the Brazilian penal colony of Fernando de Noronha during the nineteenth century. From the perspective of that penal island situated 200 miles off the Brazilian north-east coast, the author seeks to highlight ‘evolving cultural values, practices, and perceptions on Brazil’s mainland and across the Atlantic in relation to justice, punishment, rehabilitation, color, class, civil conditions, human rights, and labor’ (p. 2). Central to this successful endeavour is Beattie’s simultaneous look at the histories of ‘convicts, slaves, military enlisted men, Indians in government-organised villages, and free Africans’ (p. 5). Although distinct in legal status (the author convincingly argues) those groups had enough in common to be considered as part of a single category: the ‘intractable poor’. Moreover, a ‘category drift’ (p. 6) produced fluidity and overlapping among them, and revealed connected histories of unfreedom and abolition. Beattie builds on his previous research on the transformation of army recruitment and service in Brazil, which culminated in *The Tribute of Blood* (2001), and expands his focus from military impressment to other forms of coercion through punishment, enslavement and labour.

The originality of this volume lies in this broad approach and its capacity to cut across the boundaries of various sub-disciplines. The structure of the book nicely matches with this theoretical endeavour and at the same time foregrounds the double perspective taken by the author. On the one hand, the penal colony of Fernando de Noronha is seen as a laboratory for broader social processes, and therefore as a privileged observatory to study them; on the other hand, the island is viewed as the receiving end of discourses and practices elaborated elsewhere in continental Brazil, which can be compared with other countries.

The bottom-up perspective flows through the majority of the chapters. Chapter 1 takes the viewpoint of the convicts to accompany the reader from the north-eastern capital Recife to the island’s main square, and then describes a standard day in the penal colony. The central chapters of the volume (3 to 8) are organised thematically to explore the following aspects: the intertwining between the island’s licit and illicit trade, as a result of the authorities’ corruption and limited control, and the agency of (privileged) prisoners (chapter 3); the analysis of the composition of the island’s population, that fully reveals a world made of army commanders and subordinate officers, civil servants and religious authorities, civil-, slave- and military convicts and their families, troops ‘similar to the army convicts they guarded’ (p. 95), non-convict slaves, and unattached residents who sought refuge there (chapter 4). Chapters 5 to 7 address, respectively, the role of the ‘jealous institutions’, namely heterosexual conjugality, at the cross-roads of gender, sexuality, discipline, health, reproduction, rehabilitation and justice; the powerful contrast between the material and social lives of the island’s elites and subalterns, that additionally leaves space for nuanced appreciation of convicts’ distinct experiences of leisure; and the role of conflict in the penal colony, including convicts’ crimes, tensions between authorities, and the patterns of collaboration and opposition between convicts and soldiers on the eve of major insurrections and mutinies. Chapter 8 discusses the ‘treatment and categorisation of slave convicts’ vis-à-vis their non-slave counterparts, through the in-depth analysis of the 1881 convict slave survey.

The remaining chapters metaphorically embrace the thematic section, and contextualise the experience of the penal colony of Fernando de Noronha in the broader

pictures of Brazilian history and Atlantic human rights reforms. Chapter 2's chronological organisation highlights changes in the approach to the intractable poor on the eve of the Brazilian independence from Portugal (1821–25), the Second Empire (1840–89), the war of the Triple Alliance (1864–70), and the early First Republic. Chapter 9 focuses on what Beattie terms the 'sequencing of institutional reforms', and on the author's idea that '[a] reform that improved the treatment and condition of one category [of the intractable poor] made it less legitimate to continue for those in other categories (p. 226, and similarly on p. 33). Accordingly, the author engages in a connected study of the movements for the abolition of capital punishment, floggings, military impressment and slavery.

The integration of the comparative and bottom-up perspectives leads to equally original interpretations. In particular, Beattie combines his observations on the substantial lack of differentiation of slave convicts from other convicts on Fernando de Noronha (chapter 8), and on the relevance of the 'jealous institution' in the classification of prisoners more generally (chapter 5). Then he contrasts these findings to the situation in the United States and in penal colonies in New Caledonia, Australia and Sakhalin, and concludes: 'Instead of defending the lower boundaries of whiteness, Brazilian institutions that harboured the intractable poor more often used marriage and conjugal living as a means to rank, reward, and discriminate among them' (p. 236).

The volume is well written and has a clear structure, the documentary basis rich and varied and its interpretations convincing. Moreover, Beattie clearly has a point in arguing for the need of a category that embraces convicts, soldiers, sailors, slaves, and beyond. His 'intractable poor' wisely brings together self-representation, external stereotypes, and material conditions. The author does not address alternative conceptualisations that have been proposed in the scholarship with the same goal. I think of Guha's 'subalterns', Rediker and Linebaugh's 'many-headed Hydra', and concepts such as 'subaltern workers' and 'labouring poor'. These last ones have emerged from global labour historians' quest to re-defining the 'working class' in a way that exceeds 'free' wage labour to include workers across multiple labour relations. Historians increasingly need such inclusive conceptualisations in order to frame their narratives globally, and overcome long-established disciplinary boundaries. Beattie's important book makes a contribution also to this field.

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Michael E. Donoghue, *Borderland on the Isthmus: Race, Culture, and the Struggle for the Canal Zone* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2014), pp. xii + 349, \$94.95, \$25.95 pb.

Until recently, most of the work that covered the relationship between Panama and the United States focused on the diplomatic negotiations between teams of diplomats, and the political realities that informed these relations. Most Panamanian historians, meanwhile, struggled to defend the nationalist narrative, showing that a Panamanian national consciousness existed since the nineteenth century, and depicting the twentieth-century struggle of a nation against an empire. Histories of particular ethnic groups like the Afro-Antilleans (Michael L. Conniff), the Kuna (James Howe) and the Chinese (Lok C. D. Siu), went some way to undermine the image of two stable polities locked in a struggle. But only recently did writers like Julie Greene and