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### Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment: The Political Economy of the Caribbean World

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*Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment: The Political Economy of the Caribbean World.* By Arthur L. Stinchcombe. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. xvii + 361 pp. Maps, tables, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth.)

Arthur Stinchcombe, a sociologist whose previous work has focused on Norway, is a newcomer to the Caribbean. A Guggenheim Fellowship allowed him to browse through the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago and his own Social Science Library at Northwestern University to familiarize himself with Caribbean literature on slavery. By his own confession he has produced no new facts and what he terms "archival density" is zero (p. xiii). He also failed to consult several significant books, including a 1974 collection of essays edited by Robert Brent Toplin (1974) entitled *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America*, which contains an important essay by Franklin Knight on Cuban slavery. Yet despite these drawbacks, Stinchcombe has produced a scholarly synthesis highly recommended to experts on the Caribbean.

*Sugar Island Slavery* provides an account of how a capitalist world system built a slave system (Part 1), then tore it down (Part 2). In the telling, Stinchcombe describes the differences between the islands and the empire systems and recognizes the diverse reasons for the various levels of success in dismantling the slavocracies. He outlines three main factors which produced the slavocracy: 1) sugar's role as the mainstay of the economy; 2) the existence of a plantocracy, with an interest in sugar and slavery; and 3) the empire's willingness to let sugar planters run the island government.

The synthesis sought by Stinchcombe would be extremely simple except for the fact that, as he readily acknowledges, Guadeloupe, where Victor Hugues guillotined 1,800 people, many of whom were *békés* (white slave owners or their descendants), is not Martinique, where the *békés* survived because the island was protected by the English from the excesses of the French Revolution; Cuba, where sugar produced an affluent society, is not Puerto Rico, where coffee was queen; and Jamaica, where there are practically

no East Indians, is not Trinidad, where East Indians make up 50 percent of the population.

The dismantling of the slavocracy system is further plagued and complicated by two political movements: first, the more anarchist solution in the Dominican Republic and Haiti; second, a movement controlled by a socialistic and syndicalistic organization tied to the trade union movement but integrated into the French political system in Guadeloupe and Martinique. In describing the processes of building up and tearing down these systems, the author fully recognizes the differences between Frank Tannenbaum and Eric Williams, between Herbert Klein and Franklin Knight, and between Manuel Moreno Fraginals and Eric Williams; he also responds to the dust raised by M.G. Smith's theory of the pluralistic society.

In the end, Stinchcombe has succeeded in producing "an essay of the sociology of freedom" but not without first suggesting to the reader that "If anyone offers you a job on a sugar plantation, do not take it" (p. 331).

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