Culture-Building in Jamaica. She expands the themes of land tenure after slavery as a means of resisting colonial paradigms of landholding as its own process of creolization. *Transformations* extends the question of land tenure beyond Martha Brae.

Besson's work is difficult reading if you are not an anthropologist. Both the necessarily extensive visual and verbal genealogies combined with blocks of narratives from her participants could benefit from more succinct integration with her larger narrative, and less jargon. Her book is intended for anthropologists focused on Jamaica, generally, and the Cockpit region, in particular, and might be inaccessible to people outside her discipline and students who are not engaged in doctoral-level work. This is regrettable as her findings are intriguing.

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Patrick E. Bryan, *A History of the Caribbean Examinations Council 1973–2013: Regional Relevance, International Credibility*, CXC Self-Publishing Series (North Charleston, S.C.: CreateSpace Publishing, 2015). xxvi, 151 pp. ISBN 9781500811705. US$ 40, paperback.

Institutional history is not as a rule the sexiest genre of the discipline; as the then registrar of the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) put it in his foreword, 'ordinarily the history of an examination board would be a boring story.' And, indeed, this book is not an exciting read. But it's a valuable record of the first forty years of an important regional body which has made a major impact on education. Its author is an experienced Jamaican historian who has based his study mainly on CXC documents and publications, and on interviews with key founders and officials.

Bryan begins by chronicling the critique of the overseas examinations boards which dominated secondary schooling in the

region from the late 1800s, a critique which was led by progressives and nationalists, especially in the post–World War II period. The critique persisted and indeed intensified even when some of the boards reformed their syllabuses, as Cambridge did when it introduced papers in Caribbean history, geography, and agricultural science for the Senior Certificate (later GCE O levels) in the 1950s. As secondary schooling expanded in the region in the 1950s/60s, a wider range of students sat for O levels, and overall performance was weak. The critique incorporated three main lines: the overseas examinations were oriented to British not West Indian culture and so were unsuited to independent countries; they were not geared to the region's economic and social development; and weak performance in GCE O levels was seen as damaging to the students and by extension to the whole society.

The expansion of secondary schooling, decolonisation, and independence in the 1960s, the emergence of UWI—all favoured the move towards a regional examinations board. Active planning began in 1964, the formal agreement to establish the CXC came in 1971, and the Council was established in 1973 with its headquarters in Barbados and a Western Zone Office in Jamaica (at Michael Manley's insistence). The first examinations were held in 1979. This fifteen-year period (1964 to 1979) was consumed with protracted consultations and meetings, with public relations work, and with the task of creating new syllabuses and assessment methods.

From the start, it was intended that CXC examinations would test a wider range of abilities than GCE O levels. Admittedly, the new Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) was similar to O levels in that it was a school leaving examination taken after five years of high school, but it was 'a criterion rather than norm-referenced examination': a candidate's competency or skill was defined by predetermined standards, without reference to the scores achieved by other candidates. But, of course, it was vital that CSEC could be 'equated' with O levels, and grades I to III were stated to be the equivalent of an O level pass. Other new elements in the CSEC were a school-based assessment (SBA) and multiple-choice question papers, and the offering

of a General and Basic Proficiency (the latter was eventually dropped between 2007 and 2009 due to shrinking demand). These innovations were introduced in order to fulfil the aim of testing a wider range of abilities than GCE O levels.

Development of syllabuses began in 1975 through subject panels, on which UWI staff as well as secondary school teachers served, and the first examinations were held in 1979 in five subjects, English language, mathematics, integrated science, history, and geography. Not every country in the English-speaking Caribbean signed on—the Bahamas, for instance, did not—and others came in on a phased basis (Trinidad and Tobago only introduced three subjects in 1979 and only accepted the CXC history examination in 1983). But the years between 1979 and the end of the century saw steady expansion, in the number of CSEC candidates and in the range of subjects offered. Private candidates were accommodated by being offered an essay question paper in lieu of the SBA, and January sittings also increased the numbers. Importantly, international recognition of the CSEC examinations was achieved in this period. Among the new subjects offered by 1998 were physical education and sport, agricultural science, theatre arts, visual arts, and music. Technical/vocational subjects, and information technology, were offered from the 1990s. Interestingly, though the Council never envisaged that teacher workshops on the new syllabuses and assessment methods would become a permanent feature of its work, this is exactly what happened, so that CXC became 'an informal teacher-training institution' by default.

Bryan devotes chapter seven to the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE), introduced in 1998 to replace GCE A levels, though consultations and planning had begun as early as 1979. The nineteen-year gap was due in part to the widespread attachment to A levels, and to the real difficulties in producing a programme equal in standard to A levels yet clearly different from them. CAPE catered to a larger percentage of post-CSEC candidates but was designed to be of equivalent academic rigour; the syllabuses were less narrow; and, like CSEC, it was criterion rather than norm-referenced. Each course had two units,

which were independent of each other; SBAs were included. Nine two-unit courses were introduced in 1998 (history was not one of them); by 2012 there were twenty-four subjects offered at CAPE. Six units including one-unit Caribbean Studies and Communications Studies were accepted by UWI for normal matriculation. But it was quite a struggle to get wide regional acceptance for CAPE; some 'prestige' schools, especially in Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, resisted strongly, and in some cases the governments had to intervene and order that the CAPE examinations be taken. By around 2007, however, GCE A levels were on their way out in the region.

In his final chapters, Bryan examines developments since the end of the 1990s and the challenges looming for CXC in the current era of economic decline and austerity. A thoughtful conclusion on the legacy of CXC ends the book; he thinks that by and large it has fulfilled its mandate and has influenced education in the Caribbean in many, largely positive ways. His study is a solid, well researched history of a regional institution which has touched even more lives than UWI—with which it has so many links—and which has shaped two generations of young people of the English-speaking countries.

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David Buisseret, *The Going was Good: Memoir of a Transatlantic Life* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Dorrance Publishing Co., 2017). 275 pp. ISBN 9780812248296. US$ 29.95, paperback.

This book is the autobiography of David Buisseret, an academic, but it is not an academic book. Buisseret does not tell us anything substantial about the ideas, big or small, in his prolific scholarly writings, and he is too modest to provide a convenient list. Born in England in 1934 into a solid middle class family of Belgian antecedents, he was (to use his own