Donald Wood is an historian of Trinidad whose influential study, Trinidad in Transition: The Years After Slavery (1968), was one of the pioneering works on post-emancipation Caribbean history.

1 Dereck Beale, Joseph II (Cambridge, 1987).

The Colonial Caribbean in Transition is explicitly inspired by Wood's work and is designed as a tribute to him. Although different in focus, Madhavi Kale's Fragments of Empire also deals with many of the same issues addressed by Wood. Kale's book is a fascinating study of Indian indentured labour in the British Caribbean which focuses on Trinidad and British Guiana. Kale begins by examining the attempt to import Indians to British Guiana by John Gladstone, a Liverpool merchant who was the owner of sizeable estates in the colony and the father of the future British Prime Minister. With Indian indentured labour already established in Mauritius, Gladstone sought to introduce Indians to British Guiana even before the advent of full freedom in 1838. The debate surrounding this immigration prefigured many of the subsequent arguments about Indian indentured labour. On the one hand, the Colonial Office was wary about establishing a new form of slavery, and it regarded Indian labourers as particularly vulnerable to exploitation in a system which offered workers little protection. Although the Colonial Office sanctioned Gladstone's scheme, it quickly suspended immigration to British Guiana on learning of the high mortality of the indentured labourers. At the same time, proponents of Indian indentured labour emphasized the advantages to the Indians themselves, including the promise of work and the opportunities in the Caribbean for the immigrants, especially in contrast to the hunger and poverty characteristic of their situation in India. There were other arguments in favour of Indian indentured labour from a Caribbean and a humanitarian perspective. One concern was the effect of emancipation. Without immigration, some observers suggested, British Guiana would sink into a state of barbarism. The land would remain idle, since the ex-slave population was leaving the plantations. Moreover, the freed women who formerly made up the majority of the slave labour in the field were withdrawing from this work. While this development was applauded by British humanitarians, it was feared that these tendencies would limit the economic development of colonies such as British Guiana. Indian labour would, therefore, solve a number of problems. As Kale notes, 'Labour migration would address the shortage of labour in the British Caribbean, under-employment in India, and the not unrelated problems of immorality and the challenges of upliftment at both ends of the empire' (54). In addition, given the competition of slave-produced sugar from Cuba and Brazil, it was hoped that immigration would help secure the triumph of the free labour system in the British West Indian colonies.
British abolitionists, especially the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, argued vigorously against many of these points. They rejected all these arguments concerning a potential labour shortage in the Caribbean colonies and the laziness and backwardness of the emancipation population. Not only did the abolitionists point out the abuses of the indentured system and the exploitation of the immigrants; they also argued that the Indian immigrants were hardly free labourers themselves. However, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was not opposed to immigration, and it was aware of the importance of keeping up sugar production in the Caribbean and the need for free labour to be more successful than slave labour. As a result, the abolitionists looked to a different form of immigration and sought to encourage free immigrants from the United States and other West Indian colonies rather than those from India or China.

The Colonial Office and the British government conceded that Indian indentured immigration should be reinstated, and the system continued in operation until it was stopped by the Indian government in 1917. One of the most interesting aspects of Kale's study of the system is her treatment of Indians who returned to India and subsequently remigrated to British Guiana and to Trinidad. Returned emigrants to India often had a positive effect on future migration to the Caribbean, and Kale notes the surprising amount of communication between the Caribbean and India in this context. Of course, there were problems associated with indentured immigration, not least of which was the preponderance of men involved. Inevitably, this created difficulties on the plantations in the Caribbean and for females left in destitution in India. Moreover, the only women available for migration were often prostitutes and other unattached women, and this caused further difficulties in the Caribbean.

Kale's study, then, is very useful, especially in dealing with the connections between India, the Caribbean and the debates surrounding the process of Indian indentured labour. While her use of post-colonial criticism does not always clarify the argument, Kale's treatment of the wider issues of labour migration and labour reallocation within the context of the empire is very valuable.

*The Colonial Caribbean in Transition* is a more wide-ranging collection of essays, although it overlaps with Kale's work in certain areas. One of these is the strength of colonialism after emancipation and the response to freedom of the ex-slaves and indentured labourers. As the editors of the volume, Bridget Brereton and Kevin Yelvington, argue in their introduction, 'Colonial power in many cases became more entrenched after emancipation. At the same time, the dispossessed and disenfranchised masses worked within severe constraints to create structures and situations that would guarantee autonomy, dignity, and advancement, although these were often mutually exclusive in historical practice' (2). Like Kale, Brereton and Yelvington give due prominence to issues of gender as well as to the importance of social and cultural history in exploring the post-emancipation period. Brereton's essay, 'Family strategies, gender and the shift to wage labor in the British Caribbean', is an important contribution to the discussion of the gendered nature of emancipation. Although many women did remain on the
plantations after emancipation, Brereton notes that the withdrawal of female labour from the plantations was indeed a reality, despite the attempt by planters to get women to work on the estates after 1838. She discusses the family strategies, often 'combining wage labour by men with domestic production and marketing by women and children' (99), which lay behind this withdrawal. But women did not withdraw from field labour because of their adherence to European gender norms; instead, they did so 'to exchange the hard and degrading gang labor for work in the household, on the family farm, in marketing and in children care' (107). Brereton's essay is not alone in this collection in dealing with gender issues. M. Noel Menezes contributes a useful discussion of the Madeiran Portuguese woman in British Guyanese society in the century after emancipation. In his examination of 'Leisure and society in postemancipation Guyana', Brian L. Moore discusses the nature of elite male and female leisure activities and treats similar activities for other groups in the society. This is a novel and welcome theme which needs further exploration in Caribbean historiography.

A related theme in The Colonial Caribbean in Transition is ethnic stereotyping and images of blacks and Indians in nineteenth-century Guiana. In his contribution, Robert J. Moore comments on the continuing strength of these stereotypes and the problems they have caused as recently as the 1960s. Glenroy Taitt highlights the contribution of post-indentured Indian labourers to Trinidad in the early twentieth century, while Carl Campbell makes use of wills to get at the lives of free blacks and free Africans in Trinidad a century earlier. Many of these chapters make use of under-utilized forms of evidence, an argument which is made by Brinsley Samaroo in seeking to gather more material on the Trinidad disturbances of the 1930s. Bridget Jones adopts a very different approach in her investigation of three Martinician playwrights and their dramatic representation of Haitian history.

The final theme in the volume is ethnicity and politics. Mary Turner provides evidence of the power of religion to fuel political action, especially in looking at two major rebellions in Jamaica. Examining a later period, James Millette explores the persistence of low wages for workers from 1838 to 1938 and the political consequences of workers' grievances in the twentieth century. Yelvington examines the reaction in Trinidad to the war in Ethiopia in 1935-6, and his analysis raises important issues about race and Ethiopianism as well as the significance of these events as a backdrop to the labour strikes and riots of 1937.

The book thus explores a wide variety of themes in the post-emancipation period. Although the essays do not all fit easily together in the volume, the book nevertheless adds considerably to our understanding of the century after emancipation and is a fitting tribute to Wood. Combined with Fragments of Empire, The Colonial Caribbean in Transition reinforces the importance of this period and also the variety of approaches needed to study it.