Ana-Maurine Lara, *Streetwalking: LGBTQ Lives and Protest in the Dominican Republic*. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2021. vii + 213 pp. (Paper US$34.95)

In a 2002 interview with artist Miguel Correa, "Sobre el verano y su color," Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas said that to know the true history of the island, it was necessary to listen to the voice of "that hitherto mute and paralyzed minority: the Cuban homosexual." He implied two things: first, that the accounts from LGBTQ victims of government-state repression reveal more about the reality of the country than the official account by historians and authorities, and secondly, that resistance mechanisms leading to public visibility of the stigmatized and hitherto silenced can be an effective mechanism against political violence.

In a similar vein, *Streetwalking: LGBTQ Lives and Protest in the Dominican Republic* gives priority to the narration of the LGBTQ victims of police repression and political violence—those lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer individuals who hang out in parks and streets and find refuge in each other. Drawing on María Lugones's theorization of streetwalker strategies and Audre Lorde's theorization of silence and action, Ana-Maurine Lara presents gathering in public spaces ("streetwalking") as a mechanism that enables sexual minorities to exercise their identities freely, thus challenging notions of public morality, also known as "public decency" (p. 8)—a concept that exacerbates contempt for LGBTQ individuals, who are often labeled as social scourges ("*lacras sociales*") and criminals ("*delincuentes*") (p. 128).

*Streetwalking* is organized in two parts. Part One, "Street Smarts," contextualizes the dynamics of violence and institutional repression against Dominican homosexuals and trans individuals in the streets, namely "sexual terror," in the frame of the so-called "Colonial Christian tradition" and a biblical division of manhood and womanhood (p. 51); throughout the presidencies of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo (1930–61) and Joaquín Balaguer (1960–96 in nonconsecutive terms); and, at present, via neoliberalism and the massive rise of tourism in the country (p. 58). Part Two, "Streetwalking," presents the various strategies employed by Dominican LGBTQ activists that enable resistance ("Resistencia") to state repression, such as "*confrontación*" (pp. 95–124), "flipping the script" (pp. 125–44), and "*cuentos*" (pp. 145–69). This section shows that public visibility of homosexual and transsexual individuals might be an effective mechanism to destabilize the repressive system.

Drawing on Achille Mbembe's *Necropolitics* (2003), Lara argues that the Dominican Republic constitutes a necropolitical "Catholic Hispanic nation-state" in that the government, widely influenced by Catholic morals, operates

against the poor, Black people, and women and manages the annihilation of the LGBTQ community, representing an affront to the public moral order in the country (p. 128). Homophobia and transphobia therefore function as disciplinary techniques to maintain social order in the country. On the other hand, *Streetwalking* shows how in the Dominican Republic, the battle for sexual freedom is being led by a community that has been beaten and silenced for centuries but that nevertheless resists. *Streetwalking* strongly argues that, far from being annihilated, the Dominican LGBTQ community resists the "necropolitical machinery" (p. 128) and, with the international community's support, fights to gain respectability ("*respeto*") in the country (p. 129). Yet, subverting the order is a complex process that for many entails questioning their Christian faith and locates the family as the first site of struggle (pp. 133–34).

With an enjoyable style, the text benefits from Lara's knowledge of both queer theory and the Dominican Republic's way of life and idioms. Her interviews with LGBTQ activists, her ethnographic research, and her own experiences as a Dominican "streetwalker" offer valuable material to understand both the actual dynamics of violence against sexual minorities, resulting from the intersection of the disciplinary Catholic morality, and other country-specific problems, such as poverty, institutional racism, and a lack of education and job prospects.

Yet a more extensive theoretical approach is missing in relation to the way resistance techniques that give public visibility to the LGBTQ community, such as the caravan parade (p. 117), succeed, if they succeed, in destabilizing the country's repressive apparatus against this community in the Dominican Republic. References to the government-church discourse on homosexuals as "*lacras sociales*" and criminals are present throughout the book, and yet this study would have benefited from a deeper analysis of the testimonials from evangelists, Catholic leaders, and members of the government on state repression against sexual minorities. Such an analysis would strengthen the arguments that the Dominican LGBTQ community manages not only to resist state repression but also to spread its views over and above the repressive system, and that public visibility is an effective mechanism for this group in gaining respectability in the country. Importantly, this would show evidence that, quoting Arenas, a hitherto mute and paralyzed minority is somehow changing the reality for sexual minorities in the Dominican Republic.

*María E. López*
School of Social Sciences, London Metropolitan University, London, U.K.
*m.lopez@londonmet.ac.uk*