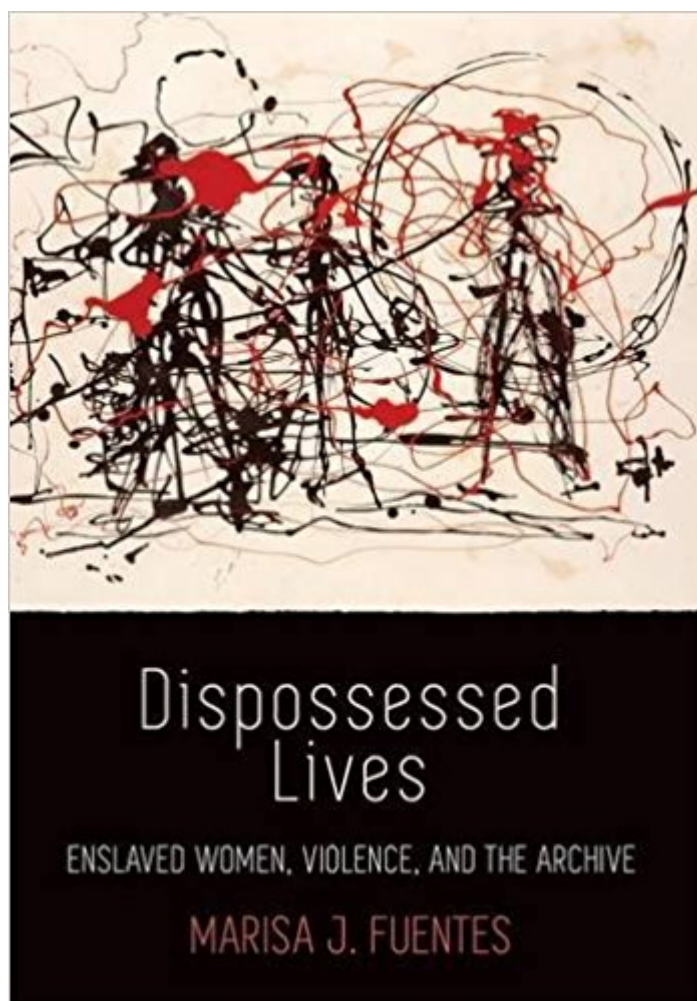


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# Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, And The Archive (Early American Studies)



## Synopsis

In the eighteenth century, Bridgetown, Barbados, was heavily populated by both enslaved and free women. Marisa J. Fuentes creates a portrait of urban Caribbean slavery in this colonial town from the perspective of these women whose stories appear only briefly in historical records. Fuentes takes us through the streets of Bridgetown with an enslaved runaway; inside a brothel run by a freed woman of color; in the midst of a white urban household in sexual chaos; to the gallows where enslaved people were executed; and within violent scenes of enslaved women's punishments. In the process, Fuentes interrogates the archive and its historical production to expose the ongoing effects of white colonial power that constrain what can be known about these women. Combining fragmentary sources with interdisciplinary methodologies that include black feminist theory and critical studies of history and slavery, *Dispossessed Lives* demonstrates how the construction of the archive marked enslaved women's bodies, in life and in death. By vividly recounting enslaved life through the experiences of individual women and illuminating their conditions of confinement through the legal, sexual, and representational power wielded by slave owners, colonial authorities, and the archive, Fuentes challenges the way we write histories of vulnerable and often invisible subjects.

## Book Information

Series: Early American Studies

Hardcover: 232 pages

Publisher: University of Pennsylvania Press (May 31, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0812248228

ISBN-13: 978-0812248227

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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## Customer Reviews

"Dispossessed Lives exemplifies the best new historical scholarship on slavery and gender. Marisa Fuentes's compelling study of women's lives in and around Bridgetown leaves the reader with a

clear sense of who these women were and how they navigated the terrain of a Caribbean slave society. At the same time, Fuentes's engagement with the problems of the archive testifies to the powerful entanglements that constitute the afterlife of slavery. This is an important study that fundamentally reshapes the questions we are compelled to ask about the histories of slavery in the Atlantic world." — Jennifer L. Morgan, New York University

Original in both content and structure, *Dispossessed Lives* offers a nuanced interpretation of race, gender, sexuality, and the power of the archive in the eighteenth-century urban British Atlantic. Marisa J. Fuentes is masterful with her use of extremely scarce primary source material, forcing us to rethink methodology and teaching us how to understand what is not present in the archives." — Erica Armstrong Dunbar, University of Delaware

*Dispossessed Lives* is an important and complex work that demonstrates how historians can employ a range of interdisciplinary methodologies in order to tease out, in sensitive and thoughtful ways, the hidden corporeality of enslavement, or, put another way, the lives, deaths, and bodies of enslaved women that are buried in the archive." — Melanie J. Newton, University of Toronto

Marisa J. Fuentes is Associate Professor of women's and gender studies and history at Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

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