Brian L. Moore's *Cultural Power, Resistance and Pluralism* traces the cultural history of Guyana's people over the century following the abolition of slavery (circa 1838-1900). Art, cuisine, marriage, family and household, formal religions and other spiritual practices, community organizations, labor, leisure, law, and sport are treated in depth and with careful attention to the historical record in order to illuminate persistent patterns, sources and evidence of innovation and change, and people's adaptations and accommodations to the physical and social environment.

Moore's study addresses three compelling questions. First, how does a cultural elite, in this case inspired by British institutions and practices, manage to rule without direct physical coercion a majority population that neither shares the same cultural heritage nor stands any realistic chance of achieving economic wealth or social respectability? Moore's study is thus about the making of hegemony, about the ability of a handful of men to govern thousands of former slaves and indentured servants brought from India, Portugal, and China to work on the plantations after 1838 under appalling working and living conditions. Second, the volume explores how these subordinated peoples responded to the cultural impositions of the elite, adapting some of their ideological, religious, educational, and leisurely practices, but dismissing others as irrelevant, impractical, or simply unattainable. Finally, Moore tests two competing anthropological paradigms, namely, "plural society" theory, first delineated for the Caribbean by M.G. Smith, and "creolization" theory, expounded by, among others, L. Braithwaite and R.T. Smith. Moore asks whether British Guiana is better understood according to plural society theory as comprised of compartmentalized ethnic enclaves; each with its own institutions, or, following creolization theory, as an integrated society consisting of creolized forms and practices.
Moore superbly accomplishes his first major objective of illuminating the character of the Guianese elite’s Weltanschauung and the implements of power that rendered possible its cultural hegemony. Importantly, his conceptualization of "cultural power" encompasses both the ideas and conventions of the colonists who ruled and the "instruments of power" that enabled the elite to survey and control the masses while promoting their own cultural beliefs and institutions. Moore's definition of cultural power is compelling, including "both formal and informal authority systems representing the state, private institutions and individuals" (p. 3). Police violence, editorials, religious and educational teachings, invented traditions, and sports ethics are here more than subjects for the historical imagination; they are simultaneously "instruments of transmission" of culture and "the essence of power" (p. 3).

Moore's account of how subordinated men and women responded to the conditions they encountered is equally engaging, if occasionally given to overstatement about the nature and extent of people's resistance to domination. He uses diverse sources, including menus, tales, musical instruments, games, fashion, and architectural forms. These enable him to paint colorful and comprehensive portraits of peoples newly emancipated and newly arrived to Guiana's shores. We visit Afro-Creole cooperatives, rural Indian villages, Chinese secret societies, and Portuguese churches. Moore's writing is vivid; Guiana's streets, workplaces, homes, schools, and yards come alive in these pages. Periodically, however, fashionable rhetoric about "resistance" overly influences his interpretation of the meaning of social behaviors in the past. Labor strikes, "sassy talk," and an unwillingness to convert to Christianity can be read as actions to resist hegemony. Less convincing are claims that the desire to eat familiar foods or to decorate one's wife with jewelry also constitute resistance.

Finally, Moore's conclusion with regard to determining whether nineteenth-century British Guiana was a plural or an integrated society is certain to elicit controversy, for he argues that it was "both" or "neither," depending upon what period of time and which social group is under consideration. He finds British Guiana pluralistic immediately after emancipation, but less so by the turn of the century as forces of change break down barriers separating ethnic and racial enclaves. In addition, he surmises that the formation of indigenous, creole artifacts and traditions was largely the handiwork of Afro-Creoles. East Indians, in contrast, retained at length the customs of their homelands. Neither consensual nor pluralist theory, however, adequately accounts for the experiences of the Portuguese and Chinese in British Guiana.
Thinking about these competing paradigms as a continuum has heuristic value, as Moore suggests, but his "test" of the theories is marred by the fact that the text is organized in chapters that separately consider each ethnic or racial group without much attention to intra-class relations. Hence the very organization of the material predisposes Moore to "see" nineteenth-century British Guiana through the lenses of plural society theory and to conclude that it is "more relevant" (p. 306). Also, because we read about different groups in separate chapters, it is difficult to judge when and why the plural society gave way to an integrated one. The structure of the text may also cloud our view of the extent to which British Guiana's diverse peoples contributed to Guianese culture more generally and altered the structure and meaning of class, gender, and racial relations. "Indian Bhojpuri" culture, for example, created symbols and practices indigenous to the Americas; it also altered the place of women -Indian and non-Indian- in Guianese society.

These points notwithstanding, Moore's scholarly explication of the making of colonial hegemony, attention to how well-to-do and impoverished persons lived their lives a century ago, thoughtful treatment of the effects of demography, religion, and education on gender relations within different social groups, and new insights about the experiences of the Portuguese and Chinese communities highly recommend this study. The book includes provocative illustrations, and informative comparisons between British Guiana and other Caribbean colonies make the treatise relevant to all Caribbean historians.