



Emmanuel Appadocca; or, Blighted Life: A Tale of the Buccaneers

By Maxwell Philip

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An 1854 novel about a mulatto son's quest for vengeance against his white father, a sugar planter who abandoned him and his mother. Intent on redeeming his mother's honor and outraged by the cruelty and greed that slavery has engendered Appadocca sails the seas with a band of ruthless pirates on a ship named the Black Schooner. The novel, written by the important activist/ intellectual Michel Maxwell Philip (1829-1888) with themes, symbols, and literary techniques, reminiscent of other major authors such as Melville, Douglass, and Stowe. This new edition with scholarly commentaries and annotations will reorient our understanding of the development of Caribbean literature in relation to English and American literary production.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A distinguished Trinidadian jurist of mixed race, Philip published this novel in 1854, when he was a 24-year-old law student, as a protest against slavery in the U.S. In particular, Philip decried "the cruel manner in which the slave holders of America deal with their slave-children," i.e., the offspring of white masters and black mothers. The charismatic, "high-spirited and sensitive" pirate Emmanuel Appadocca sets out to revenge himself on rich sugar planter James Wilmington for having dishonored Emmanuel's black mother and abandoned Emmanuel, his mulatto son. This pirate story, widely considered the first Caribbean novel, is part swashbuckling adventure, part "exquisite philosophy," a mixture of social critique and aristocratic claims on behalf of Philip's fellow Creoles. Philip delights in turning the age's most revered works to his own uses: the novel begins with an epigraph from Euripides (in the original), prefaces each chapter with lines from one of Shakespeare's plays, and looks most obviously to Sir Walter Scott for a model of Romance. In the land- and seascapes, Philips comes into his own, although few readers will relish his renditions of Caribbean dialects or his unthinking comic stereotypes of blacks. Despite the novel's artistic flaws, students of Caribbean politics and culture, addicts of seafaring novels and seekers of protest literature will find this rediscovered Trinidadian classic interesting. Commentaries by William E. Cain and Selwyn R. Cudjoe (both of Wellesley College) place the novel in historical perspective.

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From Library Journal

Old salts obviously like books with two titles. Published in 1854, this claims to be the first Caribbean novel. The plot follows the title character, a young mulatto, who sets sail as a pirate to seek vengeance on the father who abandoned him and his mother. This edition, which contains scholarly notes, still makes for a rousing sea adventure.

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Users Review

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