Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 337 pp.

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By exploring black women's encounters with the carceral state, Sarah Haley's *No Mercy Here* is a timely contribution to recent scholarship on and activism over race, policing, and mass incarceration. Two of the most public inquiries into these matters have been *The New Jim Crow*: *Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by legal scholar Michelle Alexander and director Ava DuVernay's documentary film *13th*. The latter provocatively argues that while the Thirteenth Amendment declared involuntary servitude and slavery unconstitutional, it also created a significant exception to freedom: a person still could be forced into labor as a punishment for crime. By criminalizing African Americans—on charges such as vagrancy or being unemployed (as a result of a systemically discriminatory workforce)—the postbellum legal system could actually force free people to perform unfree labor for the benefit of local governments, as well as private owners and corporations.

Haley's book picks up at this historical moment in the decades following black emancipation, when white supremacy, ever present, expanded and reshaped its protocols of terror and punishment from slavery to the criminal justice system. Combing records from the state of Georgia from the post-Civil War era through the first decades of the twentieth century, Haley addresses how African American women's forced labor contributed to the production of "Jim Crow modernity," enabling narratives of southern white progress at the expense of black citizenship and black lives. Imprisoned black women helped to develop the infrastructure and economy of the New South, building and maintaining roads to keep up with automotive advances, working on prison farms, and serving time as domestic servants in white households. As Haley explains, "State violence alongside gendered forms of labor exploitation made the New South possible, not as a departure from the Old, but as a reworking and extension of previous structures of captivity and abjection through gendered capitalism" (3). Her study examines court documents, letters, images, wardens' records, and other print material, as well as black women's songs, stories, and other acts of will, to interrogate how black women both were confined by and resisted incarceration. The book's five body chapters are arranged chronologically, surveying African American women and the convict lease system, which gave way to the chain gang in 1908, as well as systems of parole that bound parolees to white households and surveillance.

The book's title *No Mercy Here*, drawn from the lyrics of a song by an imprisoned woman, Alma Hicks, succinctly summarizes the criminal justice system that punished African American women seemingly without deference to their gender, while still meting out punishments that were specifically gendered. Considered "as subjects outside of the protected category 'woman'" and beyond reform, African American women could not expect the leniency afforded to white women who often received lesser or no sentencing for similar crimes (3). Haley threads parallel accounts of black and white women throughout her book for the sake of comparison, while keenly arguing how the category of "woman"—as well as narratives about postbellum southern "progress"—depended on white supremacist violence and black women's representation as deviant (8). Her point is not to lament that white supremacy excluded black women from "normative femininity" (8). Rather, Haley's analysis more crucially shows African American women were dismissed as women yet exploited for their physical and sexual capacities as women, including through sexual violation while in custody.

By focusing on black women as the central subjects of her study, Haley intervenes in what more typically has been the focus on black male prisoners, as Alexander decidedly concentrates in her own study *The New Jim Crow*. Haley is not alone in examining the history of black women and the carceral state. Her work builds on related studies by Angela Davis, Kali Gross, and Cheryl Hicks. Most immediately, Haley's study overlaps with Talitha LeFlouria's *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South*, published only a year prior. The two may be read as complementary projects, as both nimbly navigate the challenge of extracting and exacting useful information about historically devalued black women from Georgia's prison records. Haley distinguishes her work, however, through an interdisciplinary turn in her final chapter that may particularly appeal to cultural studies scholars. As one strategy for supplementing archival records, Haley turns to prison-themed blues by artists like Bessie Smith and Victoria Spivey to glimpse the interior lives of convicted black women. Engaging performance studies scholars such as Fred Moten and cultural critic Erica Edwards, Haley reads blues music created in or about prison as "render[ing] an imaginative world of carceral dismantling, not by merely recounting the terror of gendered regimes of imprisonment but by challenging the very foundations of ideologies justifying carceral control" (214). This focus on "the blues of black feminist sabotage" culminates Haley's repeated focus on black female resistance—rather than merely imprisoned victimization—throughout.

In recuperating the subjectivity of black imprisoned women, one of Haley's more subtle, but significant gestures is to cite several of her black women subjects by name, with numerous names featured together. The visual effect is to help readers acknowledge both the individual and cumulative effect of black women's punishment, which threatened to erase them from the public sphere of their black communities:

> Lucinda Stevens, Mamy Jones, Ella Wallace, Lucy Willoughby, Mattie Williams, Ann Thomas, Sarah Stubbs, Emma Davis, Lizzie Patterson, Bettie Wilson, Martha Vines, Violet Jones, Sophia Baker, Pleasant Morgan, Florida Thomas, Susan Conyers, Della Cole, Mary Campbell, Rosa Thomas, Nancy Smith, Julia Whitfield, Flora Richardson, Mollie Farmer, and Eliza Cobb

These are some of the names among those "whose position as gender-deviant subjects was propagated by the press and reflected in judicial decisions. This exclusion from the normative feminine subject position meant disproportionate arrest and prosecution" (57).

Woven into the body of the narrative, rather than relegated to footnotes, this list of names reclaims and values African American women in a way that simply saying "more than 20 women" would not. The black women profiled in Haley's study incur punishment for anything from minor infractions, such as cursing in public, to manslaughter in self-defense against domestic abuse and (attempted) sexual assault. Their sentences entail not only jail time and labor on the chain gang or in convict lease camps, but also extended surveillance on parole. Although Haley is unable to recuperate a distinctive voice for each of those women, the act of centering their identities grants them a visibility that counters their previous erasure or, rather, their hypervisiblity as criminals in the racist press and legal system. This methodological gesture might be linked to contemporary activist campaigns such as #SayHerName that commemorate the lives of women and girls killed by police brutality and resist their invisibility.

While recounting African American women's experiences with the criminal justice system, Haley's intersectional analysis yields insights for scholars interested in a range of related topics, including working-class and labor history, disability studies, and black women's expressive culture. For example, in the first chapter, Haley reveals a pattern of several women "characterized as 'weak-minded'" in "clemency file documents" (53). Although she concludes that this may have been yet another maligning projection of black women as deviant, Haley's observations invite more extended studies of the relationship between race and the criminalization of mental health disorders. Scholars across fields will find this book to be an engaging, provocative, and informed social history of race, gender, punishment and the long history of incarceration and capitalism.