

Book Reviews | Reseñas

– *Rethinking Latin America: Development, Hegemony, and Social Transformation*, by Ronaldo Munck, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

‘Is it possible that Latin America is now showing Europe where it is heading?’, asks Ronaldo Munck provocatively on the first page of this book. Just as Marx said that industrial England showed the rest of the world where it was heading, the author writes that ‘today the very complex, dynamic, conflictual but above all, original processes of development, new constructions of hegemony, and vision of social transformation in Latin America offer a fascinating laboratory for the rest of the world and, maybe, a mirror to the future’ (p. 1). This, then, is the book that was waiting to be written since the emergence of the ‘new left’ over a decade ago, reinterpreting 500 years of the region’s history in the light of this new phase.

Drawing on Antonio Gramsci’s concepts of hegemony, of the ‘national-popular’ historic bloc, and of the ‘compromise state’, on the ‘warm’ Marxism of José Carlos Mariátegui (whose classic *Siete Ensayos* provides the structure for the seven chapters of this book), and on Karl Polanyi’s concepts of embedding/disembedding and the double movement, Munck offers a richly nuanced overview of the region’s trajectory between 1510 and 2010. The focus becomes sharper and the treatment more detailed as the book advances. Thus we have a single chapter on conquest to modernity (1510 to 1910), a chapter on nation-making (1910-1964) and then a series of chapters that take us through the national security state, the rise and fall of neoliberalism and the rise of the new left (hegemony struggles, 1959-76; market hegemony, 1973-2001; and social countermovement 1998-2012). Each offers a reinterpretation based on the key concepts of development, hegemony, and social transformation that is full of rich insight. It is hard to see how this book will not be recognized as the definitive progressive interpretation of the decades from the 1930s to the early 2000s.

It is a tour de force, comprehensive and sure-footed as it weaves its way through an immense and varied literature on the region’s economic, social and political development. Of course much of the narrative is very familiar to anyone who has studied the region, but no one can fail to be surprised by

the subtle, generous and always authoritative treatment of issues and themes that have elicited fierce debates – the enduring legacies of dependency theory but recognizing the need for a more ‘transformationalist approach’ (p. 23), the place of the indigenous who hold the promise of ‘a new matrix to rethink social transformation’ (p. 209), the ways in which state and society are held in creative tension throughout, and the role of culture (Latin America’s ‘uneven assimilation of difference’ (p. 100)) to name the ones that most struck and excited me.

Munck eschews totalizing visions, whether of dependency, modernizations, nationalism or globalization, managing to focus on what are essential and necessary features of each of these approaches while espousing an approach that is more richly variegated: ‘more insecure forms of knowledge, a greater receptivity toward bottom-up or indigenous forms of knowledge, and less assurance in presenting a polished alternative to the status quo developed solely at the level of social and political theory’ (p. 23). This book illustrates the promise of such an approach, valuing elements long neglected by both left and right. Most importantly, Munck offers a rare appreciation of the potential of indigenous movements and cultural understandings – ‘to the logic of accumulation they counterposed the logic of reciprocity’ (p. 213) – and he values their role in reclaiming the ‘community of emancipation’ that once existed and in developing its values of reciprocity, cooperation and redistribution (p. 215).

Yet, after so many fascinating and engaging chapters, to this reviewer the final chapter was a disappointment. Perhaps it is too much to expect anyone who knows the region with the intellectual and moral engagement of Ronaldo Munck to venture a verdict on what the future holds, but he did offer that promise in the book’s opening pages. And he does venture tentatively into the terrain towards the end in the book’s final section, entitled ‘new matrix’. Recognizing that ‘the national-popular state-based hegemonic model’ (p. 207) cannot be revived under the conditions of modernizations and the exhaustion of the neoliberal hegemonic project, he observes the lack of a clear hegemonic model to cluster around (p. 210).

In this current situation, he counterposes Brazil’s ‘conservative modernization’ (p. 207) and the PT’s ‘hegemony in reverse’ (p. 208) to the contemporary Amerindian movements which have ‘seriously unsettled dominant cultural meanings and created new ways of doing politics’ with alternative conceptions of nature, culture and citizenship. ‘Western individualism – and the rational economic actor – gives way to a more complex communal form of belonging and of constructing an alternative future based on traditions and the past’ (p. 209). These he sees feeding in directly

‘to the emerging Polanyian countermovement’ whereby society reacts against unregulated market policies (p. 209). All this is very promising but unfortunately it is not examined in any more detail to ask if it really can carry such hopes and how it might contribute to the emergence of a new hegemonic project. The wider challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss that have the potential radically to change the context for social change go virtually unmentioned except with the closing reference to the indigenous being ‘keenly attuned to biodiversity and sustainability rather than pursuing private profit in a mad rush’ (p. 218).

The book’s final sentence claims that ‘Latin America is making world history, and looks set to lead the world into the twenty-first century’ (p. 218) but unfortunately it is a quote (from Oscar Guardiola-Rivera). The book only substantiates this claim in the most vague and tentative of ways. This was a big let-down to this reviewer, making the book a brilliant reinterpretation of Latin America’s past but offering little guidance on its possible future.

Peadar Kirby, University of Limerick

– *The Long, Lingering Shadow. Slavery, Race and Law in the American Hemisphere*, by Robert J. Cottrol, University of Georgia Press, 2013.

The Long, Lingering Shadow by Robert J. Cottrol analyses the context specific, complex and enduring legacies of slavery and ‘race-thinking’ in the American hemisphere. The book consists of three parts that chronologically address regimes of slavery and race, the politics of ‘whitening’ in the period immediately after the end of slavery and, lastly, recent developments regarding emancipation and equality. Within each part (consisting of three chapters each), attention is given to how these chronological themes play out in Spanish America, Brazil and the United States. Next to convincingly showing that ‘this history is best appreciated in a comparative perspective’, as the cover explains, the book also exemplifies the epistemological benefits of interdisciplinary research. Cottrol’s combination of socio-legal, historical and comparative perspectives firstly demonstrates how the symbolic and social dimensions of ‘race relations’ are intertwined with laws in constituting and lessening racial hierarchies. Secondly, this book brilliantly demonstrates that ‘the law’ is a multidirectional force in society: it may deepen an unequal social order (post-reconstruction era, early twentieth century US) or, conversely, be an instrument for a more equal social order (post-WWII US). Whereas in the U.S. the law was central in both ‘the con-

struction of racial inequality and the struggle to achieve equal rights' (p. 1), it was almost absent in maintaining and (later) combating inequalities in Brazil and Spanish America.

The historic-comparative perspective on these racial configurations demonstrates that there is no universal legacy of slavery. Cottrol consciously transcends 'US centric' perspectives on law and race. The author demonstrates how complex variations regarding (among other things) ideology, law, colonial rule and demographics resulted in a rigid U.S. binary racial formation (black or white), whereas racial formations in Spanish America and Brazil were much more permeable, for instance with regard to manumission, (change of) racial classification and 'mixed marriages'. Latin America even had 'a history of men with some African ancestry serving in senior positions' in the nineteenth century (p. 12). These differences also pertained to citizenship. For instance, native-born free 'African Brazilians' were entitled to citizenship during slavery and thereafter. In the US, a complex situation of partial inclusion of free African Americans into American citizenship and via manumission (roughly until the late eighteenth century) was followed by a period of hostility towards manumission and increased exclusion of free African Americans from U.S. citizenship. In the nineteenth century, many free African Americans lost previously enjoyed rights (voting rights, the right of free settlement, the right to occupy certain jobs). This was followed by rigid policies of segregation (especially in the U.S. south) known as 'Jim Crow' (1890s-1960s). Apparently, citizenship is not necessarily a condition from which one 'moves forward' by being granted an increasing number of rights but may be subject to agonistic processes that result in regression.

To be sure, countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay were (and still are) racially stratified societies that developed policies of *blanqueamiento*, of 'national whitening' via immigration policies, after the era of slavery (between 1880 and 1945), but they never developed large scale disenfranchisements nor Jim Crow laws. The U.S. and Latin America were and are differentially racialized regions. Cottrol demonstrates why totalizing claims regarding the legacies of slavery are problematic, thus transcending U.S. centrism on this subject. At the same time he acknowledges that his analysis of the Latin American 'paradoxes' departs from a binary U.S. experience regarding race (pp. 26-8). One might wonder how a 'Latin American' scholar, starting from these paradoxes, might make sense of the idiosyncrasies of U.S. socio-racial formations.

Interestingly, precisely the 'rigid separation of the races in the US' in the past helped to unify African Americans in their struggle against clearly

identifiable forms of exclusion. Cottrol: ‘It also, over the last forty years, helped to produce civil rights gains unmatched elsewhere in the hemisphere’ (p. 298). As a result African Americans in the U.S. are currently much more represented in universities, in the management of private companies, in congress and in government positions than African Latin Americans. The price of these improvements is that race became enacted in law and social statistics. In contrast to ‘opponents of race-conscious policies’ in Latin American countries who argue that US-like binary racial classifications are inappropriate for Latin American social realities, Cottrol is willing to pay the price of ‘racial scorekeeping’. He argues that deeply entrenched and centuries-old patterns of slavery and racial exclusion still make the use of race in law and public policies necessary to undo these legacies from the past (p. 294).

The *Long, Lingering Shadow* is a must-read for everyone who wants to get a deeper understanding of the contextualized and divergent legacies of slavery in the US, Brazil and Spanish America. At the same time, this impressive study raises the question whether the adoption of US-style identity politics is the only effective route to combat social exclusion in Brazil and Spanish America. If a nation increasingly understands itself in a black-white dichotomy, where would this leave those individuals who prefer ways of knowing the self and relating to others that transcend the logics of race? If race is a social construction that reduces identities to externally visible features, then when is the right moment to replace this formation with new ways of connecting? Can we imagine ways of connecting with other human beings that transcend race without losing sight of the political need to create a substantive equal social order?

Guno Jones, VU University Amsterdam

– *Centering Animals in Latin American History*, edited by Martha Few and Zeb Tortorici, Duke University Press, 2013.

The book’s proposal is that of ‘centering animals’ within narratives not only as mere figurative characters of history but as foci of human attention through time. The volume is chronologically organized in three parts encompassing animal histories from colonial to post-colonial periods.

The first part, ‘Animals, Culture, and Colonialism’, offers three chapters on a critical epoch in Latin American history when a Eurocentric worldview was broadly incepted in contrast to existing Mesoamerican cosmologies. Until then, native animals had been imbued with significance and

symbolism in indigenous worldviews. The first two chapters by León García Gargaraza ('The Year People Turned into Cattle') and Martha Few ('Killing Locusts in Colonial Guatemala') are exemplar of how Spaniards brought new domesticated animals (such as cows and sheep) and agricultural practices that turned out to be corruptive of both the environment and ethnoecological knowledge systems. Both cases offer rich and thoughtful insights into the power dynamics that emerged in colonial Latin America as a result of incoming anthropocentric modes of human-animal interactions, with illustrations based on dietary, spiritual and agricultural changes and conflicts. The third chapter by Zed Tortorici ('In the Name of the Father and the Mother of All Dogs') examines several different circumstances of anthropomorphizing dogs to parody central religious rituals such as Catholic baptisms, weddings and funerals. The projection of human gender roles and social relations onto pets blurs human-animal categorical distinctions that are ludicrous and comic to some and heretical to others.

The second part, 'Animals and Medicine, Science and Public Health', has three chapters covering the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries on the dual nature of animals as sources of diseases and cures. Adam Warren ('From Natural History to Popular Remedy') discusses the moral issues regarding the usage of nonhuman animals' body parts for the benefit and health of humans. This is articulated through an analysis of the interplay between Andean ethno-medicine and western medical systems in the eighteenth century. The chapter by Heather McCrea ('Pest to Vector') describes how the elite and Mexican state institutions were served by the precepts of public health as tools for social change and domination. The value-laden creation of sanitary (disease-free) environments resulted in new types of relationships between humans, other animals, and insects. Public health services enforced control over livestock, pests and, ultimately, over many human activities. Neel Ahuja ('Notes on Medicine, Culture, and the History of Imported Monkeys in Puerto Rico') analyses the moral issues raised by the importation and breeding of rhesus macaques' 'bodies' in neo-colonial Puerto Rican islands to serve U.S. scientific experimentations in pharmaceutical research.

The third section, 'The Meanings and Politics of Postcolonial Animals', tackles more recent historical turnovers in human-animal interactions as illustrated by the emergence of and contrast between conservation and animal welfare movements, ideologies of hunting and the commodification of animals. Reinaldo Funes Monzote's chapter ('Animal Labour and Protection in Cuba') discusses the emergence of a Cuban animal welfare organization in the context of technological changes in sugarcane plantations dur-

ing the nineteenth century. This case is centred on the important role that yoked oxen played as a means of transport, and as a source of food and clothing to humans. John Soluri's chapter ('On Edge') takes us to the history of fur seal hunting along the Patagonian coast from the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The chapter contrasts the interactions of European and indigenous hunters with marine mammals, and how the European hunters decimated these animal populations to levels of conservation concern. Regina Horta Duarte ('Birds and Scientists in Brazil') offers a well-documented account on the decimation of bird species throughout Brazil from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. This is accompanied by an illustration of the agency of natural history scientists in shaping emerging preservationist discourses that resonated with the shaping of a new national identity. The last study case is Lauren Derby's ('Trujillo, the Goat') exploration of the common usage of nicknames based on animal characteristics in the Dominican Republic. While this is a customary practice mainly amongst men, the chapter describes and engages in sociological explanations on the association of former dictator (1930-61) Rafael Trujillo with a goat following the celebration of the first anniversary of his death.

Finally, the conclusions presented by anthropologist Neil Whitehead ('Loving, Being, Killing Animals') are astounding in their theoretical insight. He again reflects upon the critical issues addressed by the book such as the everlasting and inescapable epistemological, methodological and ethical challenges of writing animal histories that take into account the human-animal divide. He reminds us of the perennial instability of explaining categories such as 'animal' or 'human'. His engagement with diverse strands of thought (such as 'multinaturalism' and several other explanatory devices) will most certainly enrich readers' contextual understanding of these rather subtle borderlines.

Overall, the volume's approach is methodologically innovative and challenging and shows that the descriptive and analytical presence of animals in history writing does not necessarily centre them. As nonhuman animals (as opposed to us human animals) have not left written accounts from their perspectives and do not 'speak' for themselves, they appear here as nonhuman social actors. While most historical sources are human-centred, this book pursues an ambitious target to reset historical narratives by challenging us with an alternative context of thinking about animal agency in less anthropocentric cultural histories. To this end, this volume first and foremost provides a unique opportunity for a critical interrogation of species' categorical boundaries – i.e. that of the 'human' – and how they came to interplay in alternative modes of species' interactions through time. Each

chapter takes a slightly different tack on these issues, but the volume largely operates in exploring the interface of an arguably false dichotomy of humans vs animals. While the volume does not cover the histories of all the Latin American countries, it is certainly a significant push toward the understanding of the region's natural history and will delight readers from various disciplinary backgrounds.

Leopoldo Cavaleri Gerhardinger, University of Campinas
Dannieli Firme Herbst, Federal University of Santa Catarina

– *River of Hope. Forging Identity and Nation in the Rio Grande Borderlands*, by Omar. S. Valério-Jiménez, Duke University Press, 2013.

This book is about a cultural historical study of the villas del norte in the north-eastern borderlands of Nuevo Santander on both sides of the Rio Grande between the 1750s and the 1890s. The structure of the book is clear. Each chapter has an introduction on the main topic and a conclusion. The first three chapters present us with a solid historical context of the development of Nuevo Santander (now divided into Tamaulipas and part of Texas). It is the odyssey of migrants in the middle of the eighteenth century who established their colonies in the borderlands, encouraged by the Bourbon colonial government which aimed at the construction of a border society with colonists able to sustain themselves. This plan had to resolve the problem of costly presidios and missions unable to pacify and control the borderlands. The villas del norte harboured mixed immigrant populations of vecinos, Indians as indentured labour under Spanish and Mestizo owners of haciendas and ranchos, and runaways from the coast and central Mexico. Largely based on local archives, the author gives us a detailed account of the development of these border societies that were fragmented in terms of class, ethnic origin and gender. Small elites dominated, supported in their patriarchal power by colonial land policies, control of municipal governments, tribunals and borderland militias. The hilo conductor of this book is a clever analysis of the gradual estrangement during the colonial period and later from the Mexican state of the Novosantanderinos, due to increasing military and fiscal requisitions by a state that ignored the urgency of local defence against enemy Indians. At crucial moments such as during the rebellion of Texas (1835-1836) and its expansionist designs on territory north of the Rio Grande, the Novosantanderinos supported Mexico, but they wanted more autonomy, protection against Indians attacks and an end to continuous military requisitions. Nevertheless, we can also see the pro-

found cultural and economic change that entered the villas with independence (1821) when liberalization of trade led to the influx of foreigners and increasing ties and even dependence on the U.S. markets. The author gives us a clever analysis of, on the one hand, social and cultural change brought by foreigners, and, on the other, the persistence of Spanish colonial values and attitudes. We get a good view not only of how the elites managed to adapt themselves and maintain power, but also how the subordinate classes were able to develop some strategies to resist that domination. The part on gender inequality clearly presents the subordinate position of women in many social and marital conflicts, but also how women – especially those belonging to the upper classes – were at times able to stand up for themselves.

In chapter four the author addresses the social and political consequences of the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty (1848) for the residents of towns along the Rio Grande. The reactions of *vecinos* and municipal authorities to U.S. military occupation remind me of Mexican attitudes during the French occupation of 1863: the safety of the population, *defensa del hogar*, and its interests were often more important to local eyes than resisting the invaders. The peace treaty gave the residents north of the Rio Grande citizens' rights, and reshaped the physical, political, economic and social configuration of new towns north of the Rio Grande. Legal and illegal international trade reconfigured Mexico's traditional trade routes. Non-Spanish immigrants such as merchants, buyers of land, artisans and professionals arrived, and Anglo-Americans, who were needed to control the building of American local administrations, held privileged positions. Important newcomers accommodated to the Tejano elites by maintaining existing class relations and reproducing the old elite's social patterns. The mixed and darker coloured popular classes were in their habits and attitudes the object of increasing disdain by American newcomers, men and women alike, although these newcomers did not eschew cockfights or *fandangos*. Creative popular resistance against municipal ordinances to eliminate *fandangos*, as the author suggests, may well have been a shared community attempt to resist American control. Was it perhaps the beginning of the cultural reconquest we have seen in the late twentieth century? But the dominant view until the end of the century that comes from the local press, judicial archives and Texas statistics at the state level is one of increasing criminalization of Tejanos, seen as depraved of morality and prone to crime. This resulted in the increasing incarceration of Tejanos. In daily practice they became victims of a seriously flawed judiciary and prison system, or sometimes lynching by vigilante mobs.

One of the more important social changes in the post-war years were those in class and gender relations due to the introduction of the American legal system. Tejano elites lost power and property as Anglo-American newcomers challenged their titles. Fascinating, in my view, is the development of the border as a ‘weapon of the weak’, since it gave Texan slaves and indentured labourers on both sides the opportunity to escape. Equally fascinating is the author’s analysis based on many sources, among others court proceedings, marriage books and newspapers, of the increasing independence of women in issues such as labour conflicts, sexual or domestic abuse and divorce. Chapter six analyses the difficult process of acculturation between Americans and Tejanos within the context of continuing troubles, rebellions and the Civil War. The imposed border divided an ethnic community with a much older history and common cultural identity on both banks of the Rio Grande. Citizenship remained a contested issue, claimed when Tejanos believed it was in their interest and ignored when it proved detrimental, as was the case for many of them, disappointed about the promises of American democracy. In short, this study is certainly a valuable contribution to the history of the Provincias Internas before and after the Mexican-American war.

Raymond Buve, Leiden University

– *Enabling Peace in Guatemala: The Story of MINUGUA*, by William Stanley, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013.

It requires courage to invite an outside researcher to examine the institutional archives and to publish an uncensored account based on internal memoranda, confidential correspondence, communications between headquarters and regional offices, and reviews of inquiry boards. The United Nations Department of Political Affairs and that of Peacekeeping Operations did just that and allowed Professor William Stanley to write an astonishingly outspoken book on the history of MINUGUA, the United Nations Verification Mission of Human Rights and Peace Agreements in Guatemala. Stanley also had the opportunity to interview several of MINUGUA’s heads of missions and senior staff members, as well as some key political persons in Guatemala, such as former peace negotiators Héctor Rosada-Granados and Gustavo Porras, and former minister of defence Julio Balconi. The backbone of the empirical evidence, however, rests on the abundant amount of quotations from MINUGUA’s internal correspondence between Guatemala City and New York, and the many internal staff reports.

Stanley opted, very reasonably, for a chronological review, taking into consideration the functioning and results of the consecutive heads of mission and their teams. The reporting style is frank, open, and straightforward. One observes the many political obstacles of the major Guatemalan actors as well as the intra-UN disputes and intra-MINUGUA disagreements. MINUGUA was a *sui generis* organization and was coordinated in New York on behalf of the UN Secretary General, and not all UN standard procedures could be taken into account. It had also to coordinate (unfortunately not flawlessly) with the regular UN offices like the UNDP and UN agencies, as well as with the tiny Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. Moreover, MINUGUA's mandate, originally established in 1994 during the war, was extended after the Peace Agreements in December 1996, *inter alia* with an Institutional Strengthening Division (FORIN by its Spanish acronyms), a mandate overlapping with that of the regular UN institutions. It has to be understood that MINUGUA's budget was financed entirely by bilateral donors, most of them operating with their own support programme in Guatemala.

The author has an open eye for these and other conflicting circumstances. Stanley mentions the consequences of the even more difficult Guatemalan political context (civil-military nonconformity, political murders, organized crime, fragile institutions) in detail. His final judgment, however, is clearly a positive one. This is in line with most of the previous scholarly and donor publications about the long term effects of MINUGUA's presence in Guatemala between 1994 and 2002. But this is the most convincing overview of all programmes and activities. The author is very accurate and detailed, and never loses sight of the general context of the complicated peace process, the effects of the two Truth Reports (one by the Catholic Church and the other by a UN team), the many disputes and the major and minor crises. Throughout the chapters one can find a meticulous account of obstacles, advances, discussions, and political assessments by the senior staff, which, by the way, are not always completely accurate.

Stanley mentions that the MINUGUA staff was very well informed about what really happened in the country, perhaps being the second best source of information after military intelligence. It is therefore tempting to examine some of the key processes that the diligent MINUGUA officers did not report. Probably the most important process that escaped the attention of the MINUGUA observers was the fact that, parallel to the official peace negotiations, delegation members of the armed forces and of the *comandancia general* of the *Unión Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* negotiated bilaterally for six years, and, during the last year, with the au-

thorization of president Arzú. In March 1996 both parties reached an agreement on peace and reconciliation. Later that year but before the signing of the peace accords, army colonels and guerrilla field commanders arranged the logistics for disarmament in Madrid. When the guerrilla commandantes returned to Guatemala for the signing of the final agreements, army officers served as their bodyguards. When the UN blue helm contingent started with the demobilization afterwards, they didn't have much to do.

MINUGUA did make the difference on matters of verifying the peace agreements and the monitoring of the human rights. Its mandate was additionally expanded to (technical) assistance to the government on peace and reconciliation-related processes and institutions. Stanley focusses, correctly, on MINUGUA's principal task and does not analyse in detail those relatively secondary assignments.

This book is a textbook review, written with sympathy for the mission but maintaining the necessary distance to be able to evaluate and criticize. It is this kind of publication that the UN and the bilateral donor community really needed. In many cases there are internal evaluations and review directorates, but they are staffed by functionaries with a career within the organization, and that is not the best guarantee for the measured, insightful, and critical search for lessons learned. The author of this book did his duty very well.

Dirk Kruijt, Utrecht University

– *Governing Indigenous Territories: Enacting Sovereignty in the Ecuadorian Amazon*, by Juliet Erazo, Duke University Press, 2013.

Juliet Erazo's *Governing Indigenous Territories* is a thoughtful ethnography of indigenous politics and 'territorial citizenship' in the space of Rukullakta – an indigenous territory that is both place and property – and governed by Kichwa. She looks at the dialectical process of Rukullakta's Kichwa leaders shaping the residents into citizens, and citizens shaping leaders.

The book starts with the historical background, much of which will be familiar in its broad outlines to scholars working in the Upper Napo: the Spanish appearing in the region in the sixteenth century, the ensuing colonization, uprisings, and abandonment of the area by the colonial powers, and the arrival of the missionaries, whose attempt to incorporate the Napo Kichwa into both the Christian faith and the national economy met with some success. Then Erazo explores relationships between leaders and citi-

zens as they are negotiated around the intertwined issues of Rukullakta economy, property regimes, and land use. Tracing the history of the Rukullakta cooperative, the author illuminates the uneasy role of the collective at its inception, harnessing collective will and effort in a cultural context where political hierarchies were unwelcome. Erazo looks back to the early days of the collective, the projects implemented through collective labour, from the initial tree-clearing in preparation to filing a land claim, to ‘leaders [asking] people to donate their labour towards projects that would impress state officials and...speed up the granting of the official land title’ (p. 67). In historical details like these, Erazo shows how hierarchies in the Kichwa collective were necessary in dealing with other kinds of hierarchies. The second chapter explains how state funding, when it flowed to the project, as it did in the 1970s, bestowed legitimacy on the leaders, enabling them to deliver ‘development’, from community centres, to cattle, to the cooperative members – and how when the funding dried up, the collectivist ethos subsided, settling somewhere between the large-scale collaboration envisioned by the project leaders and the pre-1970s patrilineal kin groups.

In Chapter three, Erazo shines a light on another important element of Rukullakta history: ‘the land problem’ and the debates about property, which are also debates about the rights of citizens and the role of the government. She also points out – and this kind of nuance is particularly important in the production of knowledge about Amazonian indigenous groups, which are often homogenized in the various political idealizations that get projected onto them – that in Rukullakta there were three distinct and competing understandings of citizen-government relationships. These included a collectivist view that envisioned citizenship as commitment to territorial government that would manage the lands to benefit all; a conservative view that saw collective projects as a temporary solution, instrumental for receiving a collective land title, after which point pre-cooperative land claims would be reinstated; and the egalitarians, who advocated an equal division of land among all citizens, to be used as each person wished. Erazo also takes care to point out that all three modalities ‘combine aspects of older way of doing things with some of the notions that the state [and the missionaries] promoted...’ (pp. 100-1). In that, she also makes an important contribution to ethnographic knowledge that counters imaginaries of Amazonian indigenous groups as either static, stuck in an ‘ethnographic present’ of one kind or another, or as falling squarely on one side of the ‘traditional-modern’ binary. Her discussion of debates and conflicts over land rights and land use continues into the 1990s, and covers the impact of conservation initiatives that were largely unaware of the local

debates over property, and that came to Rukullakta with an anti-cash crop and anti-cattle ranching agenda, implementing ‘community-based development projects’ which bolstered the collectivists’ preference for central management.

Bringing us into the era of conservation and ecotourism, which is booming in the Napo Province, Erazo shows that the political framework of Rukullakta’s existence was always negotiated, and remains contested to this day. Chapter four continues to analyse the impact of conservation and sustainable development projects in the region, with an overview of how ecotourism has become a desirable form of development for the cooperative, and how conservation initiatives have become a medium for new contracts and understandings between Rukullakta and the state of Ecuador. Erazo also states that ‘after three decades of interactions with environmentalists ... leaders in Rukullakta – and in the Ecuadorian Amazon more broadly – have come to see nature as limited and in need of protection by and from human beings’ (p. 168). That, I felt, was too much of a generalization about the region, and portrays as an entrenched consensus what, in my experience, is a flexible discourse in the Ecuadorian lowlands. But overall Erazo provides a well-documented, detailed view of the role conservation has played in the region, and how it has mapped on to older struggles over land and land futures.

The final chapter takes stock of how Rukullakta’s residents negotiate and perform unity, and how they manage conflict. Alongside this, Erazo also examines strategies through which citizens shape their leaders. From strategic unity against outside threats, to the role of leaders in resolving disputes over sorcery in the community, to community youth contests, Chapter five profiles spaces and circumstances that show the range of what ‘territorial governance’ includes, and how it is being broadened and expanded.

Finally, the conclusion sums up the changes that have happened to and within Rukullakta, and highlights the fact that in this space, Kichwa leaders have constantly innovated, forging new ‘governable spaces’ and leveraging new technologies of citizenship. Conversely, Erazo reminds us that just as Rukullakta leaders shape citizens, the citizens, in turn, shape their leaders, bringing their own agencies into the equation. And Erazo’s conclusion gives a sense that this history is continuing to unfold, as Rukullakta citizens deal with ecotourism initiatives, petroleum roads, and new state interests. Ultimately, the case study that this book encompasses is an excellent lens for understanding the political space of encounters between Amazonian Kichwa and the Ecuadorian state and non-state actors, and the fusion of

‘traditional’ indigenous practices and ‘modern’ political ideas in an ever-changing landscape where land remains the constant value.

Veronica Davidov, Monmouth University

– *Transnational Activism and National Movements in Latin America: Bridging the Divide*, edited by Eduardo Silva, Routledge, 2013.

What is the benefit of ‘going global’ for domestic social movements? This important theoretical and empirical question is at the heart of *Transnational Activism and National Movements in Latin America* edited by Eduardo Silva. The collection is an attempt to fill the gap in the social movement literature regarding the multilevel characteristics of contemporary social activism. This is not an easy task. Much of the literature is divided between studies that emphasize the importance of the transnational arena of social struggle and those that stubbornly focus on the national and sub-national levels. To bridge the divide, the volume’s contributors adopt what they term a ‘transnational relations approach to multilevel interaction’. The main objective of the volume is to isolate whether or not transnational connections make a difference to national movement dynamics.

An expertly written introductory essay frames the empirical chapters in the volume. The book is organized around four distinct themes, each with a corresponding set of questions and hypotheses for testing. The first theme is how to build a transnational relations approach to multilevel interaction. The expectation is that changes in the structures of opportunity and threat at the international and domestic levels will influence the arena in which social actors seek change as well as how participation in transnational activism will affect national struggles. The second theme is the relationship between transnational activism and Latin America’s ‘left-turn’ governments. It is expected that the presence of left-turn administrations will increase the effectiveness of social movements. The third theme is the changing nature of North-South and South-South linkages. Here the expectation is that North-South linkages would be less productive in terms of what activists gain by transnational participation. The final theme of the volume is the call for the ‘normalization’ of labour movement participation within the study of social movement struggles in the region. The expectation is that labour unions will act more like social movements (e.g. by relying on outsider tactics) at the transnational level. It is also expected that social movements that work in concert with labour would be more effective in achieving their goals.

The book’s six empirical chapters provide a mix of case studies, with

decidedly mixed results. Rose J. Spalding's chapter on El Salvador's anti-mining movement finds that certain international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), such as Oxfam, are quite adept at national-level collaborations. However, the emphasis of the chapter is on the horizontal shifts in ideas and repertoires between domestic resistance movements. Marisa Von Bülow provides a compelling account of the Brazilian Network for the Integration of the Peoples, a broad coalition of social movement forces. She suggests that activists perceive a greater chance of pushing their agendas through at the national level because of the region's current favourable political context. José Antonio Lucero provides an insightful examination of the tense relationship between indigenous movements in the Andes and INGOs. In this case, interference by Oxfam proved detrimental to domestic movements. In an extremely well researched, comparative analysis of union organizing efforts in Puebla, Mexico, Kimberly A. Nolan García reveals that transnational participation was the key to local union success stories. Federico M. Rossi's evaluation of Argentina's main labour confederation, however, finds that the organization's transnational activities did not influence its domestic agenda in any meaningful way. Lastly, Hannah Wittman's analysis of the presence of the transnational movement *La Via Campesina* in Brazil suggests that its interaction with local movements serves to challenge the dominant model of large-scale, export-agriculture in the country and promote certain movement demands.

The volume's impressive concluding chapter is a collaborative effort between senior scholars Kathryn Hochstetler, William C. Smith, and Eduardo Silva. The authors try to make sense out of the contradictory and inconclusive evidence contained in the empirical chapters by relating them to the central themes of the volume. They conclude that the effects of multi-level interaction are highly contingent and contextual.

The book raises an interesting proposition. According to much of the analysis, transnational activism holds few advantages for social movements, at least when they face positive opportunity structures at home. The findings reassert the relevance of the national level, though the authors are careful not to dismiss entirely the transnational arena. This is a provocative assertion. Interestingly, the book was inspired by a negative reviewer comment regarding Silva's apparent neglect of the transnational dimension in his previous work on Latin American social movements. This new volume stands as a testament to those of us who continue to emphasize domestic-level factors in our analyses of social struggles. It is a necessary read for social movement scholars regardless of which side of the divide they occupy.

Roberta Rice, University of Guelph

– *Haiti's New Dictatorship: The Coup, the Earthquake and the UN Occupation*, by Justin Podur, Pluto Press, 2012.

Haiti is known as the only nation that liberated itself from slavery, resulting in the establishment of the first independent black state in the world in 1804. This independence was, however, generated with excessive violence. Brute force continued to rule throughout the next century, climaxing in the three-decade long dictatorial reign of the Duvaliers, father and son, and their militia Tontons Macoute. According to Justin Podur, author of the book *Haiti's New Dictatorship*, Haiti is once again under the control of a dictatorship. This time it is less visible, writes Podur, calling U.S. interventionism stationed under the banner of 'donors', as well as the United Nations, other international agencies and the global media monopoly as 'Haiti's New Dictatorship'.

According to Podur, the main characteristics of *Haiti's New Dictatorship* is that the country has 'no effective say over their economic and political affairs as the right to assemble and organize politically is sharply limited, popular political parties are effectively banned from running, and human rights violations are routine and go unpunished, even though there were free elections, free press' (p. 2). This 'New Dictatorship', Podur continues, is 'less centralized as it has many international actors working with local partners, and has less crude ways of violence'. According to Podur, this new dictatorship started in 2004 when former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown the second time, and continues to operate today. He argues that it was implemented by the US, Canada and France and with the full participation of the United Nations. How this was done is the subject of this book.

Podur sees the media as part of the new dictatorship, and uses the example of two very different storylines that are told by different actors based on the build-up and aftermath of the 2004 overthrow of Aristide. According to the book, the first storyline was communicated by the international press in the U.S. and Canada that spread the narrative of an elected president who had become a brutal dictator and was overthrown by his own people. The second, less known storyline described by Podur is that of an elected president who was undermined, overthrown in a coup and kidnapped, and whose political movement was brutalized. This book elaborates on the second storyline by explaining in forensic detail the role of the international media, various NGOs, the United Nations and other actors that misrepresented Aristide's government, and which resulted in the 'new dictatorship'.

In the same year that Haiti's former president Aristide was overthrown, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was estab-

lished. The official argument for this mission is that the Security Council deemed the situation in Haiti to be ‘a threat to international peace and security in the region’. Podur argues, however, that the post-coup government was quantitatively worse than Aristide’s. He registers in explicit detail the human rights abuses carried out by what he refers to as the US-supported regime of Prime Minister Gérard Latortue and its militia MINUSTAH (pp. 4, 7 and 68). During its presence in Haiti, several human rights organizations accused MINUSTAH of sexual exploitation, child abuse and murder of innocent civilians, and have held them responsible for the cholera outbreak in October 2010 that led to over 8,000 deaths.

Haiti’s New Dictatorship draws on a broad range of academic, journalistic, and human rights reports that reviews the political history of contemporary Haiti. It offers thought-provoking perspectives on the new regime of power that governs Haiti today. However, for those who have been following Haiti’s political news and developments, Podur’s book reads a bit like a compilation of news and reports, and thus seems lacking in original research. For those who have little or no background knowledge on Haiti, it could be somewhat challenging to follow as the book goes into great detail on the political history of present-day Haiti. Nevertheless, for everybody who is interested in an analysis of how the current regime governs Haiti, it is a knowledgeable book that brings to light a very critical perspective on recent developments.

Talitha Stam, Erasmus University Rotterdam

- *Cuba under Raúl Castro: Assessing the Reforms*, por Carmelo Mesa-Lago y Jorge Pérez-López, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013.
- *Cuban Economists on the Cuban Economy*, editado por Al Campbell, University Press of Florida (Contemporary Cuba series), 2013.

Dos libros complementarios sobre un tema de actualidad que despierta gran interés no solo entre los especialistas sobre América latina sino en un público muy amplio en todo el mundo. Aunque para muchos el debate concluyó, la verdad es que la reciente crisis capitalista mundial re-avivó la discusión sobre modelos económicos alternativos al orden global vigente. Cuba formó parte destacada del más ambicioso experimento social y político de construir un orden económico y social alternativo al capitalismo. Con el derrumbe de 1989, al menos en Cuba, la ambición fue reemplazada por el instinto de sobrevivencia. Los partidos comunistas en el poder solo sobrevivieron en aquellos países cuya historia revolucionaria combinó el socia-

lismo con el nacionalismo: China, Vietnam, Cuba y Corea del Norte. De todos ellos, solo Cuba todavía despierta en círculos de intelectuales y activistas de América latina, a pesar de las críticas persistentes y crecientes, imágenes de un orden alternativo en sentido positivo. Por contraste, Corea del Norte es un régimen extraño e inclasificable, mientras hay que hacer un genuino acto de fe para considerar los sistemas económicos de China y de Vietnam como socialistas.

Como diseñados para saciar la curiosidad sobre las derivas recientes de esta promesa de sueños alternativos, los libros de Al Campbell y de Carmelo Mesa-Lago y Jorge López-Pérez hacen un balance de la economía cubana en la encrucijada del fin del ‘período especial’ (1991-2007) y el inicio de la más profunda ola de reformas económicas conocidas desde el triunfo de la Revolución a inicios de 1959.

Ambos libros son complementarios temática e ideológicamente. Temáticamente, los artículos editados por Campbell se concentran en el período especial y abordan solo lateralmente las reformas económicas iniciadas en 2007 y aceleradas desde 2010. El libro de Mesa-Lago y Pérez-López, en cambio, pretende evaluar los resultados iniciales de las reformas emprendidas por Raúl Castro y hacer recomendaciones sobre su curso futuro. Aunque ambos libros empiezan con análisis económicos retrospectivos que se remontan a los inicios de la Revolución, y presentan abundantes estadísticas, su organización es diferente. Los artículos editados por Campbell analizan políticas económicas sectoriales como el turismo, la agricultura, las biotecnologías y algunas políticas sociales como las laborales, la protección a la población pobre y las acciones frente al envejecimiento de la población. El libro de Mesa-Lago y Pérez-López, por su parte, reseña los debates internos y externos sobre las reformas económicas y ofrece una visión de conjunto del contexto político e internacional que envuelve el giro en las políticas de desarrollo cubano, trata de cuantificar sus efectos y termina con un conjunto de recomendaciones para profundizarlas.

Los contrastes desde un punto de vista ideológico entre ambos libros son muy grandes. El resultado de leer juntos ambos textos es que el lector puede conseguir una panorámica más equilibrada sobre los vaivenes de la economía cubana, sus desafíos y sobre el contexto de las reformas en curso. Los economistas cubanos que escriben en el libro editado por Campbell no esconden su adhesión a las conquistas sociales y a los valores del socialismo al tiempo que desconfían de las desigualdades económicas asociadas a la liberalización. Mesa-Lago y Pérez-López, en cambio, abogan por una profundización de las reformas de mercado, lo que ellos llaman políticas ‘pragmáticas’, y por el definitivo abandono del ‘idealismo’ que ellos aso-

cian a varios períodos de la historia revolucionaria cubana, como los años 1959 a 1970 o el de las ‘rectificaciones’ entre 1986 y 1990 y el de la ‘batalla de ideas’ entre 2003 y 2006.

Algunos de los contrastes en la forma de abordar los problemas de la economía cubana en ambos libros sirven para aquilatar mejor la forma curiosa en que se pueden complementar a pesar de su naturaleza ideológicamente contradictoria. Ambos libros muestran un conjunto variado y completo de cifras actualizadas sobre la abismal crisis económica que siguió a la disolución del bloque socialista y que llevó a una contracción de hasta el 35 por ciento del PIB entre 1989 y 1993 (esta cifra se encuentra en el capítulo de Rodríguez en Campbell, p. 35). La valoración y análisis de ese monumental desastre económico es tratado de manera contrastante en ambos textos y proporcionan información que se complementa inesperadamente entre sí. En las contribuciones al libro de Campbell, los mecanismos de cálculo de los precios para el intercambio económico con los países socialistas no son considerados un ‘subsidio’ sino un ‘trato justo’ en el comercio internacional, aunque no se cuantifica el peso de tal justicia. Esos precios se indexaban para evitar grandes asimetrías entre importaciones y exportaciones y se calculaban según promedios quinquenales para evitar fluctuaciones perniciosas (Rodríguez en Campbell, p. 30). Por su parte, el peso económico del embargo norteamericano es cuantificado reiteradas veces en al menos 89 mil millones de US\$ para mostrar sus dramáticos efectos sobre los resultados económicos de la isla (por ejemplo, en el capítulo de Quiñones Chang y corresponde por los costos hasta 2006, p. 92). Por el contrario, en el recuento de Mesa-Lago y Pérez-López, los términos del intercambio con el bloque socialista se consideran un ‘subsidio’ cuantificado en 65 mil millones de dólares entre 1960 y 1990, mientras que no se aportan estimaciones sobre el impacto económico del bloqueo (p. 13).

Quizás el más notable contraste ocurre alrededor de la valoración de la importancia de las crecientes desigualdades económicas. Los trabajos recopilados por Campbell insisten reiteradamente en la importancia de las políticas sociales universales, y de la baja desigualdad de ingresos existente en Cuba por comparación con otros países de América latina o del mundo: índices de desarrollo humano comparables a los de los países ricos o el coeficiente de Gini más bajo del continente (Castiñeiras en Campbell, p. 146-7). La preocupación también la tiene José Luis Rodríguez, que afirma que el índice de Gini en Cuba creció de 0,22 a 0,40 en los años 1990 (en Campbell, p. 60, nota 65). Otro ejemplo de esta preocupación omnipresente es el trabajo de Alfredo García Jiménez sobre el turismo, quien a pesar de reconocer los grandes servicios que ha rendido a la economía cubana como la

principal fuente de divisas entre 1998 y 2005, insiste en los efectos negativos de acentuación de las desigualdades y de promoción de la prostitución y la circulación de drogas, que lleva aparejado su desarrollo. El libro de Mesa-Lago y Pérez-López, en cambio, aunque reconocen la acentuación de las desigualdades en los períodos ‘pragmáticos’, es decir, durante las fases de liberalización de mercado, las entienden como necesarias para retribuir el éxito económico y proponen más bien que sean compensadas mediante una reforma tributaria progresiva en lugar de la recaudación regresiva actualmente vigente, centrada en el impuesto a las ventas (pp. 134-5, 230-31, 236-7 y 242). De hecho, como dijo Xu Sicheng (miembro de la academia china de ciencias sociales), ‘Cuba debe establecer una economía socialista de mercado y poner fin al igualitarismo’ (citado p. 174). De todas formas, Mesa-Lago y Pérez-López resaltan la existencia de desigualdades relacionadas con el racismo y la discriminación de género, mientras que los trabajos de Rita Castiñeiras, Ángela Ferriol, Juan Carlos Alfonso Fraga y Alfredo Morales (en Campbell) dedicados a la población de edad, a la lucha contra la pobreza o las políticas de educación y salud, apenas mencionan ese tipo de brechas y resaltan, en cambio, los logros sociales y culturales de décadas de inversión en desarrollo humano.

Un último ejemplo de cómo los contrastes ideológicos entre ambos libros nos ofrecen un conjunto de imágenes más completas de la situación de Cuba se refiere a los debates sobre el ‘modelo’ económico que está emergiendo con el fin del período especial. Mesa-Lago y Pérez-López hacen constantes referencias al debate sobre la propiedad pública o social versus la propiedad estatal, y sobre todo, a la decisiva atracción del ejemplo chino y vietnamita. Según estos autores, Fidel Castro rechazó los modelos chino y vietnamita en varias oportunidades mientras que Raúl Castro afirmó durante una visita a China en 2005 que ‘Hay gente que está preocupada por la evolución de China, pero yo no tengo ninguna aprehensión [sobre lo que veo]’ (citado p. 174). Estos temas generales sobre el modelo económico y estas discusiones internas concentran gran parte de la atención del libro de estos autores.

Por contraste, los capítulos en el volumen editado por Campbell no hacen prácticamente ninguna alusión a China o Vietnam ni al problema de la propiedad socialista ni sobre sus efectos o las discusiones a su alrededor. El más notable ejemplo de esta ausencia es el artículo de Elena Álvarez González sobre la planificación. Ella empieza con una conocida cita del Che Guevara que afirma que la planificación centralizada es la forma básica de la economía socialista y luego explica que Cuba no tuvo plan sino hasta su ingreso oficial al bloque socialista en 1976 y que a partir de 1986 todos los

métodos de planificación central entraron en revisión para luego desaparecer. Solo diez años entre cincuenta de practicar la forma básica de la economía socialista hubieran merecido un debate sobre los modelos económicos vigentes. Esta ausencia se ve compensada, por el contrario, por una mucha más detallada exposición de las oportunidades sectoriales de desarrollo económico y la diversificación productiva hacia los servicios ocurrida en la primera década del siglo XXI. Los capítulos se enfocan, en efecto, sobre un ángulo poco resaltado por el libro de Mesa-Lago y Pérez-López: la diversificación de la economía cubana, su mejor equilibrio regional, las ventajas económicas que empiezan a emerger con la comercialización de servicios intensivos en conocimiento, como la medicina, la educación o el deporte, de esa inversión social que durante décadas estuvo en los alrededores del 30 por ciento del PIB y cuya sostenibilidad es la gran incógnita de la nueva economía cubana.

En síntesis, *Cuba under Raúl Castro: Assessing the Reforms* y *Cuban Economists on the Cuban Economy* son dos libros importantes que sirven para evaluar la historia económica de Cuba en una encrucijada fundamental para su futuro. Aportan información actualizada y permiten complementar perspectivas políticas contradictorias sobre un tema de candente actualidad y sujeto de potentes controversias.

Pablo Ospina Peralta, Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar

– *Trumpets in the Mountains: Theater and the Politics of National Culture in Cuba*, by Laurie A. Frederik, Duke University Press, 2012.

Trumpets in the Mountains is one of those rare, beautifully sculpted scholarly books that make readers care about its plot, its author, and the characters. It treats in a textured manner a part of Cuban culture that is not only less studied outside of Cuba, but as Laurie A. Frederik demonstrates, inside as well – those ‘zones of silence’ wherein the Cuban government, of the post-Soviet period, liked to imagine resided the real campesino (a term about whose meaning in Cuba Frederik thoroughly debates), who could help to rescue the nation from the economic and ideological disaster it faced in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was a time when the Cuban government, obliged to flirt on a large scale with the capitalists it had previously shunned, also sought creative ways to compensate for this necessity. One of those was to endorse proyectos of Teatro Comunitario ‘theater in the community, for the community, and by the community’ (p. 82) and especially those proyectos in the most rural of areas that, far from the

‘pollution’ of capitalism, could help to buttress Cuba spiritually. Frederik shows us how this theater inherited from the 1960s teatro nuevo a belief that process more than the final project was crucial to the artistic endeavour – a process that Frederik definitively influences at nearly all junctures.

Before starting on her journey as a participant observer in Teatro de los Elementos (Cumanayagua, nearby the Escambray Mountains), La Cruzada Teatral (Theater Crusade through the mountains of Guantánamo) and El Laboratorio de Teatro Comunitario (Dos Brazos, Guantánamo), Frederik reveals the rich personal and professional reasons for her decision to foray into the regions that are infrequently traversed by travellers and scholars. As is her love of nature and country life, her own affiliations as both a performer and anthropologist are palpable throughout – affiliations that seem organic in the kind of theater that she engages, where performers know the value, to cite Frederik, citing Gertz, of ‘deep hanging out’ (p. 143).

Frederik encountered Cuba in 1997, just after the harshest years of the Special Period, the time of economic dearth, during its own transition, not toward capitalist ideology, as many onlookers during that decade assumed it would be, but rather toward a quest for newness, to uphold the essence of *Cubanía*, *pura cepa*, not in its literal meaning of pure breed, but rather in ideological terms. She shows how theater especially outside of Havana reinvigorated this discourse, by seeking to give voice to the campesino. This theater, through its socially-motivated, often multi-authored content, and its form, generated with scarce resources, embodied the discourse of *Opción Zero*: the government’s notion that if worst came to worst economically, Cubans would unite in a popular front and go back to the basics, withdrawing to life in the countryside. However, as Frederik makes clear, these theater projects were by no means simply a tool for the government but a place wherein the dynamics of dialogue, paradox, and contradiction in Cuban society are played out. These complexities are manifest in honest ways in the words and actions of the performers who, at times, balk at having to concede to the obligations of the state, at others, self-censor, and at others, after having been ‘verified’ through national prizes, are indirectly rewarded through travel. As such, they end up playing the authentic Cuban abroad, most beloved by tourists, as we see in Frederik’s final chapter in which she meets up with Teatro de los Elements on their European tour. That is, they are performing in a manner that would have been unrecognizable to their publics back home and to Frederik who met them there years before.

It is in chapter three where the issues of authorship and speaking for the other as well as related negotiations around self-censorship and censorship come most to the fore. This brilliant chapter acquires its momentum as we

readers find ourselves in the position of the other members of Teatro de los Elementos, waiting for a lengthy time for the arrival of its new production's author, the highly esteemed Atilio Caballero. The wait, however, is productive, according to Frederik's account of the collective process of social investigation, improvisation, interpretation, and experimentation, involving actors, the director, and the consultant, all of whom are crucial to the process of writing the play.

Trumpets in the Mountains is not only of interest to those engaged in theatrical performance and anthropology in Cuba and elsewhere, but also to those who wish to understand the nature of debate around art and culture in late socialist societies. In addition to its beautiful prose and sophisticated analysis of cultural dynamics, strengths of *Trumpets in the Mountains* include its glossary of select terminology that further illustrates Frederick's insights into Cuban culture. This book is an extraordinary contribution not only to Cuban studies, but also to performance studies and anthropology – one that I shall utilize in undergraduate and graduate classrooms and even recommend to non-specialist readers.

Jacqueline Loss, University of Connecticut

– *Devoted to Death: Santa Muerte, the Skeleton Saint*, by R. Andrew Chesnut, Oxford University Press, 2012.

Since the early 2000s, the Santa Muerte has gained much visibility in marketplaces and yerberías (stands for healing and magic) in Mexico. Firstly an urban cult, the Santa Muerte quickly spread to the countryside and, through the Mexican diaspora, beyond the national boundaries. Nowadays Santa Muerte is worshiped in Central America, the United States, Canada and Spain. One can even see her image, a skeleton travestied as a Virgin Mary, in tattoo parlours in Amsterdam.

The devotion to Santa Muerte is controversial. In principle, it venerates death and is closely related to the underworld of criminality. Recently, the Mexican government has systematically destroyed Santa Muerte shrines in many towns including Matamoros, Tijuana and Nuevo Laredo at the Mexico/US border, where the small temples are quickly rebuilt or moved to different locations. The hierarchy of the Catholic church in Mexico has depicted devotion as an anti-religion promoting anti-values such as death, violence and the lifestyle of drug-traffickers. The upper classes in Mexico are amazed and sometimes disgusted by the growing visibility of Santa Muerte in the public space.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century Santa Muerte emerged 'from the darkness', and became a prominent feature in Mexico's urban culture. The cult has found fertile soil in marketplaces and squares, and in chapels and itinerant shrines built firstly in Central and Northern Mexico. As churches and paraphernalia shops mushroom all across Mexico, Santa Muerte has become a cultural icon and its criminal flare is fading away. How could an underground image become a cultural icon? Within this context both complex and provoking, Andrew Chesnut seeks to make a contribution to the study of this emerging form of popular religiosity.

The book is an introductory study to the devotion of Santa Muerte, and is useful for those who are just getting acquainted with the academic sources and material available on the Internet. The publication is organized in six chapters, each symbolizing the candles that believers light when asking favours to Santa Muerte; chapter one presents a historical background; the second focuses on the rituality of the cult; chapter three discusses the deathly powers of Santa Muerte; the fourth chapter elaborates on love and passion in the cult; financial and material abundance are the main topic of chapter five; and chapter six looks at the linkages between killings and justice in the devotion. Given the absence of a theoretical framework and minuscule bibliography consulted, the book works as a long journalistic article, literary essay or a diary. In addition, a number of problems regarding the context and methodology of the study and the overarching argument of the manuscript cast a shadow over the potential of the book.

Lévi-Strauss¹ reminds us that myths do not have a clear origin: they result from collective imagination and are selectively based on historical facts. In this sense, Santa Muerte is not an exception, and believers place this cult in a historical continuum that provides some depth: it 'traces back' to the representation of death and the underworld of the Olmecs, and to the ancient Mexica culture in Tenochtitlán, where human skulls had a ritual and decorative function. Claims of an early cult of death in colonial Mexico have also been made. Chesnut reproduces these perspectives, placing the Santa Muerte devotion in a linear development dating back to pre-Hispanic cultures. Undoubtedly, the author is both intrigued and seduced by the elusive character of the Santa Muerte, but a clear distinction between the cult as a belief and as a socio-historical object is paramount.

Regarding the methodology, the reader wonders about the techniques and system behind the information collected. Vague and undocumented statements are made with no clear sources: '5 per cent of the Mexican population of 100 million would be devotees of Saint Death' (p. 9); 'the majority of devotees are taxi drivers, prostitutes, streets vendors, housewives, and

criminals' (p. 12); 'of the hundreds of Santa Muertistas whom I've interviewed and chatted...' (p. 142). From the point of view of an anthropologist, the book has the ambition to rely on ethnographic methods, particularly interviews with devotees, paraphernalia shop owners, and altar keepers like Doña Queta in Tepito, Mexico City. Yet, the data is scattered and the reader feels a times lost in the unordered accounts and fragments of interviews, which flattens the material and makes it difficult to assess when the informant or the writer is speaking. In-depth interviews, even a life-story of Doña Queta, who is an eloquent and generous speaker herself, and more detailed material would have been appreciated here. Much has to be explained about the circuits through which the belief spreads, and the way it blends into different geographical and social settings.

The chapters continuously switch among topics and chronological lines; that makes it difficult to find a central argument across the book. Some additional editing should have been used, especially to avoid repetitions. All in all, the book echoes much of the perspective and information already available in newspaper articles, blogs and documentaries circulating in the Internet since the early 2000s, which to a certain extent glamorize the devotion. But the Santa Muerte involves more than a ('powerful') miracle worker. Central questions remain open: to what extent is Santa Muerte an expression of narcocultura? If so, how could the 'criminal' saint come out in the open? And what does this tell about a context of collapsing institutions and expanding violence in present-day Mexico? Further research is necessary to unpack the symbolism of Santa Muerte both as a religious icon and as a cultural phenomenon, and the way devotees switch among systems of belief, combining both dominant and emerging expressions.

José Carlos G. Aguiar, Leiden University

Note

1. Lévi-Strauss, Claude (2001 [1978]), *Myth and meaning*, London: Routledge.

– *Foodscapes, Foodfields and Identities in Yucatán*, by Steffan Igor Ayora-Diaz, (CEDLA Latin American Studies 99), Berghahn Books, 2012.

Steffan Igor Ayora-Diaz proposes to look at 'the emergence of regional cuisines as a strategy to defend heterogeneity against the homogenizing power of nationalist ideologies'. Through three-hundred highly documented pages, he illustrates the originality and particularities of Yucatecan cuisine in contrast to Mexican national cuisine. He also analyses its link to identity as well as the transformations it is going through at the crossroads

between the local and the global and the private and public spheres. The political nature of Yucatecan food is the guiding theme.

This substantial book is the result of years of field and bibliographical research. The author certainly knows what he is talking about, as he is dealing with his own culture. He has not only observed Yucatecan food and foodways, he has also savoured it with all his senses, and cooked and shared it with friends. But he has also been able to perceive it from a more distanced point of view, since he spent several years studying and doing fieldwork abroad, and was struck by the changes in the city's 'foodscape' when he returned to Mérida, the capital city of Yucatán. His narration is personal and vivid.

The first chapter, offering a stimulating counter-opinion, is dedicated to the national/regional opposition. Mexican national cuisine is usually considered as representative of the whole country, and regional cuisines a variant of it. I must admit that, doing fieldwork in the State of Oaxaca where the cuisine is fairly close to the national one, I took this assertion for granted. But the case of Yucatán seems to be different. Ayora-Díaz shows us that Yucatán is not just a region of Mexico. The peninsula did not become fully integrated into the nation-state until 1848, and Yucatecan elites were never subordinate to the capital city. They had direct contacts with Europe, the Middle-East and the Caribbean at large, from Louisiana to Venezuela, and especially with Cuba. Yucatán received migrants from all these countries, as well as cultural and culinary influences. Its food is thus quite different from Mexican national food, which is actually representative of Central Mexico. Mérida inhabitants cook, for instance, Lebanese dishes, only consumed in restaurants in Mexico City. Moreover the national ideology enhanced the indigenous heritage from the Aztec empire, so the dishes with indigenous roots are the most emblematic ones of the national cuisine, but this is not, according to the author, the case of the regional Yucatecan cuisine. He describes it as the cuisine of the urban elites, omitting the cuisine of the indigenous, rural and urban lower-class population. National cuisine has of course also received foreign influences, which were taken as exemplary at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a period when indigenous foods were still despised (Bak-Geller, 2009).¹ The Yucatan elites who valued the cosmopolitan influences and minimized the indigenous elements of their cuisine remind us of the ideological position of the Central Mexican elites at that time. This may be why Ayora-Díaz does not track the history of Yucatecan cuisine before the nineteenth century. Yet Yucatecan food has been different from Central Mexican food since prehispanic times, while ingredients introduced at the colonial period are common to Spanish Amer-

ica, such as the citrus and spices cited by the author (not only Asian and Middle-Eastern but also typical of the Arab-Andalusian cuisine). Politics and identities are definitely at the heart of this chapter.

The second chapter is dedicated to the Mérida foodscape, followed by chapters on Yucatecan cookbooks and gastronomy in the process of institutionalization. This city has grown tremendously within the last twenty years, attracting tourists and migrants from other regions and countries. While mainly local food was offered until the 1980s, 'Mexican' and foreign restaurants of all kinds have appeared since then. In restaurants run by Mexicans from other regions, Yucatecan dishes are given a central Mexican touch which is unacceptable by local criteria. The type of food presented in the new-style Yucatecan restaurants has also changed. To appear more typically local towards tourists, some restaurateurs have reduced their menus to a few specific Yucatecan dishes such as papadzules and cochinita pibil, while eliminating others altogether. Recently published cookbooks and regional creations of haute cuisine have done the same, and this has, in turn, influenced local society. Ayora-Diaz elaborates the difference between the 'foodfield' of 'cuisine' and home cooking, and the 'foodfield' of 'gastronomy' cooked in urban restaurants and disseminated in cookbooks. In both fields, the Mérida foodscape is at the stage of innovations, representations and tensions, where power and identities are expressed.

This elaborate and original work brings new elements of reflection not only in the anthropology of food, but in anthropology at large. As a bonus, it is very pleasant to read. I strongly recommend it.

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Note

1. Bak-Geller, Sarah, 2009, 'Los recetarios "afrancesados" del siglo XIX en México. La construcción de la nación mexicana y de un modelo culinario nacional', *Anthropology of Food*, S 6, <http://aof.revues.org/6464>.