Bulletin of Latin American Research, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 125–158, 2007

Book Reviews

Skierka, Volker (2004) *Fidel Castro: A Biography*, Polity Press (Cambridge), xxiv + 440 pp. £25.00 hbk [Translated from the German by Patrick Camiller].

'One thing is certain … Fidel Castro is there to win … he does not have a moment's peace until he manages to invert the terms and turn it into victory'. Chapter 1 'The Heroic Myth' (p. 1).

'The man who serves a revolution ploughs a sea …' Chapter 10 'Don Quixote and History' (pp. 378–379).

Volker Skierka opens and closes his biography of Fidel Castro with the words of Gabriel (Gabo) García Marquez. The opening quote, taken from Gabo's 1998 *A Personal Portrait of Fidel*, is prelude to declaring Castro one of the greatest idealists of our time, perhaps his greatest virtue, though also his greatest danger. It is a statement to which Skierka clearly adheres (referring also to Castro himself having said his favourite literary hero is Don Quixote, jousting at windmills until the bitter end). The closing quote is from Gabo's 1991 novel, *The General in his Labyrinth*, on the Liberator Bolívar. The parallels are there to be drawn.

Framing his biography thus, Skierka provides the key to understanding how the youthful Castro led the 1959 Cuban Revolution to power and how the aging Castro, now nearing 80, has held onto power to this day. Castro's idealism led Cuba down exhilarating and perilous paths, garnering the support of peoples and incurring the wrath of its powerful nation to the north, punctuated by pragmatic twists and turns. How could Castro, in 1989, abandon power at the precise moment the Cuban Revolution augured to be most at peril? As Cubans say, a captain does not jump a sinking ship, and Castro would not want to go down in history as having led a failed revolution. He set out to buck the domino theory of the end of socialism, guiding Cuba through the crisis of the post-Soviet globalised world, as if in a war zone (this was one reason why the Castro leadership studied Churchill's World War II steering of Britain).

It is by no means gratuitous that Skierka should draw on Gabo, who has spent much time in Cuba and with Castro. Skierka, a German journalist who has had assignments in Latin America, including Cuba, requested but was never given an interview with his subject – his only encounter being at the German Embassy in Cuba in 2002, a year after its German publication.

Skierka succeeds in steering a middle ground on Castro and his legacy. Like previous accounts, his is political rather than personal, as there is little beyond rumour and hearsay about Castro's private life after coming to power. Readers familiar with other Castro biographies will find well-trodden ground in Skierka's account, especially in the early chapters, which draw almost exclusively on those biographies – some by British authors, giving the lie to the claim that this is the first to give a European perspective (unless the UK is not to be considered part of Europe).

In his preface to the English edition, Skierka laments the heavy US dominance of material on Cuba. Several Key US works have been omitted, however, as has much that has been written in Latin America and elsewhere in Europe, including countries of the former Soviet Union. Nonetheless, after a somewhat slow start, a third of the way into the book Skierka comes into his own, drawing on the Political Archive of the German Foreign Office in Berlin, Stiftung Archiv und Massenorganisationen der DDR at the German Federal Archives, and papers of the former East German State Security. Used primarily for anecdotal evidence of positions taken by GDR ambassadors, officials, and the like, they provide new insights. Skierka's passing reference (pp. 177–178) to Tamara (Tania) Bunke is tantalising: a romantic, legendary figure in Cuba, she is, in Skierka's account, a Stasi agent assigned to Ernesto Guevara. Skierka's position on Che is that of Jorge Castañeda: Che's demise was due to falling out of favour with Castro – an interpretation disputed by many.

Skierka's inclusion of East German documents, together with his perceptive analysis of developments in the 1990s, not least the repositioning of the military on civilian ground, make his a welcome, up-to-date addition to the growing body of studies on Castro. His book is now available in Spanish (2002) and French (2004), as well as German and English. It is one I certainly recommend.

As a historian of Cuban tobacco, I am moved to make a final comment on the cover photo of a cigar-smoking younger Fidel Castro. It is, of course, iconic. He gave up smoking in the early 1980s, for his own and the nation's health. The Havana cigar, however, was to become a key player, alongside tourism, in Cuba's strategies for economic survival in the 1990s. Skierka's only reference to cigars (pp. 239–240) is as a pleasure forgone: a deprivation in the Sierra Maestra in 1958 and a loss after giving it up, as told in a famous interview to the magazine *Cigar Aficionado,* in a 1994 issue whose sale was banned in Miami. But that is another story.

Jean Stubbs
London Metropolitan University

Chávez, Lydia and Chakarova, Mimi (eds.) (2005) *Capitalism, God, and a Good Cigar: Cuba Enters the Twenty-First Century*, Duke University Press (Durham and London), x + 253 pp. £14.95 pbk.

The publisher's flier for this book features an unhelpful claim that 'this is the most revealing book available on Cuba today'. This is, of course, hyperbole. Anyone expecting a 21st century version of American writer José Yglesias's 1968 classic, *In the Fist of the Revolution: Life in Castro's Cuba*, will be disappointed. This collection is more fleeting in its encounters. It offers some 75 fine black and white photographs and they indicate the general level of engagement of the book: apart from some studies of ballet dancers rehearsing, the subjects of most of the others are the street scenes and the obligingly photogenic Cubans routinely captured by visitors. It is not that the chapters are superficial. They are, on the contrary, often revealing and compelling journalism. But this is overwhelmingly a work of journalism by media

professionals. It is not a work of academic research, and lacks references, even when US academics are occasionally cited.

Unlike Yglesias's immersion in the daily experience of his subjects, there is no attempt here to encompass the breadth and depth of the work and play of a community of Cubans, or of a representative sample. To be fair, the collection is not presented as such by the editor, rather as offering different glimpses of Cuba that add up to a 'fuller picture' (p. 14). The chapters cover the growth of self-employment; women's lives in a provincial city; the life of a street hustler; hip-hop and the music scene; literary politics; Cuban ballet; exiled revolutionaries from Spain and El Salvador; a cigar-making co-operative; Miami immigrants; Internet use; Spanish investment; religion; and a visit by an émigré's child to his Cuban family. All are interesting in their own way, but they are not the product of a coherent research project. Some are more revealing of Cuban life than others, notably when addressing the lives of the majority of Cubans, rather than the resident and visiting émigrés, or the marginalised people featured in several chapters. Thus the chapter on the lives of four women addresses real issues of the double burden that women carry, in spite of the requirement of Cuba's Constitution that men share the housework, and other manifestations of residual and decidedly inegalitarian *machismo*. It is also a chapter that illustrates the importance to the survival of the Revolution of the commitment and forbearance of Cuban professional workers. The hip-hop chapter is a fascinating account of the local musicians interviewed and the process of official acceptance of this cultural form. It briefly refers to the negative effect on race discrimination of the 'opening' to capitalism.

The chapters are based on interviews conducted mostly in 2001, with some subsequent updating. Given the consequent focus on the bleak years of the Special Period following the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the tightening US blockade, the material deprivation, the socially divisive 'opening' to capitalism and the petty fiddling and black marketeering, the timing of this volume as contemporary reportage is inadvertently unfortunate. Since late 2004, Cuba has taken the US dollar out of circulation, clamped down significantly on corruption and the black market, revalued its domestic and convertible currencies, announced dramatic increases (especially at the bottom end of the scales) in pensions, welfare benefits and wages, new house building programmes and many new trade agreements, notably with China and Venezuela. The emergence of Bolivarian Venezuela as an oil-rich ally in a leftward-moving Latin America has alleviated the island's siege mentality. Daily life may remain afflicted by the suppressed consumerism that is a sub-text of the book, as by unpredictable public transport and seasonal power cuts, but the news in 2005, and the continuing and visible improvements in Cuba's extraordinary 'social wage' of free education and health services and near-free sport and culture, have created an atmosphere far less dismal than that portrayed here.

There are some odd errors of reporting. The impression is given that public phones take US dollars (p. 17), when even a short walk off the beaten tourist track reveals plenty of national peso phones. It is implied that a bus ride in Havana costs a dollar (p. 75), when in fact it costs twenty local centavos, 1/125th of a dollar, twice that on the suburban trunk routes. One writer visits 'one of Havana's few restored colonial buildings' (p. 198) – an admirable feat of anti-tourism given that so much of colonial

Old Havana has been restored by the Office of the City Historian. Nevertheless, this book does offer insights into some mostly atypical and rather sad lives. Anyone familiar with Havana and Cuba will recognise much that is portrayed here, but will also be aware of the particularities of the chosen subjects of most of the chapters, and of their relation to US perspectives on Cuba. Read it, then, for its often delicately penned portraits of an interesting, if unrepresentative, group of Cubans living in a period that now seems to be passing.

Steve Ludlam
University of Sheffield

Mesa-Lago, Carmelo and Pérez-López, Jorge (2005) *Cuba's Aborted Reform: Socioeconomic Effects, International Comparisons, and Transition Policies*, University Press of Florida (Gainesville), xix + 240 pp. $59.95 hbk.

This book consists of six substantive and relatively independent chapters addressing various aspects of Cuba's economic system, the policies that have governed its functioning and potential changes in the near future. While the first chapter provides a historical overview of the policies followed by the Castro regime between 1960 and 2004, the last chapter focuses attention on possible future reforms. For the scholarly inclined, however, the most interesting parts of the book lie in three of the other four chapters.

An excellent chapter, 'The Economic Crisis, Recovery and Stagnation', presents a detailed discussion of the economic situation from 1989/1990 to 2004. One feature of the authors' work is their careful research, study and evaluation of data on this subject. For instance, they present data on gross domestic product (GDP) per year, but this is supplemented with yearly data on the output of thirteen important commodities for the economy that corroborate their statements about GDP. They also identify problems with some of the figures available and provide evidence of inconsistencies in these cases. Finally, they present evidence from the work of five non-dissident Cuban economists to support their main conclusions about this period. Namely, the crisis of 1990–1993 led to a pro-market reform period from 1993 to 1996 and this reform process has stalled and retrogressed since that period. The comprehensiveness and level of detail in their discussion is so impressive that this chapter should be required reading in all well designed courses on the Cuban economy, and at least background reading in courses with a broader perspective.

An equally outstanding chapter, 'Cuba and the Human Development Index', is a convincing and devastating critique of the procedures used by the United Nations in coming up with a number to include Cuba as one of the countries in the Human Development Index (HDI). The critique is devastating because, in contrast to the methodological criticisms that exist in the economics profession, they accept the rationale and methodology for the index provided by the United Nations in its Human Development Report. The critique is convincing because the authors apply their careful, systematic and well documented approach to the analysis of the data underlying these

numbers. They find a number of inconsistencies in the way the three components of the index (income, life expectancy, and literacy and education) are measured for Cuba. The most telling example of the problems they point out is that the GDP *per capita* in purchasing power parity terms for Cuba is obtained as an average of the same measure for several other Caribbean islands! Furthermore, no details on how this average is calculated are provided by the UN. One of their findings is also of more general interest beyond the Cuban context. They show that a surprising jump (upwards) in the rankings for Cuba on the overall index in 1997 is due to a change in the methodology. They also show that the same change leads to an equally surprising jump (downwards) for Brazil. I doubt most users of HDI are aware of the magnitude of the potential differences due to this change in methodology. An indirect but important contribution of this chapter lies in alterting readers to it.

'Social Welfare and Growing Inequalities' focuses on the evolution of social issues during the 1989/1990–2004 period. It stresses a general level of deterioration in these areas during the period as well as increasing inequalities in most of them. While it continues to pay great attention to the presentation and evaluation of detailed data on these issues, it is somewhat hindered (as they note) by the lack of quality in the underlying measurements. It covers health, education, income and wealth distribution, housing, pensions, poverty and the rationing system among others. One of the most controversial issues addressed in this chapter is that of remittances and their role in increasing racial inequality. Remittances to Cuba are measured indirectly. The authors describe three methods: the Cuban method, which takes into account foreign exchange that is acquired through dollar stores plus exchange houses, minus bonus payments of various kinds; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (ECLAC) method, which mirrors indirect transfers in the balance of payments accounts; and 'other estimates based on surveys or analysis by scholars'. They go on to report that for 2002, the first method yields estimates of $500, $800 and $1.1 billion and the second method yields estimates of $820 million; the range of estimates they give for the third method, regardless of year, is from a minimum of $100 to a maximum of $400 million.

Part of the reason for such large differences is that the first two methods can include many other things besides remittances. For instance, they include income generated by illegal activities, for example, earnings from prostitution or commissions for money laundering in the drug trade, that are spent in the dollar stores or end up in exchange houses. In addition, these two indirect methods capture foreign exchange earnings by the considerable number of Cuban workers (doctors, dentists, teachers and soldiers abroad, for example) detailed abroad by the Cuban government that are spent in dollar stores or end up in the exchange houses. On the other hand, the estimates by scholars are focused on remittances only and usually are limited to those sent by Cuban exiles in the US. Unfortunately, the authors never make this point, proceed to create a hypothetical example using the number of $820 million that is more than twice the maximum estimate for remittances from the US, and conclude on this basis that racial inequalities are increasing by comparing the racial distribution in Cuba with that of Cuban exiles in the US. This comparison implies that all of the $820 million came from US exiles to their friends and relatives in Cuba! Nonetheless, I view this

inconsistency as a minor mistake among a large number of other important issues covered in an insightful manner in this chapter.

Finally, 'The Performance of Cuba's Economic and Social Model Compared with Chile and Costa Rica' is an update of one chapter in an earlier book by one of the authors. This update is flawed by two fundamental conceptual problems that also afflicted the earlier work. Both problems stem from the use of twenty different indicators of performance that are characterised in terms of more is always better or less is always better. The first conceptual problem is that for some of these indicators whether or not more or less is better depends on other things. Over the 50-year period they are considering these other things can change, e.g. less export concentration on a single commodity. If the export is oil and the time is now, when the price is around $70 per barrel, this characterisation makes no sense. In the case of Chile, there is a high concentration of copper exports and some controversy over the contribution of a high price for copper to its economic performance during the last 50 years. There are several other indicators that suffer from the same problem.

A second problem is that the authors want to summarise the information on these twenty indicators and their rankings by putting them together. Unfortunately, their attempts at synthesis entail adding up apples and oranges. Adding rankings does not solve the problem and it has problems of its own (rankings are ordinal scale variables where order has meaning but differences and ratios have no meaning). A telling example that illustrates both conceptual problems is the construction of one of their indicators for the performance of the external sector. The adding up problem is illustrated when the authors add the volume of trade *per capita* (X + M)/POP and the trade balance *per capita* (X – M)/POP to come up with only one indicator. Using equal weights (1/2) to construct the average yields exports *per capita* (X/POP) as the actual indicator and, thus, imports disappear from the analysis! The 'more is always better' problem is illustrated by the interpretation of this indicator. There are two ways to increase this indicator: increase exports or decrease population. The mechanisms for the latter are left to the imagination of the reader, but I doubt most of these mechanisms will lead to the conclusion that increasing exports *per capita* in that manner is 'better' in any civilised society.

Notwithstanding the problems discussed above, this book is an outstanding analysis of the economic situation in Cuba during the 1989–2004 period. There is no better single reference work on this subject anywhere.

Roger R. Betancourt
University of Maryland

Shaffer, Kirwin R. (2005) *Anarchism and Countercultural Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba*, University Press of Florida (Gainesville), xi + 279 pp. $59.95 hbk.

The role of anarchism (in all its guises) in the political evolution of modern Cuba has long been either hotly contested or somewhat overlooked. This has arisen partly from post-1959 Cuban historiographical revisionism, seeking especially to stress the Revolution's

socialist and even nationalist roots (leading to a conventional reading, which this book happily challenges, of an essentially 'Spanish' immigrant anarchism and a native 'Cuban' socialism), but also arises partly from a general ignorance about both anarchism as a belief-system and its specific manifestations in Cuba. This admirable text is therefore a welcome antidote to those tendencies, setting the record straight and restoring Cuban anarchism to something like its rightful historical place, i.e. at the centre of the evolving Cuban radicalism, but also, curiously, portraying it as a victim of its own internal contradictions as much as of the known systematic repression from 1925 onwards.

Shaffer open his case with three basic affirmations: that the anarchism which evolved in Cuba was fundamentally 'hybridised' through the process of 'Cubanising' an imported idea; that anarchism should be seen as integral to the emerging radical nationalist (*cubanía rebelde*) consensus and thus part of radical 'nation-building' and not, as many have contended, separate from it and even opposed to it; and that we should rightly see the anarchist contribution to Cuban dissidence as essentially counter-cultural. Of these assertions, the first is unremarkable, since most European-originating movements and ideas went through an identical process in Latin America from the 1820s – although saying it here does contest the conventional Spanish-Cuban dichotomy. The second assertion is, however, a genuine challenge to the academic consensus, and welcome for that. The third, though, gives rise to a fascinating and rich picture of a whole ethos, wider than political action, trade union activism and nationalism.

That said, however, the book's focus on this aspect does tend to leave to one side the treatment of the anarchists' significant and identifiable political challenge, the story of anarchists as political actors; here this tends to be limited to a few aspects, in a narrative which is factually crowded and informative, but leaves us a little frustrated. Within this treatment, though, Shaffer's argument about the anarchists' dilemma after 1895 is good: whether to support a radical independence movement or remain studiously internationalist (which led, moreover, to a further dilemma over what to do with the memory of Martí, whose Partido Revolucionario Cubano was, he argues, a deliberate attempt to weaken anarchist influence). It also usefully covers the anarchists' attitude to immigration (such a central theme in Cuban politics for a century after the 1840s), where they departed from the consensus (on the need to 'whiten' Cuba or the need to protect jobs) and, instead, focussed on exploitation.

Yet it is when dealing with the anarchist attempts to challenge the system through their 'counter-culture', that Shaffer really gives us the most eloquent and revealing narrative, especially the chapter dealing with anarchist health beliefs. Those beliefs (almost obsessions, in some) led to the surprisingly powerful but idiosyncratic movement of 'naturism', but also revealed their internal tensions and even their underlying Puritanism and explaining in part their penchant for a nostalgic 'ruralism'. They also, as Shaffer portrays, led to a constant need to negotiate pragmatically for survival, no different in this respect from other radicals of the time. Shaffer's discussion of the vigorous anarchist education campaigns is similarly revealing: of their constant struggles to found, spread and defend their rationalist schools, while his brief discussion of their attitudes to women shows an unsurprising reflection of contemporary attitudes. The chapter on anarchist art is also good, highlighting both its closeness to other cultural vanguard movements and, again, its curious Puritanism (which, for example,

partly explained its opposition to popular carnival). Here, his decision to focus on the writers Adrián del Valle and Antonio Penichet is commendable and useful, although it must be said that the repeated use of their literary works at the end of some earlier chapters, to illustrate attitudes (to race, nationalism and so on) does not work especially well; mostly, these sections are too short to come across as anything other than fascinating afterthoughts.

Indeed, one criticism of the whole book might be that Shaffer perhaps tries to say too many things, with some chapters as a result being frustratingly short; one cannot help feeling that a greater impact might have come from a narrower focus, either on the political impetus or the counter-culture. However, whatever the minor faults, the overall effect of the book is of a challenge that is well sustained and argued and one which stresses the genuinely radical critique (rather than action) which Cuban anarchism offered.

Antoni Kapcia
University of Nottingham

Haney, Patrick J. and Vanderbush, Walt (2005) *The Cuban Embargo: The Domestic Politics of an American Foreign Policy*, University of Pittsburgh Press (Pittsburgh), xi + 222 pp. $24.95 pbk.

As the title of this book indicates, this is a detailed analysis of the US governmental processes that have produced the economic embargo on Fidel Castro, and not so much of the USA embargo policy itself. The authors give us passing hints that they disapprove of the embargo and regard it as a failure, but they mostly offer a very even-handed discussion of the policy and its impact. Unlike many critics who regard the policy as a clear and obvious mistake, they do not portray the process that produced it as pathological or as the simple result of an overly-influential community of anti-Castro Cuban émigrés who have clustered in Miami.

The book instead shows how a very complicated interaction of domestic interests and political personalities, changing over time, has produced the embargo policies and how such policies themselves have been uneven. While one can see a certain broad continuity, of course, in the embargo that has lasted from Eisenhower all the way to the second Bush administration, the authors also note how the embargo has been changing in form over time and show how the process has seen power shift from the President to the Congress, and to various private-sector groups (not just the Cuban-US lobby) over these five decades. The role of the Cuban-US community and in particular of the Cuban US National Foundation (CANF), is discussed in some detail, and avoids trading caricatures of this lobby.

The book is very well written, and exhaustively researched, drawing in analogies with the role of Congress and private groups, on such other ethnically-charged foreign policy issues as US attitudes on Taiwan or Israel. It is thus valuable reading for anyone specialising in US foreign policy and the evolving relationship between Congress and

the President. The materials are presented chronologically, as one administration succeeds another, and as the Congress periodically asserts itself.

Someone seeking a detailed analysis or critique of the US embargo will not find it in this book, but the arguments presented surely amount to an antidote for anyone who sees the policy as a clear-cut mistake, produced entirely by the ability of a Cuban-American community to manipulate the influence of Florida in the Electoral College. In demonstrating that the policy *process* is much more complicated, the book would support those of us who see the policy *choices* as much more complicated.

The authors endorse the view widely voiced among academics, that the trend in the Cuban-American community may be to become less vehement about Castro, and less supportive of the embargo. But they concede that this community today remains overwhelmingly (at least 90 per cent) in favour of maintaining the embargo, in the hope that, sooner or later, it will force an end to Castro's regime. As in any endurance-contest, it is easy to be sceptical about the sacrifices that are imposed on both sides by stubbornly sticking to the policy. But the success of the stubborn approach for either side comes when the other ceases to be stubborn.

The authors note on page 3 that more than one billion dollars of Cuba's annual economy is derived from remittances from the USA, remittances almost entirely from the same Cuban-American community that also supports the embargo. This may be less hypocritical or inconsistent than it first seems and more sophisticated, as Miami wishes to moderate the suffering of its cousins, while at the same time hoping that the Castro regime will collapse, or that it will at least have to submit to the same economic and political reforms that have taken hold in Vietnam and China.

No one interested in the actual US policies facing the Castro regime can ignore the domestic processes determining such decisions. This book will, thus, be important reading for anyone interested in Cuba, as well as for students of US foreign policy more generally. Indeed, the book would make fascinating reading even for someone who did not care much at all about policy toward Cuba, but simply wanted a detailed examination of how complicated the US foreign policy process can be.

George H. Quester
University of Maryland

Choy, Armando, Chui, Gustavo, Wong, Moisés Sío and Waters, Mary-Alice (2005) *Our History is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, Pathfinder Press (New York), 216 pp. £14.00 pbk.

Chinese Cubans played a major role in Cuba's independence struggle, but relatively little is known about them. In Spanish, Juan Jiménez Pastrana's *Los chinos en las lucha por la liberación de Cuba, 1847–1930* (Havana 1963, 1983) and Juan Pérez de la Riva's *El barracón: Esclavitud y capitalismo en Cuba* (Barcelona 1978) tell some of the story, but not much. In Chinese, Song Xiren's *Guba Huaqiao shihua* (Narrative history of Cuba's Chinese) (Taibei 1957) is a mere pamphlet. Duvon Clough Corbitt's *Study of the Chinese in Cuba, 1847–1947* (Wilmore 1971) is sound

but generally unavailable. Barry Carr's article on Cuba and the Comintern in Rees and Thorpe's *International Communism and the Communist International* (Manchester 1998) briefly notes the Chinese role in the Partido Comunista Cubano (PCC), but only in the early years. So this book of interviews with three Chinese-Cuban generals, published by New York's pro-Castro Pathfinder Press, helps to fill a big gap in the literature.

Chinese immigrants and their descendants in colonised countries are often entrepreneurial, but in Cuba they repeatedly joined local rebels in anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist alliances. The three generals represent the perpetuation of that tradition into the 1950s and beyond. Cuba under Spanish rule imported Chinese migrants as plantation workers. In other Caribbean countries, Chinese labour replaced slave labour, but in Cuba, where slavery remained until 1886, they supplemented it. Their numbers soared and eventually, Chinese plantation workers outnumbered slaves by three to two.

The Chinese experience in Cuba confounds the stereotypical view of Chinese abroad as clannish, docile, and xenophobic. Their resistance to impressment began in China, where they killed crimps, and continued at sea. More than fifteen per cent died enroute, if murders by crimps and deaths in barracoons are included.

The longevity of Cuban slavery blighted even the non-slaves' lives. Conditions on the estates were harsher than in other Caribbean colonies. The suicide rate reflected the misery – half of Cuba's suicides were Chinese. Many Chinese fled the estates to join the independence struggle. At one point, twenty per cent were on the run. The Chinese *mambises* were known as fearless. Their role is celebrated on a Chinatown monument inscribed with the words '*No hubo chino cubano desertor, no hubo chino cubano traidor*'. In 1895, Chinese mambises joined the Independence War. Some achieved high rank.

In the 1920s, immigrants radicalised in China brought the Chinese in Cuba up to date with new ideas. Sun Yat-sen's alliance with Moscow led to the Guomindang's reorganisation along Leninist lines in China and the reform of its chapters overseas. In Cuba, leftists sidelined the old leaders and recruited a thousand members, paving the way to a new alliance with the Cuban left.

The main leftwing force on the island was the Partido Communista de Cuba (PCC), a party principally of immigrants. Politically educated Chinese newcomers acted as its leaven. Colonial liberation and pro-immigrant policies formed the PCC's platform, just as they did of the Comintern's Anti-Imperialist League (AIL), which made supporting the Chinese Revolution a priority. An 'ethnic turn' suited the PCC well: blacks, mulattos and Chinese offered a path into the plantations, where the communists lacked influence. The PCC's international ties were thin, but the Chinese had close links with the Guomindang left, dominated by communists. They brought a Comintern perspective to the PCC and helped to prime its tactics.

After 1927, when Chiang Kai-shek turned against the communists in China, Chinese in Cuba founded the Alianza Protectora de los Obreros y Campesinos, modelled on the Chinese precedent, and its leaders joined the PCC. The Machado dictatorship drove the Alianza underground and deported three of its leaders. In 1930, it joined Cuba's first general strike and formed branches throughout the island. In May, its leader José Wong was arrested with leaders of the PCC and strangled in his cell. The

generals tell his story. The Alianza survived long enough to support the workers' rising that toppled Machado.

Thereafter, Chinese politics in Cuba were inspired for a while more by nationalism than by transethnic solidarity. Demagogues scapegoated Cuba's 'foreign' workers as gringo tools and passed laws that drove them into petty enterprise. This move coincided with a reinforced emphasis among Chinese on 'homeland' politics. Chinese Cubans formed a National Salvation Alliance that helped to fund China's anti-Japanese resistance. At the war's end, they founded an Alliance of Overseas Chinese Protecting Democracy and were banned as 'leftist'. They and the future generals joined Castro's clandestine struggle against Batista. After 1959, they changed their name to Chinese Socialist Alliance and set up a José Wong Brigade of the revolutionary militia, named after the man martyred in 1930. The Brigade helped carry out nationalisations and campaigned to eliminate drugs, prostitution, and gambling from Chinatown. In 1961, it helped throw back the invasion of Playa Girón.

Pathfinder must be congratulated for uncovering this remarkable but little-known dimension of the Cuban Revolution. The book brings the tradition of Chinese-Cuban radicalism up to the present. The generals tell the story of its passage into power (and uniform) under Castro. They describe the history of Chinese immigration; the Chinese role in Batista's overthrow; their own military aid missions to Angola and elsewhere; the Special Period after the Soviet collapse and Cuba's contemporary role in Venezuela and Latin America. The volume opens with a preface by Mary-Alice Waters, the veteran Marxist commentator, and ends with a glossary that includes a comprehensive list of Chinese-Cuban individuals and organisations.

Gregor Benton
Cardiff University

Young, Elliott (2004) *Catarino Garza's Revolution on the Texas-Mexico Border*, Duke University Press (Durham), xv + 407 pp. £69.00 hbk, £16.95 pbk.

Catarino Garza's Revolution on the Texas-Mexican Border is not a traditional biography. Elliott Young uses his dissertation subject, the life of a crusading binational border journalist, to build an analysis of regional events and circumstances in terms of a transnational ideological battle. The South Texas-Mexican greater border region as the nineteenth century drew to an end provides an excellent location to make such an analysis, and Catarino Garza's eyes provide an excellent lens through which to view the landscape.

This view begins in 1859 with Garza's birth on a small farm outside the Mexican border town of Matamoros, Tamaulipas during the great liberal reforms of Benito Juárez and just before the French invaded and installed an emperor from 1862 to 1867. Garza matured during the rise of Porfirio Díaz from winner of the ensuing liberal power struggle to a position of perpetual dictator. Combine this with the encroaching economic and cultural dominance of the 'colossus of the north' on both sides of the border and one has the perfect stage for a crusading journalist and political

activist who moved to Brownsville, Texas in 1877 at age eighteen. Garza embraced revolution both to re-empower Mexicans in Texas and to overthrow the Díaz regime. This 'revolution' began in September 1891 and included multiple unsuccessful military forays from Texas into Mexico. Although armed actions lingered into 1893, Garza fled into exile in early 1892. Increasingly fancying himself as a Latin American revolutionary leader, he went from Cuba to the Bahamas to Costa Rica, meeting his death in a failed liberal revolt in Colombia in 1895.

Research for this work includes extensive use of private, state and federal archives in both Mexico and the USA. Two individuals worthy of mention used to tell this story are Garza himself and his most dogged military adversary, US Army Captain John G. Bourke. Bourke leaves for the record several published journal articles and an insightful diary, while Garza offers an unfinished autobiography and many newspaper articles. Allowing people to speak for themselves creates the obvious pitfall of selective recounting and positive self-portrayal. This Young admits repeatedly and he does a commendable job of reading between the lines and using other sources to separate truth from puffery.

The writings left behind by Garza and Bourke leads to one of the many themes of this book that extend beyond Garza and South Texas – the importance of the press. As an experienced journalist, Garza recognised from beginning to end the value of the press as propaganda, especially in influencing the reading elite on both sides of the border and even internationally. The *Garzistas* proved talented at articulate public speaking, publishing their own newspapers, and writing books. While these efforts abounded and circulated widely during Garza's time, few of the smaller Spanish-language border newspapers survive today and Garzista versions of events were ultimately suppressed and overshadowed by official US and Mexican government positions. *Corridos* [ballads] and stories told by the less literate participants have all but disappeared today. This, according to Young, is one reason why the Garza revolution remains obscure to historians.

Young also uses these two antagonists, Garza and Bourke, to illustrate a larger phenomenon cresting on both sides of the border at the end of the nineteenth century: socioeconomic transformation. Based on US imperialism, this process had been occurring since before the Mexican-American War, creating the conditions for the long history of conflict and violence caused by encroaching Anglos. By 1890, however, border Mexicans and Tejanos were getting squeezed from both sides of the line and their degradation now loomed complete and irreversible. The Porfirian regime turned to foreign capitalists to commercialise agriculture, develop mines, and build railroads. In the name of 'progress', elite and common Mexicans not only lost land, but political freedom and democracy to 'central-government interference in a region that had been relatively isolated and semiautonomous for its entire history' (p. 7). While land certainly represented the major issue of contention by those that constituted the rank and file of border armed rebellions, Garza found equally offensive press censorship, electoral fraud, corruption, selling-out to foreigners, violation of liberal principles, and outright terrorism by the Mexican regime.

Bourke, on the other hand, portrays the divergent side of the ideological battle. Bourke not only viewed the role of the US military as bringing peace to a rebellious

border, but one of modernising and Americanising a backwards and underdeveloped region – in other words, 'de-Mexicanising' the border. Garza viewed Anglo encroachment as blatant imperialistic colonising, while Bourke found it simple and necessary civilising. *Garzistas* and anti-*Garzistas* alike sought their version of development, modernisation, progress, and democracy. It is interesting to find similar criticisms and name calling levelled by each side against the other in a debate as to which was the more moral and honourable in achieving similar goals.

While this reviewer finds it difficult to call Garza's movement a 'revolution', I do agree with Young that Garza and his actions deserve serious attention by historians and that studying him offers much to an understanding of the South Texas-Mexican border region. Young admirably uses Garza, his region, and his period to paint a noteworthy transnational ideological picture that reaches beyond the traditional focus on industrialisation, mining, land, and governmental politics. This work is also valuable in helping the reader understand the upcoming Mexican Revolution of 1910.

Robin Robinson
The University of Texas at Brownsville

Brewster, Keith (2003) *Militarism, Ethnicity and Politics in the Sierra Norte de Puebla, 1917–30*, University of Arizona Press (Tucson), 220 pp. $47.00 hbk.

This is an impressive study of regional politics in Puebla's *Sierra Norte* which covers an intriguing period of Revolutionary history as Mexico experienced a slow transition from mobilisation and ensuing anarchy, inching towards post-Revolutionary consolidation and, eventually, centralist *estatismo*. It is, at the same time, impressively concise, especially since it is the product of over a decade of research. It is not an original study in terms of either its subject matter or its methodology – given that it follows the regionalist or 'microhistorical' trend within Revolutionary historiography established more than a generation ago which inexorably drew attention to the interaction of Revolutionary *caudillos, caciques* and peasants in Mexico's hinterlands – but it is no less impressive for that. Based upon meticulous, extensive, and exhaustive archival research in *poblano* and national archives and supported by oral testimonies, Brewster's analysis and judgement are consistently measured and balanced and above all, sensitive to the local context. While demonstrating a high degree of empathy for his subject, he manages to avoid the pitfalls of becoming too embroiled in local detail (or local colour), and his account is informed by comparisons with other regions, and a thorough examination of the historiography, and in particular, of recent historiographical debates, especially those which surround the 'new' cultural history and the role of the subaltern.

The focus of the book is the *cacicazgo* of Gabriel Barrios, which spanned the period in question. The examination of Barrios' rise to power – his local origins, his emergence during the height of Revolutionary anarchy and his eventual demise, allows Brewster to explore the complex characteristics and vicissitudes of local power brokerage in regional Mexico. Brewster makes it clear, as many other studies have done, that

the support for rural *caciquismo* in post-independence Mexico was rooted in the articulation and preservation of peace, security, local autonomy and cultural 'identity', always in dialogue or interaction with external authority, rather than as atavistic reflections of 'structural' or 'timeless' features of a rigid or inflexible rural peasant society. Rural communities were never static, nor entirely powerless; but the freedom of action available to regional *caciques* and the communities they represented was always circumscribed by the relative power of the state, in either its colonial, liberal or post-Revolutionary manifestations. As a result, Barrios emerges during the Revolution as a power broker between local interests, the regional authorities (in the city of Puebla), and the central state – like his nineteenth-century predecessors, such as Juan Francisco Lucas – and comes to prominence precisely at a time when the brittle and embattled liberal state/nation-building project, which enjoyed one of its infrequent bouts of invigoration during the Porfiriato (1876–1911), broke down progressively after 1911. Barrios was only able to exert a degree of power over *serrano* affairs in the 1920s, which was, as Brewster is at pains to emphasise, never absolute, since the exercise of power always involved compromise as well as coercion because neither the state nor central governments were able to assert their authority in the region, and thus were prepared to support any individual or faction which could maintain a semblance of order. Once the state was in a position to re-establish its authority and the *callista* government able to impose its strategy of demilitarisation after 1928, the *cacicazgo* rapidly collapsed. This allows Brewster to conclude, convincingly, that the key to understanding Barrios, like myriad other regional *caciques* in pre- or post-Revolutionary Mexico, was neither solely as a defender of local community interests, nor exclusively an agent of rapacious external forces, but an untidy mixture of the two.

Paul Garner
University of Leeds

Ducey, Michael T. (2004) *A Nation of Villages: Riot and Rebellion in the Mexican Huasteca, 1750–1850*, University of Arizona Press (Tucson), xii + 230 pp. $39.95 hbk.

In this insightful, if brief (174 pages of text), study of the Mexican Huasteca, Michael Ducey adds to the growing corpus of scholarship on popular political culture, peasants and state formation in the nineteenth century. Ducey examines riots in the waning decades of Spanish rule, insurrection during the Mexican insurgency between 1810 and 1821, and the politics of rebellion in this region in republican Mexico with particular focus on the 1836 Papantla rebellion and the Caste War of the Huasteca (1845–1850). He traces the shifts which occurred in objectives, tactics, ideologies and political identities between 1750 and 1850 and poses the central questions of how the villagers' 'discontent fit into the political drama of early national Mexico' and whether or not they possessed a national vision.

Ducey emphasises the diversity of the peasants of the Huasteca and their ability to manipulate and adapt both colonial and republican political ideologies and institutions to further their own needs. During the century under study, peasant tactics and discourse

changed 'dramatically' in response to political changes. Ducey analyses how the Spanish government's attempts to increase supervision of indigenous town government and community treasuries provoked riots but also produced 'dynasties of small-town politicians who would influence local village politics in the future (p. 59). He explores how the decade of the Mexican insurgency resulted in the transformation of politics: declarations of support for federalism and citizens' rights gradually replaced declarations of loyalty to the Spanish monarch. Following Peter Guardino, Ducey also challenges Eric Van Young's argument about the dissonances between elite and popular political culture. He contends that 'the barrier between elite and popular discourse was more porous than it now appears, and villagers participated in the ideological creation of the nation along with the Creole elite' (p. 89).

Ducey's analysis of 'the politics of rebellion' in independent Mexico and the Papantla movement of 1836 illustrates the emergence of a new cadre of leaders. Indian *principales* like Mariano Olarte (who directed the movement) possessed military experience, political expertise, and networks which extended beyond their villages. The rebellions also illustrate how violence and *pronunciamientos* became much more common as tactics for political change, and how the tensions between municipalities in the head towns and the indigenous authorities of the *sujetos* [subject towns] increased after independence. Ducey emphasises that although the traditional sources of indigenous political representation disappeared with independence indigenous villagers retained colonial Indian institutions on an informal basis to defend their interests so that 'daily practice laid the new constitutional system over the ancient *repúblicas*' (p. 99).

While Ducey acknowledges the provincial focus of rebellions in the Huasteca, he insists that what was also at stake was a redefinition of the political relationships between the *patrias chicas* of the rebels and the state. Ducey makes the important argument that the Huasteca Rebellion was not directed by a caudillo but developed from within the leadership of the hamlets of rural municipalities which sought to control key positions in the municipalities and the prefectures. He is quick to point out that although the Huasteca movement had its origins in agrarian protest, a major provocation was the structure of local government and rebel aspirations to change the balance of power in favour of *sujeto* communities. At the same time, the rebellion became a region-wide revolt catalysed by the US-Mexican War of 1846–1848 and the subsequent debates about what the nation was and how to defend it. As Ducey asserts, such debates 'produced an unorthodox popular nationalism that rebels used to justify their actions' (p. 144). Ducey judiciously points to the limitations of pueblo nationalism, however, 'The nationalism of the villagers was the nationalism of a guerrilla war: it was centred on local defence, pueblo equality and a resentment of outsiders' (p. 166).

What is disappointing about an otherwise suggestive study is Ducey's lack of attention to questions of indigenous culture and a deeper sense of the communities with which he deals. There is little sense, for example, about how village life was organised above and beyond the hard politics he focuses on. Did villagers have access to schools? Who were the cultural brokers who navigated between Spanish and indigenous languages and between literate and illiterate constituencies? How did local religion and

cosmologies affect political discontent and behaviour? He hints, for example, at a 'deeper cultural agenda' of the Totonac which is never satisfactorily developed and interrogated (p. 39); and, he refers to Elio Masferrer's interpretation of the Papantla movement as a defence of Totonac ethnic identity (p. 121) but does not engage with it in a substantive way. As such it makes it difficult to understand precisely what Ducey means when he asserts that the '*repúblicas* of the national period were not merely the old colonial institutions. They were more *sujeto* oriented and *probably more indigenous* [my emphasis] than had been their predecessors' (p. 102). To complicate matters even more, he uses 'peasant', 'villager', 'Indian', 'rural people' and 'rural lower classes' interchangeably. Finally, while the Church and priests have occasional walk-on roles, they remain a shadowy presence and peasant women are virtually absent from Ducey's analysis. Despite such misgivings this is a welcome study of an important region which remains understudied in the Anglophone literature.

Susan Deans-Smith
The University of Texas at Austin

Olesen, Thomas (2005) *International Zapatismo: The Construction of Solidarity in the Age of Globalization*, Zed Books (London), 243 pp. £55.00 hbk, £17.95 pbk.

This book has many strengths. Scholars and journalists have written much about Mexico's Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), which stormed San Cristóbal and other towns in Chiapas on 1 January 1994. But until now there has been no book-length treatment devoted to its transnational dimensions. For the Zapatistas, the support they ignited within hours of the rebellion has been critical to their survival. Protests by supporters overseas and in Mexico helped compel the government to cease attacks against the rebels in 1994 and again in 1995. Since then, transnational networking has supplied the Zapatistas with resources, pressured the Mexican state, and provided much needed solidarity. The rebellion helped change Mexico, spotlighting the plight of the country's Indians, leading to small but important policy changes toward the indigenous population, and arguably strengthening Mexican civil society and accelerating democratisation in the 1990s. The EZLN remains far from achieving the sweeping goals it announced at the start of the rebellion. But it survives in rural Chiapas, and its influence remains strong particularly among the country's Indians. The national and transnational support networks are an important reason for this, yet until now we have not had a detailed examination of them or a good way to theorise about them.

International Zapatismo first fills the empirical gap. Olesen carefully examines the diverse set of transnational followers who have supported the ELZN. His research is impressive. He has analysed numerous documents and websites and interviewed key players in the Americas and Europe. He provides a map of the 'transnational Zapatista counterpublic', identifying five levels of 'informational infrastructure'. In particular, he aims to explain why the Zapatistas, a small and weak movement which by most measures has had only modest success at home, sparked such enduring support overseas.

In answering this question, the book makes a second important contribution, to theories of social movements, networks, and transnational mobilisation. Chapter Two, drawing from recent theory in sociology, communications, and political science, proposes a new approach. Olesen's most important advance is to distinguish various forms of solidarity in the Zapatista network and in other transnational networks today and in the past. Altruistic solidarity is uni-directional, involving a flow of ideological or material goods from activists in the developed world to movements in the developing world. Inequality is endemic to altruistic solidarity networks, and paternalism is a risk. Olesen's innovation is to note the existence of 'mutual solidarity' in the Zapatista movement. In this form of solidarity, support is bi-directional. Overseas activists not only assist the Zapatistas through protests at home and aid shipments to Mexico; they also gain important forms of support from the Zapatistas themselves, primarily in the form of ideological guidance and inspiration. Moreover, the relationship is built on equality and mutual help. One might quibble that even in 'altruistic' solidarity, the fact that some needy groups gain support while others do not points to something more than selflessness motivating activism. Reciprocally, as Olesen himself acknowledges, the relationships within the Zapatista solidarity network have changed over time, and mutuality is not assured, but Olesen's point is well taken and extremely useful for future research.

The Zapatistas have had great success at galvanising a mutual solidarity network. There are several reasons for this. Zapatista spokesman Subcomandante Marcos, a non-Indian and former professor of communications at a Mexican University, acts as a lynchpin, linking the movement's indigenous leadership and constituency to its transnational networks. Through prolific, often compelling writing, Marcos has framed the movement as an exemplar of several important political currents at the global level. The Zapatistas' attacks on neo-liberalism, their elevation of civil society and embrace of non-violence, and their rejection of national power for themselves, have all made the movement a focal point for those on the Left disenchanted with failed revolutionary experiences of the recent past. More important for the growth of mutual solidarity, Marcos has encouraged supporters to create their own Zapatismos at home, challenging social exclusion, political repression, and economic liberalism everywhere in the world.

As a third contribution, the book enhances current understandings of globalisation and new communication technologies. Olesen views the Internet as an important vehicle not only for information exchange within the transnational network, but also for establishing critical resonances between the everyday experiences of those in Chiapas and supporters overseas, many of whom are then motivated to visit Chiapas itself. With some qualifications, he sees mutual solidarity as fostering forms of interaction that transcend distance, avoid hierarchy, and challenge more coercive forms of economic, cultural, and political globalisation. This is a useful insight both for scholars and for activists. I strongly recommend this book for students of globalisation, social movements, and Mexican politics.

Clifford Bob
Duquesne University

Otero, Gerardo (ed.) (2004) *Mexico in Transition: Neoliberal Globalism, the State, and Civil Society*, Zed Books (London), xv + 274 pp. £55.00 hbk, £18.95 pbk.

After Mexico defaulted on its national debt in 1982, its governing party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), enacted neoliberal reforms – dramatically reducing trade barriers and eliminating large state industries. Washington economists, Wall Street financiers and Mexican politicians approved and confidently pronounced these reforms would bring Mexico to first world status. The results have been lacklustre. Many books have already remarked on the feeble uneven GDP growth, the destruction of the Mexican middle class and non-existent wage growth. *Mexico in Transition: Neoliberal Globalism, the State and Civil Society*, examines through sociological approaches the negative consequences of neoliberalism for civil society and how it responded.

In his introduction, Otero argues that the ultimate cause of Mexico's anaemic growth lies within the definition of neoliberal globalism. Using Karl Polanyi's social theories of the development of the market economy, Otero suggests that a neoliberal capitalist economy turns labour and land into simple commodities. Rather than fostering development, this transformation dehumanises work and devalues the environment, as they become dispensable objects. The authors argue that the process of globalisation has been largely a negative force by following these neoliberal principles. How do citizens react to this unfavourable process? Civil society, workers, peasants and even middle class organisations actively resist and moderate this commodification of life. Ultimately, Otero hypothesises that the growth of civil society can lead to a reform of the state, allowing for equitable economic growth.

Several articles accentuate Otero's view that neoliberal capitalism degrades the quality of life. Armando Bartra argues that neoliberal globalism weakened Mexico's national sovereignty because international agricultural competition overwhelmed Mexico's agricultural production. Consequently, free trade has jeopardised Mexico's peasant culture, which according to Bartra provides a more just labour model and more environmentally sensitive methods of agricultural production. Labour has not done better. Even though productivity gains have occurred, Mexican workers have not seen a gain in real wages, writes Enrique Dussell Peters. Continuing traditions established under the PRI, corrupt, corporatist unions still prevent authentic labour representation, according to Enrique de la Garza Toledo. Immigration only helps US imperialism, notes Raúl Delgado Wise. The USA has received the cheap labour necessary to become competitive in the global market place and Mexico has lost valuable human resources.

Other authors emphasise how civil society creatively mitigates neoliberalism and even uses globalisation to its advantage. Jeffrey Cohen describes an indigenous community in Santa Ana del Valle, Oaxaca that maintains traditions and identity despite the substantial departure of members to the US. Cooperative relations continue through the *tequio* [communal labour] and the local Casa de la Cultura, which helps maintain indigenous cultural traditions and reciprocal relationships. Discussing international coffee production, Elena Martínez Lopez argues that small agricultural producers have found potential opportunities. International competition caused by free trade utterly

decimated world coffee prices. Yet, peasant cooperatives in southern Mexico specialising in organic coffees have found some success. The Mexican middle class, too, has organised to moderate neoliberalism's extremes. After the 1994 peso devaluation caused an extreme economic downturn, most small debtors and businesses could not repay banks and faced foreclosure and confiscation of property. The anti-debt group El Barzón successfully postponed many court cases against debtors in the mid nineties.

This edited volume raises as many provocative questions as it answers. Deborah Barndt unravels the contradictions of female Mexican seasonal workers who pick tomatoes in Canada. These migrant workers do not have the right to organise and despite the extra income most of these women must continue to work two jobs back in Mexico. Yet, in Canada female migrant workers receive health insurance, pensions and also standard minimum wages. Indeed, one of the women interviewed noted that the Canadian working conditions were an improvement over Mexico. What was the difference before and after NAFTA? Did these women see the opportunities created by the break down of trade barriers as a benefit compared to the protectionist, nationalistic policies of the old PRI regime?

One principal problem this reviewer found was that many of the essays depict civil society and peasant identity idealistically. Consequently, the essays tend to praise civil society but do not thoroughly look into possible contradictions and criticisms. For instance, civil society can be an agent of the government rather than a vehicle for igniting radical social change. Similarly, many books have explored the internal conflicts within peasant communities and the Zapatistas. How do these interpretations square with Bartra and Otero's positive vision of peasant communities? Nevertheless, by grappling with both the negative consequences of neoliberalism and civil society's adjustments, this collection of essays uncovers the nuances of globalisation not provided by economic analysis and ultimately provides a valuable contribution to the literature.

Byron Crites
The University of Texas at Austin

Little, Walter E. (2004) *Mayas in the Marketplace: Tourism, Globalization, and Cultural Identity*, University of Texas Press (Austin), x + 320 pp. £45.00 hbk, £18.95 pbk.

Antigua, Guatemala, according to Walter E. Little, is a touristic borderzone, a space where the distinctions between home and work, tourist and local, and representations of cultural identity and lived realities blur. Tourists often view Guatemala as a living history museum, which 'renders culture, place, and people as controlled, contained, organised, and unchanging' (p. 38). Demand for 'authentic' representations of 'Mayaness' results in negotiated cultural constructions that meet the expectations of tourists. In this engaging ethnography, Little explores how Kaqchikel *típica* [handicraft] vendors traverse the spaces of the touristic borderzone and negotiate the boundaries of cultural identity.

Through extensive ethnographic inquiry, Little meets his stated intention to describe 'how Kaqchikel Maya handicraft vendors strategically use different identity

constructions for political and economic reasons to help maintain their livelihoods' (p. 6). *Mayas in the Marketplace* reflects the shifting social realities that are affected by global and local processes. Little represents Kaqchikel vendors as dynamic and inventive, giving voice to their experiences and concerns, illustrating how, in practice, identity is fluid and malleable.

Of particular interest is the discussion of shifting Kaqchikel gender divisions of labour resulting from engagement in the tourist market. Maya women, especially those who wear *traje* [traditional hand-made clothing] and speak a Mayan language, are recognised by tourists as being 'authentic' bearers of culture, illustrated as such by Little in a number of amusing anecdotes demonstrating how this perception of authenticity is articulated by tourists and responded to by vendors. Many tourists go to marketplaces specifically to engage with Maya people; female vendors thus hold the advantage. When women work outside the home, often at a distance from the home community, gender roles at home are reconfigured 'and generally lead to strategic identity changes' (p. 144). In addition to markets and marketplaces, Little's ethnographic inquiry took him to the communities of Santa Catarina Polopó and San Antonio Aguas Calientes, where locals have responded to increasing tourism by opening their homes to tourists. In these spaces women maintain the hierarchical gender divisions of labour and in so doing, play the roles that tourists equate with authenticity and thereby take advantage of their potential for economic gain.

Little highlights the need for vendors to continue to belong to their home community. None of the vendors Little interacted with considers Antigua their home, even though most spent the majority of their time there. Following John M. Watanabe, Little asserts that 'place and identity, localised specifically as community, continues to be one of the more prominent ways that Mayas conceive of their identities' (p. 180), and the home communities of Kaqchikel vendors remain centres of social, economic, ritual, and community life. For people throughout rural Guatemala there is often no hope of working or studying exclusively in their communities; commuting is a way of life. Maintaining community ties is complicated as the 'right to claim a community as one's hometown has to do with public participation' (p. 188). Participation can be established through cultivating *milpa* [cornfield], patronising neighbourhood stores and marketplaces, involvement in ritual occasions, and offering support to local *cofradías* [religious brotherhoods].

Little asks why vendors work so hard to maintain membership in communities they do not live in or are absent from much of the time. In answering this question, Little falls short and disappoints. 'Quite simply, according to vendors', he writes, 'they *need* to belong to their communities' (p. 200). There is, in fact, nothing 'simple' about the human need for belonging to a place in time and space. Little appears unaware of the ethnographic literature that addresses sense of place as a key component of identity construction. Of particular import in this regard is the work of anthropologist Keith Basso (1996), who explains eloquently that attachment to place is nothing less than profound and integral to human identity. Furthermore, engaging an extensive geographical literature on space, place, and home would allow Little to explain the multilayered processes of belonging, conceptions of home, and expressions of identity as they are tied to a sense of place.

In his introduction, Little acknowledges the significance of place and space to identity, but defines them by way of a quotation from Michel de Certeau in a footnote (p. 279, note 2) that does little to illuminate these concepts. In his conclusion, Little returns to these concepts: 'Kaqchikel Maya *típica* vendors do not have difficulties constructing steady points of reference ….[t]hey know where home is, who populates that place, and what they need to do to exist and participate in it' (p. 263). This frame has the potential to elucidate and expand on every aspect of this ethnography, but it is not adequately supported. For this work to realise its potential, Little needs to connect with literature that will help him join concepts of place, space, and home to the construction and maintenance of identity.

The lasting significance of this work is in its recognition and representation of Kaqchikel creativity and flexibility. The participants of Little's ethnographic study are resourceful actors who find ways to use the global influences affecting their lives with positive results. Loss of culture and identity in light of global processes is not a concern for these people. As Little writes, '[w]hen asked explicitly what their identities are, they answered, "We know who we are"' (p. 32). Little has done an outstanding job in communicating something of that knowledge to a larger audience.

Reference

Basso, Keith H. (1996) *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque.

Leah Huff
Queens University, Ontario

Velasco Ortiz, Laura (2005) *Mixtec Transnational Identity*, The University of Arizona Press (Tucson), xvii + 234 pp. $50.00 hbk.

Mexican immigrants in the USA are commonly known as Chicanos or Latinos, terms that obliterate their more particular cultural backgrounds and identities. Many come from indigenous regions and speak native languages. The author of this book traces the routes taken by migrants from the Mixtec-speaking regions of Oaxaca during the last half-century. More particularly, she researches the communication networks that have formed along these routes, facilitating the formation of organisations beyond the confines of corporate home communities and the construction of more inclusive identities. While indian identities in Mexico never used to carry much significance outside the context of traditional corporate communities, the author shows how a transnational indigenous and Mixtec identity has arisen from the migratory circuit.

The Mixtec diaspora includes groups dispersed over much of central and northern Mexico and the southwestern states of the USA. The migrations of agricultural labourers across the border started with the US labour importation (*Bracero*) programme, that lasted from 1942 to 1964. During the same period and later, other Mixtecs went to cut sugarcane in Vera Cruz or to work as domestic servants in Mexico City. From

the 1960s onwards, many worked on the construction of the capital's metro system. Velasco Ortiz' study, however, is focused mainly on Mixtec groups straddling the border between California and Mexico and on some of their home communities in Oaxaca. Although many migrants remember these communities as hierarchical societies dominated by Spanish-speaking Mestizo elites, even second-generation migrants generally maintain close connections with them. Consequently, the migratory process also has important repercussions back home. There is, for example, an ambivalent relationship between migrant attitudes and the enduring importance of the civil-religious institutions of many hometowns. While some people apparently migrated to escape the obligations of serving cargos in the civil-religious systems, contributions made by many other migrants have served to invigorate these systems and give the religious feasts associated with them a new significance on an extra-local level.

The author's centre of attention, however, is the development of migrant organisations from simple hometown associations to transnational organisations. The rise of such organisations makes the general communication network or 'reticulum' (a term adopted from Michael Kearney) they form part of more complex and politically potent. She describes the typical leaders of the organisations as indigenous intellectuals who (in Gramsci's sense of what an 'intellectual' is) possess a capacity to guide and represent the aspirations of the group to which they organically belong. Redefining the sense of being indian or 'Mixtec' outside the communities of origin, these intellectuals are the architects behind the construction of a transnational ethnic community. This observation leads to a discussion of theories of ethnicity. Although the author accords in principle with the views of Fredrik Barth; understanding ethnicity to arise from the social organisation of cultural differences rather than (primordially) from cultural differences as such, she finds the emphasis that Barth places on situations of interaction across 'ethnic boundaries' to be of little significance here. The construction of a shared identity among the migrants rather follows from how their situation makes family links and principles of common origin important in new ways. The author points out that many anthropologists (including Barth himself) have in recent years come to recognise that 'intellectuals' often play an important part in the construction of ethnic identities. Thus, she is perhaps more original when it comes to analyse some gender-related aspects of the processes involved. While women commonly engage in grass roots activism, they depend on 'permits' issued by their husbands to play any formal roles in the organisations. The author suggests that the organisations, by acknowledging the need for such 'permits', function as the space where the gender order fragmented by migration is re-established.

Overall, this book clearly and coherently tells the story of how the contemporary Mixtec 'tribe' has come to share an identity that extends over large parts of Mexico and across international borders. By defining their functions in terms of a Mixtec or indigenous identity, the organisations have opened up new political spaces on both sides of the US-Mexico border. This and most of the other findings and inferences made in this book appear plausible. I find it a weakness, however, that the author presents little in terms of examples or cases relating to how common migrants communicate their ethnic identity in different types of situations. The circumstance that such identities are commonly riddled with contradictions and dilemmas is hardly dealt

with. A main method has been to identify the organisations, interview and record the life stories of their representatives and leaders. The subjectivities captured in this way can only give a limited view of what it might mean to be 'Mixtec' or 'indigenous' from a native point of view.

Jon Schackt
University of Tromsø

Falcón, Romana (ed.) (2005) *Culturas de pobreza y resistencia. Estudios de marginados, proscritos y descontentos, México, 1804–1910*, Colegio de México (Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro Mexico), 358 pp. pbk.

As a result of a doctoral seminar at the Colegio de México on the (relatively) old concept of resistance, twelve young academics and their mentor-editor present genuinely novel insights into peasant resistance in nineteenth-century rural Mexico; and interesting, if more predictable and superficial, research into the legislation imposed upon the urban poor and the strategies with which they responded during the same period.

Although aware of more recent trends, the contributors are firmly placed within a social history tradition that owes a lot more to E. P. Thompson's moral economy, especially to the revisiting of this concept by James C. Scott, and Scott's own reflections on resistance, than subaltern studies, postmodern theory, or cultural history. Fortunately, the old concepts prove to be in good health.

The use of Scott in Mexican history has two stimulating 1980s precedents. John Tutino, inspired by the historical sociology of Barrington Moore and Theda Skocpol, but more closely influenced by Scott's moral economy of subsistence, identified four key variables to explain agrarian insurrection in Mexico (1750–1940). Also influenced by the sociology of revolutions and peasant studies (including Scott), Alan Knight's history of the 1910 Revolution preferred less ambitious but more solid and detailed generalisations, and often achieved a greater integration of socio-economic, political and cultural explanation than did Tutino's more decidedly materialist approach.

The contributions to this volume are more tentative than the studies by Tutino and Knight and they do not engage with Eric Van Young's recent criticism that Scott exaggerated the rationality of peasant action. They do not aspire to grand models and some interesting local studies are hampered by the lack of a wider context. Yet Scott's concept of resistance, Tutino's four variables (material conditions, autonomy, security and mobility), and, to a lesser extent, Moore's reflections on injustice, are fruitfully applied to dense small-scale case studies, lending an unusual coherence to this collection. Contributions are at their best when interpreting short but revealing episodes (here lies the influence of cultural history and ethnographic methodologies, if not theory), such as the occupation of Mexico City by American forces in 1847–1848 (Pérez, Cosamalón); and when analysing, and comparing, meticulously researched case studies, which demonstrate the productive influence of regional and local history developed since the late 1960s (Marino, Mendoza).

Partly due to the fact that there is a more developed historiography for this theme and period (and possibly richer primary sources), the articles on rural Mexico generally show a better fit between concepts and evidence, a greater capacity to insert case studies into a broader framework, and a deeper analysis. Nonetheless, the 'urban' chapters do provide leads into important topics that have hitherto received little attention, thus developing the pioneering work of Di Tella and Viqueira, and the more recent monograph by Pérez Toledo.

Notably, the volume's emphasis on the agency of subordinate groups disproves long-held assumptions about the process of land disentailment (*desamortización*), such as the homogenous opposition by peasant communities, or the lack of a notion of private property among indigenous peoples. The chapters by Gutiérrez, Marino, Mendoza and Ortiz Yam provide a nuanced and complex picture of *desamortización*, including previously neglected topics such as the interplay between customary practices and liberal legislation, and the strategic use of certain legal rights to achieve local ends, for instance to preserve custom, to benefit the community and to favour residents against outsiders. These findings contribute significantly to an emerging revisionist history of land privatisation, prefigured in the work of Guy Thomson on 'popular liberalism' in Puebla, and of which the best book-length example is Emilio Kourí's recent work on the vanilla-rich district of Papantla, Veracruz (unfortunately neither author is discussed in this volume).

A comment is due on the treatment of agency and the state. All authors are aware of the risks inherent in the assumption that all subaltern strategies are necessarily resistant or in the actors' own interest. At best this stance provides balanced analysis, at worst it leaves the chapters inconclusive, hampered by the fear that they may exaggerate the rationality and efficiency of the dominated, but without explicitly evaluating the constraints on their action.

Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent's 1994 edited collection, *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, partly inspired by Scott's work, demonstrated the advantages of looking simultaneously at both the construction of state hegemony and popular resistance. The volume reviewed here, in seeking to recuperate the perspective from below, explicitly excludes state formation. However, further development of this book's insights may be hindered if we disassociate popular resistance from state hegemonic processes. We need more systematic research into the relations between hegemony and resistance, and the specific strengths and weaknesses of the Mexican state. Do the multiple strategies of resistance that we are now identifying point to a structural weakness of the state? Does resistance from below (e.g. the strategies of the urban poor against vagrancy laws, or those of peasants against privatisation) prevent the state's standardisation of practices (as the anthropologist Nuijten has argued for twentieth-century Mexico) and the rule of law?

Finally, Falcón must be praised for developing a space where the contributions of European, US and Mexican scholars speak to each other, a situation that is much less frequent than would be desirable.

Ariadna A. Rodrigo
Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, Mexico

Kovic, Christine (2005) *Mayan Voices for Human Rights: Displaced Catholics in Highland Chiapas*, University of Texas (Austin), x + 238 pp. $50 hbk, $19.95 pbk.

This book presents a rich ethnographic and historical approach to the expulsion of religious dissidents in San Juan Chamula, Chiapas, and seeks to address the complex issue of human rights in multicultural contexts. Supported by a solid description of the historical processes related to the broader social, cultural, economic and political context in Chiapas and San Juan Chamula, Kovic presents and scrutinises the narratives of a particular group of indigenous exiles, thus putting the reader in direct contact with the human side of the drama of expulsion.

Kovic shows that expulsion is not solely linked to conversion to Protestantism, as scholars, journalists and government officials have tended to argue. Unveiling the power struggles involved, she demonstrates the economic and political factors that underlie the expulsion of more than 20,000 people from Chamula since the early 1970s. Indeed, 'expulsion cannot be viewed exclusively as a religious conflict because political and economic interests are embedded in religious symbols' (p. 85).

A key contribution of the book is that it shows the complexity of any assessment of human rights in multicultural contexts, which 'demands an understanding of indigenous people as subjects with human agency rather than as mere objects of abuses' (p. 39). Kovic underlines explicitly that indigenous people are not only victims, but also perpetrators, showing that the divide in the struggle for rights and justice in Chiapas cannot be drawn simplistically across ethnic or class affiliation. Human rights, she argues, have been used both by government and indigenous actors to pursue their own interests.

Kovic describes a Catholic Church that sought a dialogue with 'the other', but that constructed an abstract and romantic image of indigenous culture and thus to a large extent ignored the heterogeneity within and between communities, and failed to address 'the question of who would define culture and the ways tradition is linked to power' (p. 58). In this way, she stresses once more the complexity of the study of human rights in multicultural contexts.

The author points to a central dilemma faced by Church activists in the promotion of indigenous subjectivity how far should they accompany indigenous people in the political struggle for liberation? Her analysis begs further questions related to the process of self-determination, particularly with respect to the definition of rights. Up to what point was the notion of rights held by the indigenous people from Guadalupe moulded by the pastoral workers' own perceptions?

Mayan Voices for Human Rights stresses the link between conceptions of human rights and religious identity. The book depicts a progressive Catholic Church that recognised indigenous peoples as 'subjects of their own history' and as counterparts in a cultural dialogue. It also stresses the importance of the alliance for human rights between indigenous people and the Catholic Church. In this respect, she argues that '[d]istinct notions of human rights – including those from indigenous communities, from Catholic doctrine, and from legal codes – are not treated as competing notions but rather as coexisting definitions of rights' (p. 113). But the broad description and analysis presented by the author throughout the book suggests that the concept of

rights constructed by the indigenous-Church alliance in Chiapas is closer to the notion of 'rights of the poor' (linked to liberation theology) and group solidarity (characteristic of indigenous communal organisation) than to the liberal version of universal human rights. In this respect, the author does point at the ambiguous links between universal human rights and the notion of 'rights of the poor', and underlines the latter's critique of the liberal, pro-capitalism and pro-*status quo* features of mainstream human rights thought. But the author does not explore explicitly the tensions and ambiguities of a notion of rights that, in the end, might not be so coherent or harmonious.

Perhaps the central question suggested by *Mayan Voices for Human Rights* is whether the Chamula people living in exile in Guadalupe consider that their human rights were violated by their expulsion and by the poverty in which they live. In other words, do they see explicitly their experience as contrary to human rights even if they seldom use the concept in their narratives? It is clear that they condemn their expulsion and their every day suffering. It is also clear that they consider that they should have a 'dignified life'. But are these necessarily human rights claims? Do all visions of a 'dignified life' have to be framed in the language of human rights?

The narratives of the people of Guadalupe underline that the authorities of Chamula violated the law, but most importantly the local norms of respect (126–129). They also emphasise the consequences of poverty and the need to have access to land and basic services. This makes us question if the people from Guadalupe were not framing their own visions of their situation within a broader notion of justice, law or even 'natural law'. In other words, it is not fully clear that the ethical framework through which they consider their own situation is that of a 'complex understanding of [human] rights, which is internationally informed (…) but locally grounded' (p. 116). The value of *Mayan Voices for Human Rights* goes beyond its important empirical contributions, but lies equally in the further reflection and debate that such an analysis inspires.

Alejandro Anaya Muñoz
Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City

Hall, Linda B. (2004) *Mary, Mother and Warrior: The Virgin in Spain and the Americas*, University of Texas Press (Austin), xiii + 366 pp. $65.00 hbk, $24.95 pbk.

Any scholar of Latin America, whatever the discipline, will be familiar with the Virgin in Latin America and here Linda Hall attempts an analysis of the cult of the Virgin in Spain and the Americas, principally Peru and Mexico. The book's opening chapters deal with the Virgin in Spain at the time of the Reconquista and develops the argument, based partly on William Christian's work, that the Virgin was found especially suitable to aid in the conquering of new territories; unlike more local saints there was a universalism to the Virgin albeit one that did not, by any means, preclude local apparitions. The Virgin as an object of devotion and part of the ideological armoury of conquest was carried into the New World where, as in Europe, she was assimilated to

local deities and mother cults. Hall contrasts the violent and sanguinary Aztec female deities and suggests the indians found the 'poignant' image of the Virgin much more attractive, especially in the context of mass destruction and death. 'Faced with the disasters and cultural disintegration brought by the Spanish, it seems reasonable that the indigenous Mexicans would find the Virgin appealing' (89). The argument that indians readily adopted the Virgin as their own because of an emotional need for such a mother figure appears to be rather overdrawn – she was not so readily or profoundly adopted in Peru – and Hall seems to accept rather uncritically the 'natural' appeal of Virgin as loving and suffering mother. Given, as Hall carefully documents, that the Virgin was adopted as patroness of violent conquest, it is difficult to see how, in the eyes of the indigenous Mexicans she would be 'more closely associated with birth and nurturing and forgiveness than with dismemberment and death' (88). At any rate, the case would need to be more carefully made.

In highland Peru, more than Mexico, indigenous imagery and belief were more strongly retained, perhaps because the centre of Spanish political power was in Lima far from the indigenous highlands. An important cult of the Virgin did, however, develop in Copacabana and continues to attract large pilgrimages. It is clear that there was a fusion between the Virgin and the Pachamama, but it is a shame Hall did not review more of the anthropological literature which would show that the Virgin Pachamama shares very few, if any, of the characteristics normally attributed to the Virgin: suffering, chastity, and love, not to mention virginity. This raises important questions about the Virgin, at least in the Andes, which are never addressed.

Hall clearly states in her introduction that although she may be used in an 'attempt to reinforce gender ideologies of passivity and obedience to women and other subordinate people … belief in the Virgin has been empowering and … this empowerment has been more important than any sort of gender-related restrictions based on the model of Mary as Virgin' (p. 16). The succeeding pages need to be read in this frame. Hall asserts that 'Mary's example encouraged [indigenous] women to resist sexual violations' (p. 295) and this would seem to imply that such encouragement was actually needed and appears to reproduce the colonial ideology that the indians were redeemed from licentiousness and concupiscence by the civilising influence of the Spanish. In the incident referred to previously (pp. 125–126), the victim suitably flees to a convent where the kindly nuns take her in. Hall does not consider the implications of a model of feminine chastity that ultimately values death over the loss of virginity, seclusion over freedom. Although it is certainly the case that many Iberian and Latin American women find the Virgin empowering, it is also the case that many have argued strongly against the self-sacrificing and chaste mother image that the Virgin embodies. It would be unfair to claim that Hall offers an entirely one-sided view of Marianism; but in emphasising so strongly its power to unite, empower and create solidarity, she runs the risk of ignoring considerable scholarship and experience which views Marianism as an important ideological pillar of patriarchy. Although an entire chapter is devoted to Eva Perón and her invocation of Marian imagery, the reader will search in vain for any discussion on *marianismo* and its relevance to gender relations. This reader would have welcomed more discussion on the implications of the fact the Argentine military dictatorship

so closely associated itself with the Virgin and the possible incongruity of the image of a caring loving mother as a patroness of a political regime which deprived so many mothers of their children. Hall does offer a brief discussion of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo who also invoked Marian imagery, but largely leaves it to the reader to ponder the contradictions.

Hall concludes that, despite the multivocality of the imagery of the Virgin, there are three 'overarching constants: strength, power and connection'. *Mary, Mother and Warrior* provides a useful historical and comparative study of the Virgin in Spain and the Americas; but many readers may find its partiality to mariolatry somewhat frustrating.

Andrew Canessa
University of Essex

Ruggiero, Kristin (ed.) (2005) *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean: Fragments of Memory*, Sussex Academic Press (Brighton and Portland), vii + 262 pp. £55.00 hbk.

Various edited collections on Latin American Jewry have appeared since the mid-1980s. Anthologies of the last ten years, such as David Sheinin and Lois Baer Barr (1996), Judit Bokser Liwerant and Alicia Backal (1999), *Jewish History* 18:1 (2004), and Marjorie Agosín (2005), focused on Ashkenazim in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico; the disciplines of history and literature; and the topics of identity, anti-Semitism, immigration, and diplomatic relations. The themes of memory and women have assumed importance in the more recent works. Agosín's collection departed from precedent by combining the personal with the scholarly and examining popular culture and the arts. The Holocaust and genocide haunt her volume and also shade the pages of Sheinin and Barr, as well as Bokser Liwerant and Backal.

Containing papers presented at a conference at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2001, the volume under review adds to this literature. Like its predecessors, it privileges Argentina and Ashkenazim, although it allots more space to the Caribbean than previous works. Anti-Semitism, identity, and diaspora still are important themes. Continuing recent trends, it pays heed to women's voices, blends scholarship with personal experience and features the arts. Memories of genocide permeate the book, which is more interdisciplinary than preceding anthologies.

A section entitled 'Relocation in the Nazi Years' explores Jewish immigration and Christian views of Jews. Ruth Schwertfeger discusses how Anna Segers, a German Jewish Communist, began to construct a tolerant postwar Germany in writings produced during her exile in Mexico. Jeffrey Lesser explains that Jews continued to arrive in Brazil after 1937 despite being banned from entering, largely because local Jewish leaders convinced policymakers that the supposed Jewish proclivity for financial gain would facilitate economic development. Offering a rare glimpse of Argentine Christians who supported Jews, Rosalie Sitman examines the magazine *Sur*. *Sur*'s criticisms

of fascism and anti-Semitism and testimonies of victims of Nazism served to counter local rightist nationalism.

'Constructing Memory' examines three moments of anti-Semitism in Argentina. Israel's kidnapping of Eichmann in 1960 prompted a wave of right-wing violence against Argentine Jews, who had mixed feelings about this action, as Raanan Rein points out. In response, they created self-defence groups, founded a Jewish day school and increasingly emigrated to Israel. David Sheinin shows how the Argentine military attempted to disguise its Dirty War with a publicity campaign falsely asserting its devotion to human rights. Beatriz Gurevich documents the corrupt and incompetent response of the Argentine government to the attack on the Ashkenazi community centre in 1994, as well as the ensuing divisions among Argentine Jews.

'Identity and Hybridity' covers the Caribbean and Mexico. Robert Levine's offering demolishes several myths about Cuban Jewry, demonstrating that estimates of their numbers do not reflect non-observant Jews or out-migrants. Those who left after 1959, who may have only constituted half of the Jewish population, have eulogised their lives under Batista, forgetting the widespread repression and their outsider status. Ruth Behar discusses the making of her film on evolving Cuban Sephardic identities on the island and the US, noting the juxtaposing and intertwining of Afro and Jewish Cuban practices. In an original look at the French Caribbean, William Miles inserts Jews into the history and hybrid culture of Martinique. Ilan Stavans examines the evolution of his multilingual transnational/Mexican identity, focusing on his grandmother's abandonment of Polish and Russian, tempered use of Spanish, and reliance on Yiddish.

Perhaps the most innovative section is 'Poeticizing, Painting, Writing the Pain'. Marjorie Agosín's poetry crosses back and forth across the Atlantic, keeping memories alive in the face of persecution under Hitler and Pinochet. Using painting to express sadness and fear, defy authoritarianism, and survive trauma is the theme of Raquel Partnoy's article. Her daughter Alicia Partnoy, a prisoner under the Argentine junta, examines poetry written in Nazi concentration camps and ghettos and Latin American military detention centres. Her powerful comparison demonstrates that both sought to empower the victims and were inherently political.

Almost a third of the book has appeared elsewhere, in the present or expanded form. While some readers will welcome easy access to these important readings in one volume, specialists may be disappointed to find that much of it is not new. One should also point out that some essays lack introductions and could use further editing. Haim Avni has asked students of Latin American Jewry to examine, among other matters, comparative topics, the absence or decline of anti-Semitism, and bridge-building between Jews and non-Jews. Several selections in this book address the last three themes, most notably Sitman, Lesser, the Partnoys, and Behar. I would stress the need for analyses centring on women, non-Eastern European Jewish communities, and Jewish participation in broader cultural and political forces. Perhaps the next anthology will discuss these issues.

Sandra McGee Deutsch
University of Texas at El Paso

Miller, Marilyn G. (2004) *Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race: The Cult of Mestizaje in Latin America*, University of Texas Press (Austin), xii + 202 pp. $55.00 hbk, $19.95 pbk.

This clear and accessible study of the discourse of *mestizaje* in twentieth-century Latin America provides a welcome addition to a densely-populated scholarly field. Miller's approach is new and praiseworthy: she offers a book that introduces readers to the broad debates about *mestizaje* that have occurred among artists and intellectuals in Latin/o America, with secondary attention to the debates among Latin Americanist scholars in the US academy. Because she anchors these debates in several regional case studies, Miller provides a general historical overview that also includes useful discussions of specific artists and socio-historical contexts. These case studies illustrate Miller's main argument, namely, that although pro-*mestizaje* discourse has historically been used to proclaim the existence of a singular Latin American identity, the wealth of local reflections on *mestizaje* itself belies such claims to unity. *The Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race* is written in the spirit of pluralism, as it seeks to uncover the multiplicity of voices that have contributed to the discourse of *mestizaje*. Miller does not over emphasise the religious metaphor of the project's title; indeed, a stronger focus on the idea of a 'cult' would have run the risk of misleading some readers into thinking that belief in the *mestizo* is akin to religious belief (an interesting possibility that has yet to be explored), and that its adherents were self-constituted as a group (they were not). Beyond affirming the existence of their multiplicity, Miller does not submit these voices to a single overarching thesis or idea. She writes, 'the most prevalent characteristic of a historiography of *lo mestizo* is its lack of uniformity and, indeed, its pervasive susceptibility to contradictions' (p. 2).

The 'Introduction' does a very good job of synthesising this complex material. Subsections are largely chronological, introducing the reader first to the nineteenth-century foundations of the discourse of *mestizaje*, focusing on Simón Bolívar and José Martí; then to Fernando Ortiz's fundamental notion of transculturation; and finally moving on to the contemporary scene, drawing from writers as disparate as Fernando Vallejo and Gloria Anzaldúa in order to drive home the point that the discourse of *mestizaje* is very much alive. An excellent excursus on Bakhtin, meanwhile, argues that the basis for *mestizaje* as an aesthetic theory lies in his poetics of hybridisation. Miller's account is very persuasive, although it could also be argued that Lukacs too serves as touchstone for the theories of literary *mestizaje* developed by Antonio Cornejo Polar and Angel Rama.

The subsequent chapters are dedicated to a closer examination of artists and intellectuals in the contexts of their respective national traditions. Chapter One addresses José Vasconcelos's notion of the 'cosmic race' and Chicana/o appropriations of the idea. Chapter Two examines Caribbean discourses of mulatez in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and, more briefly, the Dominican Republic, primarily through an analysis of the poetry of Nicolás Guillén, Luis Palés Matos, and Manuel del Cabral. Chapter Three offers a very interesting analysis of the discourse surrounding Argentine tango. Miller argues here that contemporary notions of tango are the product of a process of 'whitening' that hides the African roots of the form. Chapter Four turns to a discussion of Brazilian novelist Jorge Amado's *Tenda dos milagres* (1969), exploring Amado's role in the

creation of a problematic 'myth of racial democracy' in Brazil through his celebrations of Bahia's *mestiçagem*. Chapter Five concerns two foundational examples from Ecuador: writer Jorge Icaza's novel *El chulla Romero y Flores* (1958) and painter Oswaldo Guayasamín's unfinished installation 'La capilla del hombre' (2002). Miller offers illuminating analysis of both works. Finally, an 'Epilogue' considers how *mestizaje* has been taken up to describe the experience of globalisation, examining the works of Guillermo Gómez Peña. Miller focuses particularly on two fascinating issues: one, how *mestizaje* has been integrated into US ideas of cultural and racial mixture, where '*mestizaje* becomes a kind of dangerous, edgy version of a melting pot in which certain elements refuse to dissolve or adhere' (p. 147); and two, how it has been extended into the realm of virtual reality in order to describe the effects of cybertechnology.

The sum of these short, readable chapters will be very useful to those with little previous exposure to *mestizaje* from a scholarly perspective. It should also be quite informative for those who have addressed the question only in broad conceptual terms, or through the experience of a single country. I know of no study that covers as much geographical ground as Miller's. Those who come to it from a more sustained engagement with the discourse of *mestizaje* may wish that Miller had pushed her own arguments further. She frames her intervention vis-à-vis two distinct and opposed approaches to *mestizaje*: against those who see the reality of *mestizaje* as the monolithic ground of a common Latin American experience, she shows the tremendous variety of the discourses that define it; against those who dismiss pro-*mestizaje* discourse for its false inclusiveness and racist 'dark side', she shows its contemporary vitality. Yet this approach seems to inhibit her from engaging with the challenges posed by the two camps. If her own study undermines the possibility of a pan-Latin American phenomenon, then one is tempted to ask, what of *latinoamericanismo* itself? If the discourse of *mestizaje* is indeed a socially exclusionary one that continues to actualise a colonial legacy, then how can one be neutral about its vitality? However, the questions raised here only testify to the difficulty of introducing readers to an object of study – the discourse of *mestizaje* – that is thoroughly unstable because it remains an object of such intense political disagreement.

Estelle Tarica
University of California at Berkeley

Kiddy, Elizabeth W. (2005) *Blacks of the Rosary: Memory and History in Minas Gerais, Brazil*, The Pennsylvania State University Press (University Park), xvi + 287 pp. $55.00 hbk.

The Brotherhood of the Rosary of Blacks and its ritual performances organised by people identifying with blackness and grouped into *congados* (the performers are called *congadeiros*), formed in what is now Minas Gerais, Brazil, in the early colonial times and has adapted to innumerable political-economic and social changes right up into the 21st century. The black brotherhoods of rosaries in Brazil became loci for the construction through ritual of a cosmology that, in the words of the author, linked

'Africans from different regions of Africa, and from Brazil, both free and slave' (p. 69) within a community of accommodation. Some might take the brotherhoods to be in contradistinction to the more familiar Quilombos organised by slave runaways into communities of resistance. Kiddy, however, argues convincingly that in many ways the brotherhoods (with members both slave and free) and the Quilombos (predicated on free members), served to 're-create communities within this new, alienating environment in which Africans found themselves' (p. 77). As the argument unfolds we see how those of the 'accommodating' brotherhoods and those of the free and antagonistic Quilombos did things differently, while emphasising the same ethos of Blackness in Brazil and Africanity in its diversity.

The book begins with a short, insightful ethnographic introduction and ends with ethnography (Chapter 7 and Conclusion). The prime elements of the *congados* cannot be found in history but rather emerge in the hidden transcripts of the performers, as revealed in oral transmission. In between this significant insight come 191 pages of Euro-African and Brazilian history with interwoven snippets of ethnography. Chapter 1 deals, impressively, for one interested in blackness and Africanity, with Marian devotion and lay religious brotherhoods in Europe, the history of Portuguese expansion in the fifteenth century, Christianity in Africa, and the fusion of diverse elements into early Brazil. It is followed by a chapter on the formation of African brotherhoods in Brazil, and elsewhere, with a focus on the transformational dynamics in Europe and in Africa, as well as in the Americas. These excellent chapters are required reading for everyone interested in African diaspora studies and Latin American cultures, in all disciplines. They take African diaspora studies out of the realm of trait tracing and acculturation and into the historical and ethnographic forces of cultural reproduction.

Part II, which constitutes chapters 3–5, gives a detailed history of the brotherhoods from 1690 to 1988; Part III introduces the ritual and social phenomena from the ending of slavery in Brazil to 1990, and then the ethnography again enters. Significant features introduced and traced historically and ethnographically revolve around the cultural perception of timelessness of the *congado* performances, the full name of which is the Festa de Reinado de Nossa Senhora do Rosário (Feast Day of the Crowning of the Congado). This feature is part of a cosmology that affirms the rituals as coming from the beginning of time, the cosmology of which is given in stories, told by performers, of the salvation by blacks of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ child in the waves of the Atlantic Ocean. Only Brazilian organisations known as the Congos and the Mozambiques, with blacks as leaders and followers, had the powers of blackness to induce her to come to shore. Blackness, the core imagery of the Congado brotherhoods, is signalled by the use of the Portuguese *negro,* not *preto* (the polite word); a prominent organisational feature of the ritual groups is the selection of a king and queen, and a hierarchy descending from them. Rich cosmological dynamics of death are combined with cultural stress on care of the dead, and these features also relate to hierarchy, fused to the concepts of blackness and Africanity.

The type case of this book is the brotherhoods of Jatobó, near the capital of Belo Horzonte. This is the site of the primary ethnography which serves as a window to the relevance and importance of the extended history. Four main themes brought out by the author include those of race and class, focused on being black (again, the use of

negro is significant here); shared faith; common concepts of power; and the importance of passing on an inner, personal, sense of shared brotherhood history, much of which cannot be found in written records. Herein, again, the author brings out the concept of hidden transcripts. For example, she uncovers a parallel system of cultural transmission from men to men, and from women to women, but in the latter tells us that the information flow is from aunt to niece (neglecting to say whether this is from woman to brother's daughter, or sister's daughter, or both).

This major contribution to African diaspora studies, Latin American Studies, and Black Studies underscores an academic vigour to be found elsewhere, such as in the work in Maroon art of the Guianas by Richard and Sally Price, perhaps in the compilations and explications offered by the reviewer and Arlene Torres in their tomes on blackness in Latin America, and by various authors writing of Andean indigenous systems. Even if her 'new perspective' (p. 249) is found elsewhere, in works not referenced, this contribution is strong and one hopes it will find wide circulation.

Norman E. Whitten, Jr.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Navarrete Pellicer, Sergio (2005) *Maya Achi Marimba Music in Guatemala*, Temple University Press (Philadelphia), 288 pp. $74.50 hbk, $27.95 pbk. (inc. CD)

There is a paucity of published, scholarly work focusing upon the music of Guatemala, so this in-depth ethnomusicological and ethnographical study of Maya Achi marimba music in Guatemala is a very welcome contribution. It is the most recent addition to the series 'Studies in Latin American and Caribbean Music', which aims to present interdisciplinary studies in traditional and contemporary musics.

As the title indicates, the central focus of this work is a musical instrument, the marimba, and its role in relation to myths, ritual practice, social experience and behaviour through musical production. A marimba is a long wooden keyboard instrument with large resonators, usually played by three musicians. It is regarded as the 'national instrument of Guatemala', with the traditions surrounding the marimba playing a key role in the social, cultural, and generational history of the country.

Navarrete Pellicer's study focuses on the use of the marimba in Rabinal, one of the eight municipalities of the Guatemalan departamento of Baja Verapaz, which is populated by the Achi people, of Mayan descent, and *ladinos* (*mestizos* in other parts of Latin America). In recent decades Rabinal has been the site of intense political violence, remembered as *la violencia* – in which army repression took the form of massacres and the burning of crops, livestock and homes (the scorched-earth policy).

As Navarrete Pellicer is dealing with local Rabinalense musicians and traditions, both the recent violent events and the much longer term history of colonisation are intrinsically and fascinatingly part of the narrative. Although near the beginning of the book the author discusses some of issues surrounding the ethics and politics of fieldwork and research, particularly in relation to his presence as a Mexican and *ladino*, and also the role of his wife, a clinical psychologist, who was involved in the exhumation

of bodies, further interrogation of the enormously complex issues regarding the intervention of outsiders would deepen the analysis of the dialectical nature of these contexts. Similarly, the ethics of representation also needs to be addressed in relation to what is fundamentally a classic ethnography of an indigenous group of people.

Despite these issues, this book is a captivating and scholarly study. One of the strengths of this work is the way in which Navarrete Pellicer moves from generalisations and macro-contexts of historical and cultural processes, such as *ladinoization* and the development of the marimba in Central American and Guatemala, to the focused micro-context of the Maya Achi peoples in the location of Rabinal. The book is divided into two major sections: the first section is mainly historical, and also includes a discussion of the basic concepts of music and its place in the Achi worldview. The second section concentrates on the social and cultural settings of musical practice and on musical change.

Some of the many areas of discussion and analysis include: the traditional belief in the dead, which is the heart of local Catholicism; people's creation myths and their ritual discourses which show the relationship between the living and the ancestors, and the role of music and prayers in the annual re-creation of the world; Achi ideologies concerning music, alcohol and women; social and musical change; the marimba teaching/learning tradition; economic aspects of musical change and musical strategies adopted by musicians to cope with poverty; and daily social interaction as part of the process of musical communication.

In two chapters, Navarrete Pellicer analyses ways in which for the Achi people 'music is considered female', relating to the nurturing and domestic role of women, particularly in terms of symbolic sustenance that is shared between the living and the dead. The parallels between behaviours in music making and the imposition of 'limits and norms for correct female behaviour' by males in the community in everyday life, provide plenty of food for thought, although an interrogation of the construct of 'female' would add further weight to these discussions.

For anyone interested in Guatemalan society, ritual and beliefs and the role of music, music-making, musicians and musical behaviour in shaping and interfacing with cultural, religious, political and socio-economic conditions, then this book comes highly recommended. The inclusion of a CD provides an excellent sonic experience of marimbas in action, so crucial for this discussion of music in Maya Achi society.

R. Hellier Tinoco
The University of Winchester