

JOHN GLEDHILL AND PATIENCE A. SCHELL, (EDS.): *New Approaches to Resistance in Brazil and Mexico*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

Reviewing edited collections can be challenging. Does the volume sustain its intellectual coherence? Are the essays roughly equal in quality? Are the introductory and concluding essays as helpful as the closely researched chapters? And, finally, for whom is the book intended? Is it too specialized for undergraduates, or is the material accessible and engaging enough for non-specialists?

New Approaches to Resistance in Brazil and Mexico, despite its uninspiring title, is a terrific collection of works by a broad array of scholars working in different fields and in universities on different continents. And, although it is indeed quite specialized, the work is accessible and can be assigned to advanced undergraduates. Its first real strength is its breadth. Although focused only on Latin America's two most populous nations, the book includes essays on resistance by different groups from the colonial era to the present. In addition to an introduction by co-editor John Gledhill, "A Case for Rethinking Resistance," and Alan Kinght's thoughtful conclusion, "Rethinking Histories of Resistance in Brazil and Mexico," the book's main essays are divided into three sections. Part One includes studies of the colonial era and early national period in a variety of settings in Brazil and Mexico. Part Two focuses on the role of religion in resistance. And, the chapters in Part Three examine resistance in contemporary politics. Indeed, the collection's strength lies in its focus on only two countries over a long period of time.

Brazilianists will be particularly interested in the outstanding essays by John Monteiro and Patricia Pessar, who sadly passed away in the middle of their wonderful careers. Monteiro's essay brilliantly uses close readings of archival sources to make a broader argument about the evolution and power of indigenous resistance to Portuguese authority. Pessar, as throughout her work, connects the anthropological with the historical and political. She seamlessly details how analyses of millenarian movements can fit easily within the rubric of resistance studies. Pessar convincingly argues that the success of twentieth-century Brazilian state-making has recast millenarian resistance in much more stark class terms. Most of the essays here, like Monteiro's and Pessar's, focus on rural actors. Maria Gabriela Hita's study of Salvador, Bahia, and Matt Gutmann's essay on Mexico City and Oaxaca are exceptions. But, this rural focus reveals the collections' broader view of resistance. The authors are largely concerned with the subaltern struggle against the state and state-aligned actors. And, the subalterns they are most often interested in are indigenous people and the peasantry more broadly.

This is an obvious and understandable bias given the trajectories of Latin American history, but it does ultimately limit the the value of reevaluating the

idea of resistance over the *longue durée*. Knight's conclusion bridges this divide, but only a little. Mexico has experienced urban riots and strikes since the colonial era, and the historiography on the urban poor (in Mexico and Brazil) and urban slaves (in Brazil) is vast. Latin America's dramatic twentieth-century urbanization, with its associated rural-to-urban migration, and the growth of the state provide ample arenas for popular resistance. Scholars of the so-called New Social Movements have created a rich literature on such themes. This collection would have benefited not only by addressing more directly those findings, but also by taking them a bit further. A series of essays explicitly studying resistance could/should have examined the ways people work within and outside a wide variety of institutions and settings.

Margarita Zárate's chapter on resistance within a peasant organization in Michoacán provides an interesting example of just such a perspective. Her focus on gender and ethnicity demonstrates the power of examining popular institutions (labor unions, peasant organizations, neighborhood and consumer associations, etc.) as contested sites themselves. Once we ask, for example, whether or not women workers' activities within a union dominated by a male leadership cadre can be understood as a form of resistance to dominant societal paradigms, we open "resistance" to a much more critical analysis. The essays in *New Approaches to Resistance* are all very well crafted, but the collection -- with a few exceptions -- tends to reify popular class actors as agents of resistance without considering the complications of social relations divided by gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. within those groups.

There is one more conceptual weakness to the volume as a book. Although Gedhill's introductory essay and Knight's conclusion are extremely well done, I was left wondering what these essays collectively tell us about Brazil and Mexico. The book is an edited collection on resistance itself, so the chapters by Gedhill and Knight focus on the concept of resistance. But, the editors seem to have missed an opportunity to step back and think about the trajectories of Brazilian and Mexican history through the lens of resistance. That is, the editors seem more interested in complicating and addressing resistance, and so these two Latin American nations are little more than useful arenas for that enterprise. Having assembled such a strong collection of essays from terrific scholars, the editors could have also transcended their narrow focus to ask broad questions about the history, politics, economics, and culture of Latin America's two most populous nations.

I hope it's obvious from my comments that *New Approaches to Resistance* got me thinking about a variety of themes in Latin American studies. The book as a book is certainly worthwhile, and the individual essays can each be read

as challenging, interesting, and discrete studies of some aspect of resistance in Brazil or Mexico.

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MARTHA FEW AND ZEB TORTORICI (EDS.): *Centering Animals in Latin American History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

En los últimos años, varias publicaciones que tratan las relaciones entre humanos y animales han discutido cómo incluir el rol activo de estos últimos en las investigaciones históricas y culturales. Desde hace un tiempo se ha venido argumentado la importancia de entender a los humanos como parte de un mundo cohabitado con especies no humanas y no reinando sobre ellas. Desde esta perspectiva, los animales no son receptores pasivos de las actividades humanas sino que tienen un rol muy activo en ellas. *Centering Animals in Latin American History* editado por Martha Few y Zeb Tortorici constituye una excelente contribución a un mejor entendimiento de la historia latinoamericana a través del estudio de casos donde los animales cumplieron un rol importante en las trayectorias humanas. Lo importante de estos ensayos es que, al reconfigurar las historias a través del rol de los animales, también se reconfigura la posición de los humanos en el ambiente natural y se desnaturaliza la clásica posición binaria de las categorías humano y animal.

Focalizándose en Latinoamérica, el volumen se sitúa dentro de una historiografía del colonialismo y postcolonialismo. Los autores analizan variados temas como creencias, simbolismo, y ciencia, entre otros. En el capítulo introductorio, Tortorici y Few se hacen la pregunta más difícil del volumen: la transformación de los animales en los actores centrales de la narrativa histórica, ¿realmente nos provee de versiones mejores y diferentes del pasado que aquellas versiones históricas donde los animales no son centrales? La respuesta probablemente varía en cada capítulo, ya que, como reconocen los autores, en algunos casos el reconocimiento de la presencia de animales como actores sociales no los convierte automáticamente en el centro de las narrativas. Además es importante, como dicen los autores, no antropomorfizar el rol de los animales si se busca un narrativa posthumanística .

El resto del volumen está dividido en tres partes. La primera es sobre cultura y colonialismo. En el primer capítulo, León García Gargaraza examina la cosmovisión de un curandero indígena que alentaba la resistencia contra los españoles. La incorporación de animales domésticos del Viejo Mundo también