Atlanta logró echar raíces, desde el préstamo de sus instalaciones a un colegio, hasta la organización de peñas y bailes. También, la construcción de un “capital social” y los contactos políticos que el club pudo movilizar en circunstancias clave. En este punto, el capítulo sobre el aprovechamiento de las oportunidades que ofrecía la política deportiva del peronismo es particularmente revelador. En fin, la de Atlanta es una historia a través de la cual se puede seguir la parábola de las iniciativas de la sociedad civil en Argentina: su nacimiento en la época del fervor asociacionista de comienzos del siglo, su crecimiento con apoyo estatal a mediados del mismo y su decadencia hacia el final, cuando la propia sociedad es la que sufre un proceso de “descolectivización” y las iniciativas barriales se debilitan frente a formas de consumo más familiares o individuales: la cancha de tenis, el gimnasio, etc. Atlanta es en estos años una gran metáfora del país: arruinado en los ochenta, gestionado por una empresa privada que luego se retira, quebrado y luego revivido con la energía de sus propios socios, que lo sostuvieron a pesar de todo.

Ezequiel Adamovsky


In Rumores y sensibilidades en Venezuela colonial. Cuando de historia cultural se trata, Frédérique Langue offers six essays exploring the methodology of cultural history, the role of rumor in elite society, and patrician anxieties regarding shifting race, class, and gender dynamics in late colonial Caracas. Broadly, the essays are a call to apply cultural history (or what Langue refers to more specifically as the historia de mentalidades) to a range of topics in Venezuelan history. Langue’s collection draws on a broad range of secondary sources and a few archival case studies of divorce suits, ecclesiastical sermons, and travelers’ observations. She argues that generations of Venezuelan political and economic historiography have obscured a fluid society where the exclusive and rigorously-planned rituals, marriages, civil statutes of the elite (los mantuanos) belied threats to their social control presented by an upwardly mobile mixed-race (pardo) population.

Rumores y sensibilidades begins with a brief foreword by Reinaldo Rojas, which situates the book’s dominant approach within the social context of late colonial Venezuela. After this introduction, Langue’s first essay constructs the methodological framework with which she will analyze the more intimate cultural aspects of Venezuelan daily life: the history of mentalities. She sees the history
of mentalities as a more inclusive form of cultural or intellectual history. It is
driven by a desire to understand the rituals and everyday forms of sociability
of disparate social classes. Like Carlo Ginsburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms*,
the best works of this genre often rely on social transgressions that produced
ecclesiastical and inquisitorial records.

A second essay traces the evolution of Venezuelan colonial historiography
in order to support the assertion that deep cultural history is necessary for its
further development. Langue emphasizes that the colony’s region, which is
divided between Caribbean, Andean, and interior plains, influences its identi-
ty. This extreme regionalism leads to a penchant among Venezuelans historians
to write local, rather than national, histories. Authors who bucked this trend
constructed hagiographies to great men or dry economic works. Langue asserts
that these persistent historiographical tendencies have muted or ignored many
of the fascinating complexities of Venezuelan daily life in the colonial period.

Langue’s third and fourth essays examine the legal components of elite
strategies for consolidating power and wealth through marriage. The third essay
discusses elite fears surrounding *pardo* attempts to infiltrate Venezuelan high
society through the purchase of whiteness (*gracias al sacar*). Not only did par-
dos aspire to join elite social strata in order to end discrimination against them,
but they also conscientiously reproduced elite values of exclusivity once they
succeeded in legally obtaining white status. Langue’s fourth essay uses another
important piece of late eighteenth-century legislation, the Royal Pragmatic of
1776, as a starting point to explore multi-class marriages, *mantuano* sexual im-
propriety, and scandal. This elite-inspired statute forbade marriages of unequal
social standing without parental consent. According to Langue, it represented
beleaguered *mantuano* efforts to add legal protections to an arsenal of strategies
already in place to maintain control and secrecy over romantic relationships that
might damage elite public credit.

The fifth essay in the collection shifts from legal actions to the everyday
means by which *mantuanos* suppressed incessant rumors concerning extrama-
tiral affairs and domestic disputes. Langue observes that elite families’ myriad
informal means of concealing their members’ undesirable sexual partnerships,
sometimes with the help of the clergy, revealed a wide gulf between the social
ideals of honor and what occurred in daily life. Likewise, rumor became a weapon
wielded by the lower classes against immodest elites. Through an examination
of the patriarchs’ sexual escapades and their violent interactions with their wives,
Langue draws the same conclusions as scholars like Ann Twinam that “el honor
adquiere la doble cara de una necesidad privada y pública” (p. 118).

In the final essay of the book, Langue concentrates on both religious and
profane festivals as sites for understanding intricate inversions of the dynamics
of socioeconomic class and gender. Elites designed the many festival days punctuating the Venezuelan calendar as moments of intentional social inversion that were supposed to reaffirm the dominant class hierarchy. Yet by the late eighteenth century, these ritualized inversions of rigid socioeconomic and gender divisions in the colony hit too close to home for elite white males beset by the increasing power and independence of pardos and women.

*Rumores y sensibilidades en Venezuela colonial* offers a compelling academic polemic. Langue should be commended for emphasizing an interesting body of literature and a methodology that Anglophone scholarship has embraced more fully than its hispanophone counterpart. Venezuela colonial history is fertile ground for this mode of cultural inquiry given its tightly knit mantuano clans and its large, legally-adroit, and upwardly mobile pardo population. Langue’s diversified secondary sources and well placed case studies survey what has been written already about these groups and what future topics await study.

Several shortcomings make this collection uneven. It would have benefited from more careful editing. Although each essay works well as a stand-alone piece, when taken together they often repeat similar arguments or introduce the same historical actors in multiple instances as stand-ins for elite points of view. The essays also set up provocative questions, such as the conflict between peninsular and creole identities, which they do not fully explore. Finally, while it might be asking Langue to write another book, the pardos she so often portrays as foils to the mantuanos appear in her text mostly as a nameless, faceless group. Nonetheless, Frédérique Langue has written an intriguing collection of thoughtful pieces that pose the question of how to fit the later colonial Venezuelan elite into the historiographical currents of cultural history. The book will be of use to specialists of Venezuelan history and cultural historians alike.

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Este libro colectivo es un aporte a la historiografía interesada en el problema de la incorporación directa de las mujeres en el campo científico. “Incorporación directa”, porque proceden como actores principales en la producción, circulación y apropiación de conocimientos, y ya no a la sombra de algún “hombre de ciencia”. Estas investigaciones aportan a la riqueza de interacciones entre la historia de las mujeres, de la segregación en géneros y de la actividad científica.