

that at the time the PT had only twelve percent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. (Ironically, Taylor notes, the PT had not engaged in the same practices when the Lula administration had proposed rather similar reforms, while Cardoso's PSDB, now in opposition, generally did not make use of the courts when it was in opposition because it approved of the substance of many of them.)

The OAB has also made "intensive use" of the courts, for obvious and not so obvious reasons. It was an institution that was also strengthened by the 1988 constitution. The OAB has played a significant role over time in opposing military rule and it continues to see itself as the "watchdog of democracy." Yet it has also acted out of narrow professional interests when, for example, it challenged a cap on honoraria paid to lawyers in land-expropriation cases.

In the final chapter Taylor provides a comparative study of Argentine, Brazilian, Uruguayan, and Mexican judiciaries and their response to pension reform. Brazil, as it turns out, was the only one of those four countries whose judiciary played a significant role in shaping the process of reform. This underscores the point made throughout the body of the text regarding its institutional strength. Despite similar authoritarian experiences in other South American countries, their judiciaries did not achieve the same degree of independence as the Brazilian one.

Many Latin Americanists interested in the judiciary will find this book a valuable contribution to the literature. However, the book is repetitious, particularly in the early chapters, and it certainly reads at times as if it had to be stretched to make a book. In a much too short conclusion, Taylor certainly could have reflected more on the relations between the developments he describes and the nature and quality of Brazilian democracy. His tone is balanced, but his arguments could have been more robust. The judiciary and the executive may not always see eye to eye, but which one more accurately reflects popular wishes? Taylor also might have done more to address attempts to broaden the "effective legal franchise," which could make the judiciary an even more effective instrument of Brazilian democracy.

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ANTONIO VIEGO: *Dead Subjects: Toward a Politics of Loss in Latino Studies*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007.

It would be hard to dispute the claim that much of Latino Studies and its antecedent disciplines of Chicano and Puerto Rican Studies have emerged as coordinated responses to the collective trauma resulting from the violence of loss and dispossession. Be it the territorial, material, social, and political dispos-

session and displacement that follows from colonial conquest or the linguistic, spiritual, or cultural loss that was coerced by legal and extra-legal means in the centuries following contact with Europeans, a profound sense of fragmentation and alienation permeates the Latino world of the Americas. This shared experience has been influential in shaping much of the discursive response that constitutes Latino Studies. An underlying premise of Chicano-Puerto Rican-Latino studies is that discursive practices within and outside of universities are a site of resistance and can play an important role in re-uniting fragmented communities and individuals.

Almost from their inception as disciplines four decades ago, scholars within the rubric of Latino studies have debated about the validity of applying Western theories, such as Marxism, psychoanalysis, and post-structuralism to their situation. Meta-theorists of the discipline would observe that though the question has never been resolved, a healthy skepticism has been nurtured even as engagement with western theory has continued alongside the development of culturally specific concepts and terminology across academic disciplines.

In *Dead Subjects: Towards a Politics of Loss in Latino Studies*, Antonio Viego argues that a clearer understanding of the nuances and complexities of loss will enable historically situated ethnic-racialized subjects to better conceptualize and shape social and legal redress to systems of inequity that have facilitated loss and trauma on a grand scale. If Viego's argument seems grounded in psychology, it is no coincidence. His insightful study is premised on the notion that Lacanian theory is extraordinarily valuable for understanding collective trauma and loss. Viego's embrace of Lacan is a critical response to the limits of Freudian psychoanalysis for understanding not only the psychology but also the politics of loss. To help readers understand the limits of Freud, Viego reminds us that the emergence of psychoanalysis in the United States was aligned with questions of national identity that were precipitated by the mass immigration occurring in the early 20th century. As a result, he asserts, there was a "drive for a unified and purified body politic" (p. 34).

Tracing the work of historians of psychoanalytical thought in the U.S., Viego illustrates how the notion of a "divided heritage" and "dualistic national identity" began to emerge as a way to explain social friction and racial tension. In the resulting version of psychoanalysis, difference became a problem and social and cultural assimilation became the solution to re-unite the fragmented subject. The result was that Freudian psychoanalysis in the U.S. tended to promote the ego as rigid and fixed in its effort to produce a subject that was knowable and transparent, therefore also controllable. Such a proposition, as Homi Bhabha has argued, has its parallels in colonial discourse. Viego pointedly argues that this premise of colonial discourse and Freudian psychoanalysis come together in a

dangerous way because “Racism depends on a certain representational capture of the ethno-racialized subject rendered... potentially whole and unified in order to manage this subject more masterfully in discourse” (p. 48).

While necessarily vigilant in his critique of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, Viego’s primary interest is to encourage scholars of Latino studies to engage Lacanian theory in their understanding of Latino subjectivity. Following the oft-made argument that Lacanian theory is a species of queer theory, Viego argues that it is also a “radical anti-racist theory” that functions to deepen and extend its anti-heteronormative charge (p. 48). In Viego’s words, “*Latino* queers ethnicity and race” (p. 21). In explaining why Lacan is not more popular among scholars of critical race and ethnicity knowledge projects, Viego asserts that Lacanian theory is not endorsed because “understanding the precipitation of subjectivity as an effect of language seems, among other things, ahistorical, apolitical, universalizing, and antihumanist” (p. 49).

To make his case, the first two chapters of *Dead Subjects* are devoted to mapping out the historical and theoretical pitfalls of the Freudian and Lacanian schools of psychoanalysis. In the next two chapters Viego shows how Lacanian theory and Latino studies might interface. It is here that Viego clearly demarcates where Lacan departs from Freud and follows this by identifying the overlap between psychoanalytical theory, social psychology, rights discourse, and critical race and ethnicity theory (p. 78). Viego’s argument is most forceful when illustrating how psychoanalytical assumptions have shaped Latino subjectivity in rights discourse. He argues: “we have to attend closely to how we have been instantiated in the law as particularly types of psychological subjects since the extension of rights required that a psychological portraiture be created of ethnic-racialized subjects as psychological subjects experiencing social injury” (p. 100). What is lost in succumbing to such a profile, however, is the multi-valent nature of human subjectivity that is constantly evolving and adapting to a dynamic world. The result is a static or “dead, subject.” Borrowing from Foucault, Viego argues that we need to liberate ourselves “from the kinds of psychological subjectivities codified by the state and its legal apparatus” (p. 101).

The final three chapters of *Dead Subjects* are reserved for demonstrating how a Lacanian psychoanalytic framework might precipitate new subjectivities. Applying his astute insights in an inter-disciplinary approach to Latino history, literature, cultural practices, and theory, as well as ethnic studies in general, Viego illustrates how some such perspective is already manifest in the destabilizing artistic and intellectual practices of nepantlismo, Spanglish, and rasquachismo.

Viego’s writing is lucid and crisp, though the subject matter is theoretically dense. To his credit, he is passionate, personable, and playful in communicating the urgency to shift away from a perspective that relies on assumptions that may

be unintentionally forestalling a politics of liberation. But he is also realistic in suggesting that such a paradigm shift may usher in an unknowable future in which Latino identity as we know it may no longer exist. Such an argument is as compelling as it is disquieting.

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LYNN STEPHEN: *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

“To understand multisited communities,” Lynn Stephen writes (p. 66), “we have to offer multisited histories.” In this comprehensive and multifaceted book, Stephen has shown us how deeply a single skilled ethnographer with the benefit of decades of experience and eight years of sustained work can render understandable multisited communities. Using the term “transborder” as a welcome conceptual shift away from the worn term “transnational,” Stephen profiles indigenous Oaxacans whose lives cross not only national boundaries but also the boundaries of class, ethnicity, and gender as they migrate within Mexico and between Mexico and the United States. Living lives across borders, indigenous Oaxacans are as likely to find themselves across borders that have shifted through time as they are to cross a border actively through migration, by changing their status, or through other forms of mobility. Among the many contributions that Stephen gives us with this volume is a solid understanding of how migration permeates the lives and livelihoods of people who never emigrate, situating the experiences of migrants and permanent residents within wider historical and social contexts that influence home, community, political, and economic processes such as the Cargo system.

The book is organized into ten chapters that range over a broad territory. Chapter one introduces the term “transborder,” differentiating it from transnational while preparing the reader for what becomes the book’s consistent and generally engaging style: mixing individual and family narratives with theoretical, cultural, social, and historical analysis. More than most anthropologists, Stephen teaches us through the voices of indigenous Oaxacans as much as through her own interpretation. In the epilogue, she describes her ethnography as being in line with the thick description of Geertz, and her work certainly is that—at times, to my thinking, a bit too thick, the personal histories droning on a little too long and the more general narratives of social, economic, and historical processes covering ground with which many of us are familiar. Her discussion of the disruptive consequences of neoliberal policies on Mexican peasant agriculture, for