REVIEW ESSAYS

SPECTERS OF COLONIALISM:
Building Postcolonial States and Making Modern Nations in the Americas*

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COCHABAMBA, 1550–1900: COLONIALISM AND AGRARIAN TRANSFORMATION IN BOLIVIA. Expanded edition. By Brooke Larson. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998. Pp. 422. $64.95 cloth, $19.95 paper.)

THE EMERGENCE OF LATIN AMERICA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By David Bushnell and Neill Macaulay. Second edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Pp. 341. $32.50 cloth, $11.95 paper.)

LIBERALS, THE CHURCH, AND INDIAN PEASANTS: CORPORATE LANDS AND THE CHALLENGE OF REFORM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH AMERICA. Edited by Robert H. Jackson. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. Pp. 228. $47.50 cloth.)

THE MAGICAL STATE: NATURE, MONEY, AND MODERNITY IN VENEZUELA. By Fernando Coronil. (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1997. Pp. 447. $50.00 cloth, $19.95 paper.)

MODERNITY AT THE EDGE OF EMPIRE: STATE, INDIVIDUAL, AND NATION IN THE NORTHERN PERUVIAN ANDES, 1885–1935. By David Nugent. (Stanford. Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997. Pp. 404. $55.00 cloth, $19.95 paper.)

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PEASANTS, POLITICS, AND THE FORMATION OF MEXICO'S NATIONAL STATE, 1800–1857. By Peter F. Guardino. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. 319. $55.00 cloth.)

REVOLUTION AND RESTORATION: THE REARRANGEMENT OF POWER IN ARGENTINA, 1776–1860. Edited by Mark D. Szuchman and Jonathan C. Brown. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994. Pp. 282. $40.00 cloth.)

Over the past decade, the study of Latin American history has been characterized by the continuing vitality of important debates about the colonial legacy, as a new generation of scholars grapples with the significance of colonialism for the history and future of the Americas (Klor de Alva 1995). Closely related to debates about colonialism has been the emergence of new approaches to postcolonial state formation (Nugent 1993; Joseph and Nugent 1994) and growing efforts to engage critically with nationalism and nation making, often with an emphasis on peasants and indigenous peoples (Anderson 1991; Urban and Sherzer 1992; Sommer 1991; Smith 1992; Mallon 1995; Thurner 1997). At the same time, debates about how to conceptualize social structures and social change (elite power and subaltern resistance) in colonial and postcolonial Latin America have been revitalized by the interaction between revisionist Marxism and poststructuralism (Stern 1993b; Mallon 1994; Beverley and Oviedo 1995).[1]

The seven books under review here cut across or directly engage these important debates. In an effort to review them in a coherent fashion, this essay begins with the colonial legacy debate and then discusses the efforts to recast this debate in the 1980s and 1990s. The more specific question of state building in the postcolonial era is then taken up, followed by a discussion of nation making and the related themes of Eurocentrism and modernity. Taken collectively, these books illustrate an important politico-intellectual tension in the historiography that has increased since the 1980s. Some of the texts under review reflect the way in which much if not most historical work has played a relatively complementary role in relation to elite-centered state-building and nation-making projects, and they continue to regard the nation as an unproblematic unit of analysis.[2]

By contrast, the rest of the books can be identified with an important strand in the literature that has been influenced by Marxism and poststructuralism. These works seek to reconceptualize the role of the state, ad-

1. For an influential discussion of usages of the term *elite* and the concept of *subaltern*, see Guha (1988, 44). Use of *subaltern* has increasingly involved some degree of awareness of the complex ways in which class, caste, gender, race, and ethnicity inform and articulate with wider social hierarchies (see Latin American Subaltern Studies Group 1995, 135).

2. As a growing number of writers have noted, it is important to distinguish between "the state" and "the nation." A now-classic statement on this point was made by Benedict Anderson in the early 1980s (see Anderson 1990, 94–95; 1991; also Berger 1997, 328–29).

dress the problematic character of the nation, or explore the history and significance of subaltern groups in relation to elite-centered efforts at state building and nation making. This current has revised earlier Marxist and dependency-oriented challenges to the liberal and elitist orientation of the dominant approaches to Latin American history, drawing increased attention to the complex and socially embedded character of state building and nation making while reinvigorating the debate about the colonial legacy.

Debating the Colonial Legacy: Culture, Modernization, and Structure

Despite the significant historiographical and theoretical shifts that had occurred by the second half of the 1990s, the debate about the colonial legacy is still framed regularly as a debate between those who emphasize "culture" versus those who emphasize "structure."[3] At the same time, modernization theory is often represented as a third pole in this debate. In its classical form, as manifested by the Alliance for Progress in the early 1960s, modernization theory tended to assume that whatever the legacies of colonialism might be, they were either beneficial to modernization or the process would make them irrelevant (Packenham 1973; Berger 1995b; Latham 1998). By the late 1960s and early 1970s, cultural and structural approaches to the colonial legacy and to Latin American history generally were revising or challenging classical modernization theory, while some historians sought to synthesize a cultural approach and a structural approach (Stein and Stein 1970; Loveman 1979).[4] The framing of the colonial legacy debate in terms of the distinction between culture versus structure and various efforts at synthesis continued into the 1980s and 1990s.[5] For example, in the fourth edition of their influential history text, Thomas Skidmore and Peter Smith frame the debate about Latin American colonial and postcolonial history in terms of structural (dependency) and cultural approaches, while pointing to modernization theory as the third strand in the debate. They locate their own perspective as an outgrowth of dependency theory, emphasizing that "the fate of Latin America" has depended and will continue to "depend largely on its relationship to the centers of inter-

3. Examples of the cultural approach include Morse (1964), Lynch (1986), Wiarda (1973, 1982), Véliz (1980, 1994), and Harrison (1997). Structural approaches encompass an array of work, including the numerous precursors and revisions of dependency theory. In the 1960s, André Gunder Frank became the best-known popularizer of dependency theory (Frank 1969, 1967). On the rise and transformation of dependency theories, see Cardoso (1977), Berger (1995b, 106–21), and Love (1996). For general historiographical background, see Skidmore (1998, 106–9), Gibson (1980), and Berger (1993; 1995b, 25–65; 1996a).

4. The significance and synthetic character of Stanley Stein and Barbara Stein's book has been underlined in Bergquist (1974, 26; 1979, 379–80).

5. For a marked effort to reject culture in favor of structure in the context of the new cold war of the 1980s, see Needler (1987, xi-xii, 161–65).

national power" (Skidmore and Smith 1997, 7–10, 424). But they also point out the need to pay attention to cultural trends when trying to understand the colonial legacy and the postcolonial history of Latin America (Skidmore and Smith 1997, 11).

In contrast, the interpretation of the colonial legacy (and the overall approach to postcolonial Latin America history) provided in the second edition of *The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* by David Bushnell and Neill Macaulay is an apparent effort to modify the cultural approach and reject a structural approach in favor of a revised form of modernization theory. Bushnell and Macaulay take pains to overturn the more reductionist elements of the cultural approach that, in their view, relies on the idea of an "ethnic character defect" to explain the postcolonial predicament. They also challenge what they perceive as the structural excesses of dependency theory (pp. 31, 43–45, 49, 52–53). In relation to the first half of the nineteenth century, they emphasize internal over external factors to explain the Latin American trajectory. For example, Bushnell and Macaulay note that prior to the 1850s, "capital inflow and accumulation" were constrained by "low productivity." The "reasons for it are to be found in the region itself, in its geography—in the placement of its natural resources and population—and, especially, in the institutions and habits left over from the colonial past" (p. 45).

The second edition of *The Emergence of Latin America* has been revised and updated in a minimal fashion, with no attempt to take into account new research on the nineteenth century that has emerged since the book was first published in 1988. Apart from a few minor changes, the only noticeable modification is the addition of a couple of extra pages in the concluding chapter. The fact that Bushnell and Macaulay continue to cite André Gunder Frank's work of thirty years ago as representative of dependency theory reflects the dated character of this book (p. 185). The dependency debate has moved well on since the 1960s (see Berger 1995b). Ultimately, Bushnell and Macaulay's book provides a narrative of the region's transition from the colonial era to the consolidation of nation-states in the second half of the nineteenth century, a sequence that reflects the continuing influence of liberal elite-centered approaches to postcolonial Latin America.

The history of the nineteenth century in Latin America and its relationship to the colonial era is also central in a recent book on the emergence of Argentina edited by Mark Szuchman and Jonathan Brown.[6] *Revolution*

6. The authors and chapters are Mark Szuchman, "From Imperial Hinterland to Growth Pole: Revolution, Change, and Restoration in the Río de la Plata"; Lyman Johnson, "The Military as Catalyst of Change in Latin Colonial Buenos Aires"; Tulio Halperín Donghi, "The Colonial *Letrado* as a Revolutionary Intellectual: Deán Funes as Seen through His *Apuntamientos para una biografía*"; Ricardo Salvatore, "The Breakdown of Social Discipline in the Banda Oriental and the Littoral, 1790–1820"; Kristine Jones, "Indian-Creole Negotiations in

and Restoration: The Rearrangement of Power in Argentina, 1776–1860 rests on a synthesis of cultural and structural approaches. In the introductory chapter, Szuchman represents the debate over the colonial legacy as one about the degree of continuity or change that various authors have discovered in the transition from colonialism to independence rather than as a debate over the significance of culture versus structure. The book's periodization of the history of Argentina challenges the established demarcation between the colonial and the republican periods, emphasizing that the movement for independence may "have been less of a radical break with the past" and more of "a manifestation of the unresolved battle between the forces of change and continuity" than is often assumed (pp. 1–3). The postcolonial social order was restored on the "terms" set by "the modernizing elites," and thereafter, "some of the conditions that had been problematic a century earlier were merely aggravated" rather than overcome (p. 23). *Revolution and Restoration* focuses primarily on the role of elites, and the overall conclusion points to structural as well as cultural continuities. The volume intersects with synthetic work such as Stein and Stein (1970) and Loveman (1979), on the one hand, and with relatively long-standing structural interpretations of the transition from colonies to nation-states in Latin America, on the other (Stavrianos 1981, 74–98, 177–95; Andrews 1985; Bousquet 1988). An explicitly structural approach was spelled out in comprehensive fashion in the late 1980s by historical sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein. He argued that the wars of independence in the Americas (North and South) in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth are best understood as a process of "settler decolonization." Wallerstein emphasized that, with the exception of Haiti, decolonization in the Americas "occurred under the aegis of their European settlers, to the exclusion not only of the Amerindian populations but also of the transplanted Africans, despite the fact that, in many of these newly sovereign states, Amerindians and blacks constituted a substantial proportion (even a majority) of the population" (Wallerstein 1989, 193).

Recasting the Colonial Legacy: Power, Accommodation, and Resistance

In an influential debate with Wallerstein conducted in the pages of the *American Historical Review* in the late 1980s, Steve Stern sought to revise both world-system theory and liberal elite-centered histories of colonial

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the Southern Frontier"; Samuel Amaral, "Free Trade and Regional Economies: San Juan and Mendoza, 1780–1820"; Thomas Whigham, "Trade and Conflict on the Rivers: Corrientes, 1780–1840"; Pilar González Bernaldo, "Social Imagery and Its Political Implications in a Rural Conflict: The Uprising of 1828–1829"; Kevin Kelly, "Rosas and the Restoration of Order through Populism"; and Jonathan Brown, "Revival of the Rural Economy and Society in Buenos Aires."

and postcolonial Latin America. Building on some insights of world-system theory, Stern proposed an approach emphasizing that the central dynamics of Latin American history have been the strategies of accommodation and resistance pursued by the rural and urban poor, the initiatives and interests of mercantile and political elites whose "centers of gravity" were in the Americas, against the backdrop of the world system (Stern 1988a; also see Wallerstein 1988; Stern 1988b). Stern's (1993a) study focused on the way in which the indigenous peoples accommodated themselves to or resisted Spanish colonial structures in the context of the profoundly unequal power relations of the colonial era. He argued that the "most dramatic" colonial legacy in the Andes was "Indian poverty," which was linked to the "interpenetration" of the subsistence and commercial sectors of the economy. Indian poverty also flowed from displacement and migration to the mines and cities. Stern pointed out that all these trends were overlaid by the way in which "the Indian countryside became poor and 'backward' not simply in economic terms, but in a social and ideological sense as well" (1993a, 184–86). He argued that "colonialism created 'Indians' and defined them as an inferior, degraded race" (Stern 1993a, 186).

Stern's work was part of the growing trend in the 1980s and early 1990s to recast the colonial legacy debate by moving beyond both the elite-oriented focus of the liberal historiography (apparent in the work of writers like Bushnell and Macaulay) and the problematic distinction between Spanish cultural legacies and historical structures. This approach also reoriented the debate about colonialism and the colonial legacy toward the indigenous population and its response to and interaction with colonial institutions and toward the economic changes brought on by colonialism (Clendinnen 1987; Farriss 1984; Larson 1988; Spalding 1984; Taylor 1979; Tutino 1988; Lockhart 1992; Jacobsen 1993). These scholars built on the work of earlier historians, such as the influential and pioneering study of the Aztecs under Spanish colonialism by Charles Gibson (1964), not to mention the early work of Eric Wolf (1972). Some of these historians and historical anthropologists were also influenced by Marxist historiography and political economy.

The well-known study of colonialism and class formation in Bolivia by Brooke Larson (1988) stands firmly in this tradition, as William Roseberry notes in his foreword to the revised edition (pp. xiv-xv). With the slightly altered title *Cochabamba, 1550–1900: Colonialism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia*, the revision includes a lengthy new chapter that seeks to connect the rest of the book with the political and historiographical shifts of the past ten years or so. The original chapters from the 1988 version remain unchanged. Covering the period from the Spanish Conquest until the dawn of the twentieth century, Larson's book retains as its "central aim" clarification of the way in which "the pressures and contradictions of colonialism and class" were central to the emergence of "a distinctive Indian and mes-

tizo peasantry that eventually became a powerful protagonist in regional society" (pp. 3, 7). A key theme is the question of colonial legacies. While emphasizing the complex and dynamic character of class and state formation in the colonial and postcolonial eras, Larson also points out the way in which key aspects of the Incan era articulated with the Spanish colonial period, while elements of Spanish colonialism continued or were reinvigorated during the postcolonial era (pp. 295–320, 321, 339–40). Larson's study also provides a thematic and chronological account of Cochabamba in the colonial and postcolonial eras. The work stands as an impressive and theoretically engaging study in historical anthropology and the political economy of colonialism.

By the time the first edition of Larson's book appeared, historians like Patricia Seed had begun to express dissatisfaction with what she considered "the distressing sameness characterizing many historical and anthropological works on colonial empires and their post-colonial successors" (Seed 1991, 182). In her well-known 1991 article in this journal, Seed argued that as the 1980s came to a close, "tales of resistance and accommodation were being perceived increasingly as mechanical, homogenizing, and inadequate versions of the encounters between the colonizers and the colonized," while poststructuralism was redirecting "contemporary critical reflections on colonialism (and its aftermath) toward the language used by the conquerors, imperial administrators, travelers, and missionaries" (Seed 1991, 182–83). As more than one commentator has noted, however, Seed made little effort to identify the particular works that took a homogenizing approach to processes of accommodation and resistance, although it was presumed that writers like Larson and Stern were the focus of her concern. Furthermore, in an effort to make a sharp break with studies emphasizing "accommodation and resistance" and the Marxism to which they were often linked, Seed somewhat misleadingly represented subaltern studies (which she held up as one of the possible ways forward for studying colonialism and postcolonialism) as primarily a poststructural phenomenon. She glossed over its origins and development as a self-consciously Marxist project pursued by a group of South Asian historians. Profoundly influenced by Antonio Gramsci, they sought to challenge the hegemony of elite-centered nationalist historiography in the Indian subcontinent (Seed 1991, 192–93; Mallon 1994, 1500–1503; Gosner 1996, 3–4; Guha 1988, 37–44; Guha 1997). This trajectory bears striking similarities to the Latin American-oriented work that Seed was criticizing.[7] At any rate, by the mid-1990s, a number of books (including one by Seed herself) emerged that reflected an

7. For a less skewed reading of subaltern studies in South Asia that emphasizes the way in which historians and anthropologists of Latin America were pursuing similar concerns for many years before the connection with subaltern studies was emphasized, see Latin American Subaltern Studies Group (1995, 135–46).

effort to focus on the texts and languages of conquest or the specificity and heterogeneity of colonial history (Seed 1995, 15; Greenblatt 1991; Pagden 1995).

In contrast to Seed, numerous other writers have engaged with poststructuralism in a fashion that breaks less with Marxism but brings culture and difference into the study of colonialism and its legacies in a way that transcends many of the problems associated with earlier approaches (Dirks 1995). Larson seeks to account for this and other shifts in the lengthy new chapter added to *Cochabamba, 1550–1900*. She first provides a thorough overview of important trends in historical anthropology and Andean studies over the past fifteen or twenty years. Larson then attempts to revise the key themes and extend the chronology of her 1988 book. A strength of Larson's analysis of theoretical and historiographical trends over the past two decades is her emphasis on the way in which many scholars who use poststructuralism have built on Marxism or Marxist-influenced work. Her own work reflects this synthesis of Marxism and poststructuralism. From Larson's perspective, "the contradictory historical dynamics of polarizing class relations and eroding colonial-caste power in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Cochabamba" (outlined in the first edition) facilitated the growth of "cultural mestizaje" and "Qochala popular culture" (something not discussed in the first edition). These trends "incubated everyday forms of peasant-plebeian politics and discourses" and led to social explosions that were often "gendered municipal conflicts over immediate economic and civic issues" (pp. 347–48). Thus the revised argument of *Cochabamba, 1550–1900* is presented in the following terms: "while Cochabamba's peasantry did not inherit primordial ethnic identities or invoke colonial corporate privileges as strategies of defense, they actively adapted and reconstructed communal and political relations through their quotidian practices of adaptation, survival, and struggle." Larson emphasizes that "popular culture and politics" or "more generically, 'cultural mestizaje'" must be viewed "as intrinsic to the wider material and social processes of imperial rule, class formation, and local conflicts over water, land, and peasant labor" (p. 348).

Building Postcolonial States: Liberalism, Modernizing Elites, and Peasant Politics

While Larson actively embraces many of the new historiographical trends in a sympathetic but critical fashion, the rising influence of Marxist and poststructuralist formulations has produced far less sympathetic reactions on the part of some historians. For example, Robert Jackson, the editor of *Liberals, the Church, and Indian Peasants: Corporate Lands and the Challenge of Reform in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America*, clearly intends that his book be read as a critique of the theoretical excesses of approaches to culture, ethnicity, and gender informed by poststructuralism and less di-

rectly by the perceived conceptual shortcomings of revisionist Marxism.[8] He specifically criticizes the work of Florencia Mallon (1983, 1995).[9] Jackson's edited volume can be located within wider debates on state building. It focuses on the attitudes and policies of state-building liberal elites in Mexico, Guatemala, and the Andes toward the Catholic Church and the Indian peasantry in the nineteenth century. Jackson emphasizes that the contributors to the volume seek to analyze the making of national policies as well as changes in the rural social order and patterns of land tenure that resulted from these policies. They also want to show that Indian communities could sometimes postpone or deflect the impact of new legislation and that local elite conflicts also worked to alter the way in which laws were implemented (pp. 4–5, 9).

From Jackson's perspective, Michael Ducey's contribution, "Liberal Theory and Peasant Practice: Land and Power in Northern Veracruz, Mexico, 1826–1900," is a particular "corrective" to Mallon's (1995) book on Mexico and Peru. Jackson argues that her work is flawed because she "attempts to describe the nature of relations within communities" by focusing on gender and ethnicity in the Mexican state of Puebla in the 1850s and 1860s "without reference to the changes that resulted from the implementation of liberal anticorporate land policies" (pp. 5–6). Jackson concludes that in central Mexico in the middle of the nineteenth century, "community politics" and "the direction of ethnic relations cannot be divorced from the context of liberal land policies, and any effort to explain ethnic relations without this context is meaningless" (p. 6; see also Mallon 1995, 63–88).[10] Jackson also recommends Nils Jacobsen's contribution, "Liberalism and Indian

8. Beyond the introduction and conclusion written by Jackson, the contributors and their essays are Robert Knowlton, "Dealing in Real Estate in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Jalisco: The Guadalajara Region"; Dawn Fogle Deaton, "The Decade of Revolt: Peasant Rebellion in Jalisco, Mexico, 1855–1864"; Michael Ducey, "Liberal Theory and Peasant Practice: Land and Power in Northern Veracruz, Mexico, 1826–1900"; Hubert Miller, "Liberal Modernization and Religious Corporate Property in Nineteenth-Century Guatemala"; Nils Jacobsen, "Liberalism and Indian Communities in Peru, 1821–1920"; Erick Langer and Robert Jackson, "Liberalism and the Land Question in Bolivia, 1825–1920"; and Robert Jackson, "Community and Hacienda in the Bolivian Highlands: Changing Patterns of Land Tenure in Arque and Vacas."

9. In an earlier book, Jackson challenged Larson's analysis of the Cochabamba region. Larson had emphasized that the late-colonial era was a period of dramatic change, but Jackson argued that the crucial moment of agrarian transformation in Cochabamba occurred in the 1890s (see Jackson 1994). According to Larson, "In spite of Jackson's contentious stance," her analysis (especially Chapter 9) "also points to the late nineteenth century as a critical moment of accelerated agrarian change" (p. 350). She suggests that the difference between their studies is primarily one of "research designs and strategies." Although both authors cover a long stretch of history, Larson focused her research on the late eighteenth century, while Jackson concentrated on the late nineteenth century (p. 350).

10. In the chapter itself, Ducey does not challenge Mallon. The only time he mentions Mallon's work is to build on the concept of "popular liberalism" that "bridges the gap between

Communities in Peru, 1821–1920." It provides "both a chronological and a conceptual framework for understanding Peruvian corporate indigenous community policies" and is thus a "corrective" to Mallon's 1995 book and her earlier work on Peru (p. 7; Mallon 1983). Here again, Jackson is concerned about Mallon's emphasis on gender and ethnicity. He argues that although "gender and race" are "important elements" in the study of "changes in internal relations within communities and between the communities and local nonindigenous elites," the character "of these relations during liberalism's period of greatest influence was defined by the dynamic of changing access to and ownership of land" (p. 11).[11] Yet understanding the power relations and social impact of changes in land use and landownership immediately returns the focus to ethnicity, gender, and social class, among other factors. While the essays in Jackson's edited volume are not easily categorized, his perspective, as adumbrated in his introduction and conclusion to *Liberals, the Church, and Indian Peasants*, appears to be an explicit reaction against poststructuralist currents and Marxist perspectives and an effort to reassert a liberal-empirical research agenda.

Despite Jackson's focus on peasants and indigenous peoples, the way in which he frames his overall analysis is clearly sympathetic to elitist state-building projects, and it naturalizes national boundaries, making little or no attempt to conceptualize the process of state building or nation making. He confidently represents state building as a relatively straightforward exercise in modernization presided over by liberal elites who responded pragmatically to the constraints on their efforts that flowed from the activities of peasants and local interests. Jackson argues that the "ultimate objective of liberal reformers was the creation of strong and modern states with vibrant economies," emphasizing that a significant aspect of Spanish American liberalism in the nineteenth century was "its fundamental pragmatism" (pp. 207, 212, 214). He concludes that liberalism was above all "a blueprint for modernization" and that although liberals and conservatives "sometimes disagreed," their differences over issues such as "free trade versus protected markets" were "fundamentally pragmatic" in character (p. 214). Jackson's perspective in *Liberals, the Church, and Indian Peasants* (but not necessarily that of his contributors) exhibits important parallels with Bushnell and Macaulay's approach, although they pay no attention to peasants or indigenous peoples. Bushnell and Macaulay make an explicit case for a liberal elite-focused approach to state building and so-

peasants and liberal ideologues," which he notes has been postulated by Mallon and others (p. 66).

11. Jackson's critique of Mallon should be contrasted with Jacobsen's contribution that cites Mallon only once in a note in relation to liberalism in Peru. In a 1995 review of Mallon's book, Jacobsen praised her work. His criticisms—that Mallon underestimated the influence of liberalism in the Andes in the nineteenth century and that he has doubts about her use of the concept of hegemony—are at odds with Jackson's concerns (see Jacobsen 1995, 865–68).

cial structure and engage only briefly with nationalism (to be discussed subsequently).

Central to Bushnell and Macaulay's approach in *The Emergence of Latin America* is a critique of the concept of class, which they argue "cannot wholly explain the dynamics of traditional Latin American society" (p. 52). At the same time, they would agree with Jackson's more explicit attempt to downgrade the categories of gender and ethnicity. Bushnell and Macaulay also find "little justification for casting nineteenth-century Latin American history as a struggle between the elites and the masses," singling out Bradford Burns's 1980 volume on nineteenth-century Latin America as a classic example of such an approach. Bushnell and Macaulay conclude, "The contest was not between the elites and the masses but among interest groups whose membership often cut across class lines" (pp. 53–54, also see p. 71). Framing the political economy of state building and nation making in nineteenth-century Latin America in terms of interest groups flattens the historical process and ignores or downplays the power relations that shaped the interaction of competing "interests" (pp. 97, 100, 101–2). At one stage, Bushnell and Macaulay even argue that subsistence farmers, large landowners, and their tenants and sharecroppers in nineteenth-century Brazil "coexisted symbiotically" (p. 150). This organic image of the Brazilian social structure, which sidesteps the question of the unequal distribution of power, points to the apparent influence of liberal functionalism and modernization theory on their work. In contrast to Jackson's view of peasants imposing constraints on elite-led projects, Bushnell and Macaulay's emphasis on elite activities as the motor of change in the nineteenth century leads them to assert at one point that "outside the middle and upper sectors of the population, most Latin Americans were simply indifferent to the political struggles taking place—if they were even aware that they were happening" (p. 35).

This particular aspect of Bushnell and Macaulay's argument is challenged by Peter Guardino in his impressive new book, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800–1857*. For early-nineteenth-century Mexico generally and the Guerrero region more specifically, he argues that the "empirical record does not justify" the opinion adumbrated by Bushnell and Macaulay that "lower-class actors" did not participate in or had no significant influence on the wider political arena. From Guardino's perspective, "Mexico's peasantry entered the national political stage in 1810 and was not even temporarily excluded until after 1876," and the "'elite' political struggles" of the period "were never substantially detached from the concrete realities of Mexican society" (p. 6). On this score, he also criticizes authors whose work has focused on the rebellious peasantry but either implied "a wide gap between" the "dynamics" of peasant politics and "national 'elite' politics" (Mejía Fernández 1979; Meyer 1973) or simply excluded "elite politics" from "their analyses of rebellions"

(Tutino 1988). Guardino proposes instead that the process of state formation and the emergence of national politics in nineteenth-century Mexico were "fundamentally linked" to shifts in "peasant political action" and to attempts by elites to bring about change in rural areas after independence (pp. 6–8, 45–47).

From Guardino's perspective, state formation cannot be viewed as a process in which the state is "unilaterally imposed" on "previously constituted societies." In Mexico the peasantry was "central to both the destruction of the Spanish colonial state and the formation of the Mexican national state" (p. 4). The most significant aspect of state building in Mexico in the first half of the nineteenth century was that officials of the state deferred "to the power of local agencies and institutions." This deference was most pronounced in the case of the municipality, the administrative unit that "became both the most important executive agent of the central state and the most important bearer of the demands that peasants and other rural people made on the state" (p. 108, see also pp. 107–9).

Guardino focuses on the area that became the state of Guerrero but incorporates an analysis of wider trends. He argues that the political coalitions (including an ethnically complex and stratified peasantry) that came into being between 1820 and 1840 went on to provide the "bases" of national politics in Mexico into the 1850s and after. These kinds of coalitions and alliances survived until the rise of Porfirio Díaz in the 1870s and reappeared during the Mexican Revolution after 1910 (pp. 146–48). Furthermore, Guerrero "was a key site for the elaboration of popular federalism" and "its successor, popular liberalism" (p. 217). To this day, popular liberalism is a potent "ideology of opposition" providing a political discourse "capable of defending the rights of the poor to land, decent wages, just taxes, and local democracy within the framework of liberal republicanism that Mexico's political elites have used to justify their power" (pp. 219–20).

Popular liberalism represents "a haunting challenge" in asking that the "ideals of post-Enlightenment liberal nation-states" be taken seriously by the elites who repeatedly deploy them to legitimate their power and privileges (p. 220). Guardino has done a convincing job of linking subaltern politics to elite politics and regional politics to national politics. While bringing subaltern agency into state formation, he effectively conveys the powerful limiting aspects that shape peasant actions and the unequal power relations that informed the historical and contemporary social order in Mexico.

Making Modern Nations: Eurocentrism, Nationalism, and Modernity

Guardino's main concern is the connections between the role of peasants and elites in state building and nation making. But while he writes about nation making, he does not attempt to conceptualize nationalism and

tends to assume that the nation and the state are more or less the same. Jackson's book as well as the volume edited by Szuchman and Brown also gloss over the question of nationalism, effectively treating nations as unproblematic and thus natural units of analysis. Bushnell and Macaulay note that as the nineteenth century progressed, "abstract" entities such as Mexico and Colombia "became the framework for the subsequent evolution of the area." They comment that these entities "would eventually be so taken for granted that few scholars, Latin American or otherwise, have bothered to analyze the process whereby the map of Latin America was originally carved up" (p. 22). At the same time, the Eurocentrism of Bushnell and Macaulay's approach is reflected in the observation that the new nations of Latin America "must appear slightly artificial by virtue of the fact that they are not clearly separated from one another by differences of language, historical tradition, and sometimes religion," unlike the "older nations of western Europe" (p. 22).[12] By the time the second edition of Bushnell and Macaulay's book appeared, various analysts had begun to ask serious questions about why "the map of Latin America was originally carved up" the way it was. While raising general questions about the rise and dissemination of nationalism in Latin America, some writers have also challenged the Eurocentric assumptions of the dominant approaches to state building and nation making that held European nation-states up as universal models.

These are the main concerns of an engaging new book by David Nugent, *Modernity at the Edge of Empire: State, Individual, and Nation in the Northern Peruvian Andes, 1885–1935*. He challenges various forms of Eurocentrism that are entrenched in the North American historical profession and beyond. Nugent emphasizes that the process of state building and nation making outlined in most historical works (he cites Smith 1992 and Urban and Sherzer 1992) does not fit, for example, with the way in which the modern nation-state in Peru came to have "a real presence" in the Chachapoyas region (in the department of Amazonas in the northern part of the country) by the 1930s. Contrary to established interpretations based primarily on European examples, in Chachapoyas the impetus for "state building and nation making" emanated from "the fringes of the territorial state" and was inspired by the activities of "subaltern groups." They were led by middle-class Peruvians connected with the wider rise of APRA "who had formerly been excluded from participation in the national community" (p. 308, also see pp. 316–17, 371–72). As Nugent makes clear, although the Peruvian nation-state had been established in the 1820s on the ostensible

12. *Eurocentrism*, as I understand the term, is the implicit or explicit assumption that the overall historical trajectory perceived as characteristic of Western Europe and North America represents the model against which the histories of all peoples and social formations are or ought to be evaluated and comprehended (see Callinicos 1995, 165; Amin 1989, 106–8; Young 1990, 2–3; Berger 1996b).

basis of "liberal principles of democracy, citizenship, private property, and individual rights," the new nation's central government had no interest in realizing any of these principles up to the 1920s, if not beyond. While liberal principles were invoked regularly by governing elites, large areas of Peru were organized along lines "diametrically opposed" to principles of "popular sovereignty" (pp. 308–9). Up to and including the period covered in *Modernity at the Edge of Empire*, the central government's ability to control all the territory it claimed sovereignty over was seriously limited, and it selected members of regional elites to act on its behalf. The selection of a faction of the local elite by the central government ensured that the elite group that exercised local authority in the name of the national government actively denied other local elite groups "access to political power" (p. 309). What resulted, as Nugent makes clear, was "endemic conflict, as elite-led factions struggled" to "become the single privileged client of the state" (p. 309).

Nugent argues that this situation began to change in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, when many inhabitants of Chachapoyas led by middle-class reformers and radicals increasingly came to regard "state and nation as potential liberating forces in their lives" and directly requested the central government in Lima to make its presence felt in Amazonas (p. 8). The popular sense that modernity and nationhood possessed a powerful "emancipatory potential" encouraged many to take up arms and put their lives at risk "to break the power of the landed elite" and to link their community directly "with the institutions of the nation-state" (p. 8, also see p. 21). Nugent concludes that the process of state building and nation making and the related social relationships and political attitudes and practices of those who exercised state power in Chachapoyas (and in Latin America more generally) differed markedly from the situation in the nation-states that had emerged in Western Europe and in their colonies in Asia and Africa. According to Nugent's interpretation, "coercive" and "oppositional models of state building" and modern nation making are of "limited use in understanding the history of state and nation building in postcolonial Latin America" in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (pp. 315–17).

At the same time, Nugent's concern with restoring subaltern agency to the process of state building and nation making does not lead to downplaying the institutional and discursive limits on subaltern action. Nugent also outlines the way in which the arrival of nationalism in Amazonas in the 1930s occurred on terms set primarily by an urban middle class. Although it sought to create a more inclusive form of regional and national politics (challenging derogatory racial categories and attempting to dispense with distinctions between persons of indigenous and European background), new or revised forms of exclusion emerged. The process of democratization in Chachapoyas "meant not only the empowerment of the urban, male middle class but also the systematic [and continued] exclusion of women and peasants" as the language of modernity continued to be de-

ployed in the interests of particular groups despite its universalistic pretensions (pp. 319, 321). *Modernity at the Edge of Empire* is an exemplary study that provides a thought-provoking point of departure for subsequent works on postcolonial state building and nation making in Latin America and beyond.

As with Nugent's book, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* by Fernando Coronil makes a significant contribution to debates about postcolonial state building and nation making. Coronil also challenges the Eurocentrism of the dominant historical and social science paradigms. He locates his work at the intersection of Marxist theories of the state with dependency and world-system theories, yet his approach is strongly influenced by various currents within poststructuralism. Coronil argues that his approach "decenters Eurocentric conceptions that identify modernity with metropolitan cultural formations and relegate the periphery to a pre-modern domain" (p. 8). From his point of view, this method allows him to "approach the so-called periphery as the site of subaltern modernities rather than as the region where traditional cultures are embraced by Western progress" (p. 8, also see p. 56). Coronil is critical of the way in which most theories of the state have taken states in the "advanced capitalist nations" as the "general model of the capitalist state," while states in "peripheral capitalist societies" are "represented as truncated versions of this model" (p. 65). They are interpreted in terms of "a regime of deficits" rather than in terms of "historical differences." Coronil argues further that a unified and global perspective on the development of capitalism and state formation reveals "that all national states are constituted as mediators of an order that is simultaneously national and international, political and territorial" (p. 65, also see pp. 62–66).

From this perspective, Coronil analyzes the formation of the Venezuelan state since the late nineteenth century. He emphasizes that after oil emerged as the main primary export of Venezuela, the idea "that oil constituted 'our national wealth' and that the role of the state was to 'safeguard it' eternally for the nation" provided the "foundations of an emergent political discourse of national identity" (p. 81). The ongoing struggle against General Juan Vicente Gómez (who ruled Venezuela from 1908 until his death in December 1935) and the foreign oil companies closely connected to his regime yielded a "nationalist language" that "addressed Venezuelans as members of a national community sustained by the collective ownership of the common subsoil" (p. 111). With Venezuela's emergence from the contests over state power as an oil nation, the country was "imagined as having two bodies, a natural body (the material source of its wealth) and a political body (its citizenry), both of which were represented by the state" (p. 116). After Gómez died, the "state's task" was seen to be "to reintegrate the split nation," primarily by "safeguarding the nation's vanishing physical body" (the extraction and export of oil) "on behalf of the nation's eternal

political body" (p. 111). At the same time, the "integration of popular and elite interests" around a populist and reformist political center "came to characterize hegemonic political projects in Venezuela" in the years after 1935. The "expectation that collective well-being" could be realized via a state-building and nation-making process grounded in the rising revenues of the oil industry was central to the "fantasy" of "national unity" (p. 127).

The Magical State is a stimulating book that suggests creative ways to think about state building and nation making in relation to the complex connections among state power, social structure, and national narratives. At the same time, Coronil's heavy revision of dependency theory and world-system theory still tends to privilege "external" economic linkages over "internal" relations of social power.[13] His overall theoretical position also highlights the limits of any attempt to overcome Eurocentrism. Formulations like those of Coronil and Nugent that explicitly challenge Eurocentrism are nonetheless produced within a wider framework that ensures that efforts to overcome Eurocentrism are accommodated to Eurocentric forms of knowledge production even as they seek to challenge Eurocentrism (see Dirlik 1994, 51–52, 74, 96–97). This observation is not meant to suggest that peeling the layers off the onion of Eurocentrism is not a worthwhile project. Yet profound material and discursive constraints continue to limit such efforts. Coronil's and Nugent's books reflect those constraints while providing key points of departure for those seeking to grapple with questions related to Eurocentrism, the colonial legacy, postcolonial state building and nation making, and the complexities of capitalist modernity.

Conclusion: Specters of Colonialism

This essay has emphasized the vigorous and politically charged debates over the colonial legacy, state building and nation making, elite power, and subaltern accommodation and resistance that cut across the wider study of Latin American history. Some of the seven books reviewed here reflect the way in which a considerable amount of the historiography is unselfconsciously grounded in Eurocentric conceptions of historical change and is implicated in elite-led efforts at state building and nation

13. Coronil's privileging of "external economic linkages" is reinforced by his deployment of the concept of "the Third World" in a generally uncritical fashion (pp. 6–7, 30, 65–66, 317–18). Although Coronil acknowledges serious problems associated with the term *Third World*, he continues to use it and presents his overall conclusions about Venezuela as relevant to "the Third World." As a result, even though his analysis draws attention to the particularity of Venezuela's historical trajectory, he couches his conclusions and maps out his overall framework in a way that homogenizes diverse areas of the globe. He thus allows the dubious concept of "the Third World," which poorly represented and challenged global inequality in the past, to continue to homogenize power relations in the contemporary world and Venezuela's position in it (see Berger 1994; 1995a).

making. Yet a number of recent contributions to the study of Latin America (including some reviewed here) represent a challenge to established historiographical traditions. They reflect the trend since the 1980s to focus increasingly on the history and significance of subaltern or indigenous groups. These groups were economically exploited and politically, socially, and culturally marginalized or excluded in the colonial era—and they continued to be exploited or marginalized or excluded during state building and nation making in the postcolonial era. These newer contributions to the historiography, which build on an earlier Marxism and more recent trends in poststructuralism, have sought to place subaltern groups in the wider sweep of Latin American history. They thus help illuminate the complicated history of postcolonial state building. They also help denaturalize the nation and problematize historical and contemporary nation-making projects. In doing so, they shed new light on the complicated ways in which the specters of colonialism continue to loom over the shifting and profoundly unequal distribution of social, political, economic, and cultural power in the Americas.

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