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Review/Reseña

Laura Gotkowitz, ed. *Histories of Race and Racism: The Andes and Mesoamerica From Colonial Times to the Present*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011.

Race—Putting in Work

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Laura Gotkowitz asks a single question to unify the articles in this edited collection: What work does race do? The difficulty of an edited collection is making the articles function as a whole; this book does a better job than most. Gotkowitz's introduction and Florencia Mallon's conclusion connect the articles effectively despite the continental span of the collection and the long time period covered. The articles also make frequent reference to each other and thus show that the authors read each other's work and sought a unified contribution to the understanding of how race functioned

historically in Latin America. The collaborative process that produced the book fostered its unity. The edited collection emerged from a conference at the University of Iowa in 2002. The gathering attracted both historians and anthropologists. Gotkowitz co-organized the conference with Marisol de la Cadena, who published a book in Spanish, *Formaciones de indianidad: articulaciones raciales, mestizaje y nación en América Latina* (Colombia: Envi6n, 2007), using some of the conference's articles. Gotkowitz's edited collection includes seven articles that appeared in that book plus nine others that did not figure in de la Cadena's collection.

Gotkowitz takes the question "What work does race do?" from Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Race in the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). She believes that the question helps identify how race is used as an ideological stand-in for class, gender, nationality, or region. She focuses on the historic uses of racism: to reinforce political or economic power, to exploit labor, and to seize land. Scholars have generally discussed race in Latin America with caution yet the book's articles avoid any attempt to define "race" and approach the concept with trepidation. Gotkowitz's introduction identifies the patterns that scholars have used to discuss the evolution of racial thought in Latin America. One approach argues for the nineteenth-century emergence of a biological racism in Europe that spread to Latin America; a cultural or historic racism then arose to replace it after the Second World War. Another approach blurs the boundaries between these two eras, seeing some cultural racism in the era of biological racism and vice-versa. Gotkowitz sees a modified version of the second approach that acknowledges continued biological racism after World War Two, especially in the popular context, but argues that culture is at the heart of contemporary racist practice, and a number of the articles elaborate on these arguments.

Work on Bolivia, Gotkowitz's nation of specialty, predominates in the book, and political events from contemporary Bolivia frame the edited collection. The most important, at least for the narrative framing of the book, occurred on May 24, 2008 in Sucre, Bolivia. On that day a mob seized some forty people of indigenous origin and forced them to march

shirtless through Sucre's plaza, where they were abused and forced to pay homage to Sucre's flag. Gotkowitz narrates these events at the end of her introduction and includes six striking photographs of graffiti from Sucre related to the violence. Two photographs from May 17 and 18 are anti-MAS graffiti with racist overtones (the MAS is the political party of President Evo Morales). The other four photographs are from May 28, and depict graffiti denouncing the racism of the previous days. The final two articles in the edited collection return the text to the events of May 24 in Sucre and their aftermath. The prominent position of Bolivia in the book is indicative of the edited collection's focus on indigenous ethnicity and, to a lesser extent, *mestizo* identity. The book hardly deals with people of African or Asian descent, and there is no discussion of immigrant groups to Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Gotkowitz's introduction and Mallon's conclusion do excellent jobs of analyzing and knitting together the book's articles, discussing and summarizing them in the order that they appear in the volume. This review takes a similar approach. The book contains only two articles on the colonial period—this is perhaps a weakness. Kathryn Burns' article "Unfixing Race" explores the interplay of religion and ancestry in the colonial Iberian world. In the Castile of 1492 ancestry was used to judge Christian fitness. Purity of blood (*limpieza de sangre*), a judgment about heritage—Christian, Jewish, or Muslim—became more important than religious practice. The Spaniards brought this framework to the New World. Initially, Burns argues, the Crown advocated assimilation, but eventually Spain adopted an apartheid "two republics" system. Racial mixing continuously undermined the "two republics," and the Spanish eventually became suspicious of individuals with a mixed ancestry. Burns does an excellent job of positioning these shifting policies in a trans-Atlantic context, linking a suspicion of American *mestizos* with the Morisco revolt in Spain. The empire-wide examination of racial thought is laudable.

Sinclair Thomson's article, "Was There Race in Colonial Latin America? Identifying Selves and Others in the Insurgent Andes", examines the final decades of the eighteenth century. Thomson directly engages some of the debates about race that Gotkowitz lays out in the introduction. Did

modern racial thought begin in the eighteenth or nineteenth century? Did it emerge in Europe or perhaps in Europe's American colonies? What are the implications of transitions between biological and cultural racism? Why does race remain a powerful concept despite repeated academic attacks? Thomson criticizes discussions of the emergence of modern racial thought that fail to consider the trans-Atlantic Iberian empires. He also makes a salutary call for an examination of racial thinking among the masses. To accomplish this, he suggests focusing on moments of insurgency, such as that in the Andes from the 1730s to the 1820s. Thomson asserts that Andean insurgents employed terms resembling modern racial language. While "Spaniard" was the more common term, "white" was occasionally deployed in a manner approximating modern usages. He also discusses a number of Quechua epithets—an especially stimulating contribution.

The book's next section examines the long nineteenth century. In "From Assimilation to Segregation: Guatemala, 1800-1944", Arturo Taracena Arriola explores the country's transition from an early elite nationalist model that sought the assimilation of the indigenous and *ladino* population (*ladino* is a Central American term approximating *mestizo*) to a system of segregation locking indigenous people into a lower caste. Taracena does a good job of answering the question: What work does race do? This is the result of Taracena's grounding in the methodology of historical materialism. *Ladinos* began the nineteenth century in a better position than indigenous people to meet elite definitions of civilization: Western clothing, the Spanish language, basic literacy, the consumption of Western products, land ownership, market-oriented production, and Catholicism. Taracena focuses on secondary laws under the constitution that excluded indigenous people and imposed a structural economic subordination. Segregation persisted until the revolution of October 1944 and the reappearance of integrationist projects.

The second article on the long nineteenth century returns the focus to Bolivia. Rossana Barragán explores the racialized occupational categories employed in an 1881 census of the city of La Paz in "The Census and the Making of a Social 'Order' in Nineteenth-Century Bolivia". While government officials used racial-biological terminology, census categories

reflected actual class standing. In the colonial period “caste” designated different categories of persons, but in the nineteenth century “race” replaced the older term. Officials also began to use “white” to describe those at the top of the social scale and widened the gulf between “white” individuals and “mestizos.” Barragán speculates that this hardening of “mestizo” was an elite reaction of the populist presidency of Manuel Belzu (1848-55) and his artisan political base. Census makers equated “mestizo” with urban artisans and the residents of provincial towns. The 1881 La Paz census classed a larger percent of women as “mestizo” than men, a fact Barragán attributes to the distinctive dress of middling women that differentiated them from both elite and indigenous women. One notable quirk of the 1881 census was the impression that government or professional employment was more prestigious than landowning. Elite women often appeared as landowners, allowing their husbands to pursue professional careers. Barragán concludes that racial and occupational categories were already fused in Bolivia by the 1881 census.

Brooke Larson’s article, “Forging the Unlettered Indian: The Pedagogy of Race in the Bolivian Andes”, focuses on the evolution of Indian education and its eventual emphasis on manual labor over literacy, employing the theoretical framework of Angel Rama’s *The Lettered City*. Bolivian liberals began the twentieth century with a constellation of beliefs about the country’s indigenous population: that a history of deprivation made them victims, that they were disappearing, and that education might racially regenerate them. The government recruited Georges Rouma from Belgium to implement a national education program of Spanish-language instruction and literacy. This complemented the ruling Liberal Party’s recruitment of literate voters in the cities and the countryside. The suggestion that the Liberal Party of the early twentieth century was more benevolent than the Republican party of the 1920s is a unique argument. Larson criticizes President Bautista Saavedra (1921-25) as anti-democratic; he supposedly saw rural voters as the ignorant pawns of Liberal Party bosses. Elite authors, Larson notes, became paranoid of politically active *mestizos* at the end of the nineteenth century. Reactionaries decried conscription and literacy programs that sought to turn *mestizos* and

indigenous people into citizens. Instead, they sought to forge an apolitical Aymara confined to the rural highlands and manual labor. Larson notes that the conservative elite found inspiration in U.S. manual arts schools for blacks and Native Americans. Thus, conservative thinkers hoped to turn indigenous people into efficient cogs in a modernizing nation while still denying them political participation.

Part three of the book focuses on the twentieth century. The first article in part three, “Indian Ruins, National Origins: Tiwanaku and *Indigenismo* in La Paz, 1897-1933”, by Seemin Qayum, focuses on intellectuals affiliated with the Geographic Society of La Paz. Nationalist thinkers in early twentieth-century Bolivia viewed the archeological site of Tiwanaku as an attractive symbol of origin. She notes that while *indigenismo* became important in many Latin American nations between the 1920s and the 1960s, it never developed comparable strength in Bolivia. Qayum begins with a bureaucratic tussle between the towns of Tiwanaku and Viacha for the Pacajes province’s capital in 1897. Despite the use of a learned tract by the Geographic Society of La Paz to support the historic importance of their town, Tiwanaku’s leaders failed in their appeal. Qayum then discusses the career of Arturo Posnansky, the long-time president of the Geographic Society of La Paz and the director of that city’s Archeological Museum. In 1932 Posnansky began lobbying for the relocation of the Bennett Stela—an imposing Tiwanaku statue—to La Paz. The elite of La Paz resisted many aspects of Posnansky’s proposal. Qayum uses both incidents to illustrate the limits of *indigenismo* in Bolivia. Significantly, the article follows Bennett Stela’s story into the twenty-first century. In 2002 the government moved the statue back to Tiwanaku. Qayum employs a critical eye when presenting the ideological constructs of the early twentieth century, but she does not do the same for contemporary Bolivia. Much of the article’s final section is colored by a kind of Aymara ethnic nationalism known as *katarismo*. Qayum does not examine the rhetoric of contemporary leaders and intellectuals with the same rigor applied to Posnansky’s.

In the next article, “Mestizaje, Distinction, and Cultural Presence: The View from Oaxaca”, Deborah Poole explores Oaxaca’s Guelaguetza

Festival. She notes a number of competing ideological traditions in Oaxaca: traditional *mestizaje* constructions, popular cultural movements, and neoliberal multiculturalism. Poole's use of this final term to describe the politics of contemporary government functionaries is intriguing. She notes that academic interpretations of Mexico's *mestizaje* ideology are at variance with popular belief. Scholars now view it as an ideology of class dominance seeking a unified national identity at the expense of indigenous ethnicities. Poole argues that Oaxaca entered the twentieth century with a number of characteristics at variance with elite, liberal goals: collective property, decentralized authority, a heterogeneous population, and popular Catholicism. Following the Mexican Revolution, a new political elite sought to impose an officially categorized diversity as the basis for Oaxacan identity. In 1932 the new elite organized a precursor to the Guelaguetza Festival. In it, regional culture fused with female dress and the state's ethnicities became costumes that middle- and upper-class women might don on special occasions. Poole also examined the Ninth Annual Festival of Mixtec Culture in 1999 as a contrast with the state-run Guelaguetza Festival. She found a surprising number of ideological similarities between the two events. Poole makes the final observation that governments today deploy neoliberal multiculturalism to capture the assistance of international lenders and aid organization that would prefer to fund ethnic or community based organizations.

Claudio Lomnitz's article, "On the Origin of the 'Mexican Race'", originated as a piece of popular commentary; as such it lacks the theoretical depth of other essays in the collection. He states that racialization's role in forging national identity and social difference has long preoccupied him. His chapter examines how the U.S. border has helped forge the idea of a unified Mexican race. Lomnitz argues that Mexicans were first considered a unified race in the United States. Because of discrimination, the idea of a Mexican race had tangible implications along the border. He concludes by noting that many positive reforms following the Mexican Revolution employed the idea of a unified Mexican race, but adds that the concept is clearly flawed and that Mexico needs something different today.

The edited collection's final chronological section focuses on contemporary events and debates. Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld's "Politics of Place and Urban Indígenas in Ecuador's Indigenous Movement" is the book's only article on Ecuador. Colloredo-Mansfeld asserts that both indigenous leaders and their opponents have traditionally rooted indigenous authenticity in the countryside. In contrast, he highlights the successes and complexities of urban indigenous activism. He analyzes a number of political fights in the small highland city of Otavalo in the 1990s involving two different indigenous organizations: one representing the artisans that control the town's handicraft market, and the other representing a larger body of associates in both the rural and urban zone. Both organizations played prominent roles in nationally publicized battles with Otavalo's reactionary mayor Fabián Villareal. In 1996 Villareal sought to exclude an indigenous university student from the Queen of Yamor beauty pageant. Then, in 1998, he sought to banish a bust of the Inca general Rumiñahui from the town's central plaza. An indigenous candidate, supported by the artisan association, defeated Villareal and became mayor in 2000. Colloredo-Mansfeld points out that from a class perspective this electoral victory might be seen as marking the rise of a new indigenous bourgeoisie, but the emergence of an indigenous dominant class is a significant development in contemporary Ecuador. Markers of indigenous identity have traditionally been used in the Andes to exclude individuals from the bourgeoisie, so to now have some rising social actors brandish those symbols of indigenous affiliation is a captivating cultural change.

Esteban Ticona Alejo returns the focus to Bolivia with his article "Education and Decolonization in the Work of the Aymara Activist Eduardo Leandro Nina Qhispi". While this article rightly elevates the work of an overlooked Aymara activist in the 1920s and 1930s, it has the ring of hagiography and engages in excessive levels of mythmaking and hyperbole. Nina Qhispi was part of a wave of economic and political dissidents who settled in La Paz in the 1910s and 1920s. He and others were fleeing hacienda expansion on the Altiplano and the violent repression of several rebellions. Between 1928 and 1930 Nina Qhispi established two related institutions: the Sociedad República del Kollasuyo and the Centro

Educativo Kollasuyo. He promoted educational initiatives for indigenous youth and cooperation among the country's indigenous communities. Nina Qhispi sought and often received official sanction for his activities. Ticona Alejo is uncritical of the support Nina Qhispi lent to various presidents; the Aymara activist was especially supportive of President Daniel Salamanca and his march toward the disastrous Chaco War (1932-35). In his desire to lionize Nina Qhispi, Ticona Alejo fails to observe that this is just one example of how the Aymara activist was more conservative than others on the left and in the labor movement during the same period. Ironically, the same government that Nina Qhispi supported at the start of the Chaco War eventually persecuted and repressed him.

In "Mistados, Cholos, and the Negation of Identity in the Guatemalan Highland", Charles R. Hale contemplates the potential emergence of a third racial group in Guatemala between the traditional poles of *ladino* and Indian. Hale observes that *ladino* in Guatemala does not perfectly correspond to *mestizo* in other Latin American countries—*ladino* implies a greater distance from the indigenous population. He is interested in this new, amorphous, and unnamed middle group and their potential to swing Guatemalan politics to the left or right in the future. Hale hopes that they might positively transform the country by means of what he terms "*mestizaje* from below." In other countries indigenous activism and international multicultural currents have undermined older *mestizaje* ideologies; Hale postulates that something different might be happening in Guatemala. In the past Guatemalans applied the term *mistado* to individuals who fell into the murky space between *ladino* and Indian. Hale finds this unsatisfying and opts for the term *cholo*. The choice is odd. In the Andes, *cholo* is a sometimes synonym for *mestizo*, and along the U.S.-Mexico border the term describes someone who mixes the culture of both nations. In both regions *cholo* has a pejorative connotation. A major youth gang in the Guatemalan city of Chimaltenango is named the "Cholos." While the gang reflects some interesting cultural borrowings, the appellation's use to designate an emerging national racial group is a stretch.

“Authenticating Indians and Movements: Interrogating Indigenous Authenticity, Social Movements, and Fieldwork in Contemporary Peru”, by María Elena García and José Antonio Lucero, is the only article that treats Peru after the colonial period. It examines how a researcher’s pre-conceived notions might distort an investigation. García and Lucero caution against emphasizing Peru’s lack of a national indigenous movement and instead tout the vibrancy of more local organizations. The article describes criticism that the two scholars received following a presentation of their research in Cochabamba, Bolivia. García and Lucero had emphasized movements that they judged to be professional and supported by international aid networks; they were skeptical of groups promoting radical forms of indigenous ethnic nationalism. Commentators criticized their reliance on the perspective of the aid organization Oxfam. García and Lucero, in their presentation, had also impugned the Peruvian activist Javier Lajo, who eventually contacted the two authors to dispute what he considered to be misrepresentations. He judged Oxfam and its foreign experts to be imperialist colonizers. García and Lucero conclude that the anti-imperialist critique of activists like Lajo should be taken seriously.

The final two articles return the focus to Bolivia and the contentious attempt to craft a new constitution starting in 2006. “Transgressions and Racism: The Struggle over a New Constitution in Bolivia”, by Andrés Calla and Khantuta Muruchi explores the racial tensions that surfaced as a part of that process. The Constituent Assembly was a diverse body: 35 percent female, 55 percent indigenous, and 47 percent spoke an indigenous language. A silent, day-to-day racism has always marked Bolivia, but the Assembly’s atmosphere of indigenous empowerment provoked a more openly racist response. Racist incidents occurred during the Assembly’s initial sessions, sparked by the proud display of traditional ethnic markers like indigenous dress and language. Once the gathering broke into small working groups, a subtle racism based on education and legal knowledge crept into the process. Finally, a more violent explosion occurred on May 24, 2008—the incident Gotkowitz narrates in her introduction—in response to the visible presence of empowered delegates from the country’s

indigenous and mining communities in symbolic locations of power like Sucre's central plaza.

The final article, "Epilogue to 'Transgressions and Racism': Making Sense of May 24th in Sucre: Toward an Antiracist Legislative Agenda", by Pamela Calla and the Research Group of the Observatorio del Racismo, examines the political fall-out of this violence. The short piece mentions that the media and a guilty segment of Sucre's population sought to justify the incident by relating it to the death of three individuals in November 2007 during clashes between supporters of the return of the national capital to Sucre and government forces. Yet the article's main focus is on two versions of a law debated to combat racism in the wake of the conflict. One version sought to penalize discrimination based on disability, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. The other only penalized ethnic discrimination. Grass-roots indigenous organizations supported the more limited version of the law. (The authors never adequately explain this lack of indigenous support for the more expansive version of the law.) The Bolivian government eventually ratified the more expansive proposal, but this new law has not been without controversy. Journalists have especially objected to a clause that penalizes the media for denigrating individuals in a discriminatory manner, as they view it as an infringement of free speech.

Florencia Mallon's conclusion, "A Postcolonial Palimpsest: The Work Race Does in Latin America", summarizes the book's articles and offers insightful commentary and criticism. She hints that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Latin America are marked by occasional periods of social opening that might have allowed for experimentation with more enlightened racial ideas. As one she points to the early republican period in a number of nations and terms this a moment of "insurgent Enlightenment liberalism." Mallon observes that this possibility was frightening for the Creole elite and, as such, was repressed. The second period of more open ethnic experimentation in the postcolonial era occurred during the twentieth century with the emergence of socialist and revolutionary movements. Mallon's final period is happening today with the growth of contemporary indigenous militancy. This collection of articles has quite a bit to say about this final moment.

Histories of Race and Racism: The Andes and Mesoamerica from Colonial Times to the Present contains a number of works that have appeared previously in different incarnations in Spanish. This book performs the useful service of introducing the work of many of these scholars—especially the Latin American scholars—to an English-speaking audience. It does this while also crafting a whole that is more unified, with its various parts in dialogue with one another, than is usual in an edited collection. Laura Gotkowitz should be complimented on the accomplishment.