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### **Review/Reseña**

Arnold Bauer, *Chile y algo más: Estudios de historia Latinoamérica*. Santiago, Chile: Instituto de Historia, Universidad Católica and Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, 2004.

### **Arnold Bauer and Chile: A Love Story**

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*Chile y algo más* is, in its sum, a love story. A collection of seven scholarly essays and thirteen book reviews written over the last twenty years by University of California historian Arnold Bauer and translated into Spanish and published by Chile's Pontificia Universidad Católica and the Biblioteca Nacional, the book testifies to the deep respect Bauer's scholarship has earned in Latin America, especially in Santiago, and the enormous affection that its author holds for the *finis de terra* of South America. Translated works by historians writing in English about Chile are still painfully few inside Chile, and those chosen for the honor are held close to the heart. As Chilean historian Sol Serrano writes effusively in the book's introductory preface, "Chile knows [Arnold Bauer's] song well, and how Chileans love it."

The collection begins with a nostalgic but powerful essay, “Chile en el corazón”, in which Bauer narrates his personal journey to becoming a Latin Americanist. Raised on a farm in eastern Kansas, Bauer’s first trip South of the Border was to Mexico on a GI Bill scholarship following his service to the US Air Force in Morocco during the Korean War. Most US scholars of Latin America trace their intellectual inspiration in one way or another to the Cold War, but few can do so in such a breathlessly global and picturesque way as Arnold Bauer. Partly this is because Bauer is a beautiful writer, who takes obvious pleasure in story-telling, and who has a beguiling talent for getting just the right mix of self-effacement and self-dramatization. But partly it is his story itself. Bauer is a good half generation older than the larger wave of Latin Americanists inspired by the Cuban Revolution and the 1960s—and the difference matters. His own moment of “awakening” is when, as a convinced Cold Warrior and Air Force serviceman installing Mark VI Missiles in the vicinity of Casablanca, he is aghast to read in the newspaper that US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles has publicly claimed that the “The United States does not now have, nor does it intend to have, atomic weapons positioned in North Africa.”

A few months after such betrayal, Bauer is in Mexico City and it is 1954: the place and year in which the exiled Fidel Castro will meet Ernesto Guevara, himself just arrived from the US-backed bombing and coup in Guatemala City. The same Soviet KGB agent who befriends “Che” evidently takes an initial interest in pursuing Bauer, but desists when he finds Bauer lacking revolutionary potential. Indeed, Bauer soon returns to San Francisco for a successful stint as a businessman with a home on Nob Hill. But he is lured back to Latin America, and in 1962 he enrolls in the University of California Berkeley history graduate program at the age of thirty-two. Sojourns to Chile followed, including being physically present during the tumultuous years of the agrarian reform in the late 1960s. One is struck by Bauer’s own fascination, not with peasants, but with the lives and sensibilities of Chilean landowners and the genteel elite. When Bauer returns to Berkeley in 1969 to finish his dissertation, he is holed up furiously writing and anxious to get back to supporting his family, rather than taking over university buildings or volunteering to cut sugar-cane in Cuba.

But by then Arnold Bauer had already spent a great deal more time in Latin America and the world than his younger fellow-graduate students, and had done so at a crucial moment: before the splintering and hardening of divisions on the political left, and before the study of elites was momentarily (and unfortunately) considered “reactionary,” and “class analysis” made more synonymous with heroic histories of workers. Bauer, himself, contemplates self-critically in this essay the degree to which he may have over-estimated the harmony between peasants and landowners in his now classic 1975 book (based on the dissertation), *Chilean Rural Society from the Spanish Conquest to 1930*. And yet he also quite rightly defends his central argument that paternalist labor arrangements functioned (and endured) precisely because they had mutual benefits, however unequal. Indeed, Arnold Bauer’s meticulous archival work in hacienda records and sensitive reading of class relations have more relevance today than ever for the Gramscian-influenced wave of labor and political histories which see employer strategies as crucial to the construction of hegemony. “Chile en el corazón” makes for inspired reading: it is an unabashed celebration of the excitement of becoming an intellectual and a poetic meditation on the risks, limits, and profound joys of studying another country.

With the exception of one additional chapter also originally written for this book, most chapters of this tribute collection are reproductions of articles and lectures Arnold Bauer has produced over the long arc of his career. While thematically diverse, all of the essays address the centrality of agriculture to colonial and modern political economy, and the continuity and changes between these periods. “Ciudad y Campo en 1850” presents Bauer’s now widely-accepted argument that Republican Chile was notable less for overt domination by foreigners than for its clannish elite and under-utilization of land and labor. This is followed by a sequel chapter comparing Chile’s semi-peonage labor system, *inquilinaje* (in which peasants traded labor for access to land) with other peasant labor systems in Latin America and Europe. It showcases Bauer’s crucial proposal that while Chile’s system was not unique, Chilean landowners had an exceptional investment in maintaining *inquilinaje* into the 20<sup>th</sup> century because it became the

means by which elites controlled rural votes and maintained political power.

Other chapters reach further out of Chile to compare the spatial and temporal organization of economic life in colonial New Spain and the Andes, and changing family division of labor connected to the introduction of mills for grinding corn, a task long performed by Meso-American women. One especially interesting essay, originally published in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* in 1983, examines the crucial role of the colonial Church as an early modern financial agency, which lent money, generated capital, and controlled vast amounts of urban and rural property. Here, as in other essays, Bauer draws upon the monographic works of other scholars to undertake the crucial labor of putting various voices into dialogue, painting the broader picture of what was happening in Latin America as a whole, and recasting arguments. Bauer is a generous and perceptive reader of his colleagues, giving credit where credit is due, and masterfully suggesting how new waves of scholarship reshape past models. For example, in his essay on the colonial church, Bauer addresses research by feminist scholars on the surprisingly large financial lending role of religious women who controlled a majority of church property in urban areas like Mexico City.

The chapter “Cultura Material y Consumo en Hispanoamérica”, which was written especially for *Chile y algo más*, is also a particularly compelling piece. Based on research Bauer conducted for his 2001 book, *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture*, the essay provides a rousing and elegant call for histories of material culture and histories of consumption. Bauer draws fluidly on a wealth of longstanding debates about these issues from anthropology and European and US-American cultural studies, reminding his fellow Latin Americanists that materialism and consumption are two sides of the same coin. He proposes the need to wed the history of the commodity to the history of meaning, passionately rejecting the tiresome dichotomy between historical materialism and cultural representation. For a field such as Latin American history, which has long shunned the latter in the name of the former, this is a crucial and welcome gesture from a senior historian who made his fame in economic history. Bauer goes on to provide a sweeping overview of different phases of material culture and consumption, including different types of “civilizing goods” (wheat,

cattle, and wine brought by the Spanish, versus 19<sup>th</sup> century imports of bourgeois luxuries), mid 20<sup>th</sup>–century “national and development goods” (textiles and cars produced by import substitution policies), and the “global goods” of our more contemporary neo-liberal moment. If reminiscent of modernization theory’s “stages,” Bauer’s schema deftly lays out a research trajectory for future scholars and stakes out a *history* of long *durée* for consumption in Latin America. As Bauer reminds us, eating, drinking, gift-giving, and buying things for loved ones are simultaneously intimate and social, and are the day to day stuff of how life is made and lived. Such acts underlay why people rise-up or acquiesce to power, and how they do so. Historians of Latin America can ill afford to ignore material culture and consumption as central sites for understanding politics and economy.

*Chile y algo más* is a beautiful tribute to an exceptionally fine scholar who has inspired historians both North and South of the equator. It samples Arnold Bauer’s impressive finesse with empirical sources as well as his expansive and ever-evolving conceptual frameworks. The appeal of its individual parts has already been long-lasting, making this collection, like its author, a classic.