

nature of the business and highlighting the features that it shares with, but exhibited in advance of, sports such as horse-racing, baseball or professional football. Among these are the construction of purpose-built spaces (the first in Europe since Roman times, though Roman arenas were not for a paying public), the early emergence of a specialist press and bullfighters as celebrities (astronomical earnings, product endorsement, charity performances, press interest in their lives). He goes on to examine and interpret other aspects relating to the business such as changes in the social and geographical origins of bullfighters, the shifting relative importance of the bull breeders and the types of bulls used, the role of women and their banning from the profession in 1908 and the social and gender composition of audiences. Shubert shows how the simultaneous popularity of and opposition to bullfighting presented politicians with difficulties and these too are examined and interpreted (with special attention to the 'crowd'). The final chapter is less concerned with the commercial reality of the bullfight, and provides an interesting history of the use of bullfights to mark royal occasions and political events. Throughout Shubert draws on sources ranging from local and central government documentation to press reports to travel journals by foreign visitors to Spain, as well as secondary literature on the bullfight. For the most part this study is eminently readable and, stepping outside the debate on the morality/the 'Spanishness'/the mythic nature of bullfighting, provides new and interesting perspectives on a well-worn topic for quite a wide readership.

Josephs aims to provide 'a culturally and artistically oriented view of *toreo*' for English-speaking readers and, implicitly, to defend the *corrida*. A mythic approach to the bullfight is intimated both in the book's main title and in the system of 'heroic' references used throughout. These latter are facilitated to an extent by the name César but Josephs also evokes mythological figures such as Hercules and, especially, Theseus. Even his motive for writing the book is cast in superhuman terms (dreams). This ahistorical, quasi-religious

frame is rather forced. The more successful aspects of the book relate to the 'sub-title'—*The Saga of César Rincón*. The author's genuine admiration for Rincón helps maintain interest through the wealth of technical detail (for Josephs this *arte* is what distinguishes the bullfight from brutality). By the end of the book we know relatively little about César Rincón personally but quite a lot about his bullfighting style. Along the way Josephs provides a comprehensive introduction to techniques and terms, with each explained the first time it is used in the text and indexed for reference purposes. However, it seems unlikely that any but an *aficionado* or a committed reviewer would plough through the detailed description provided on the various *corridos* as Josephs charts Rincón's Spanish seasons. These descriptions are based on the author's tape recordings and are complemented by photographs, also taken by Josephs. In quality and number, these photographs compare favourably to the disappointingly small black and white plates used in Shubert. The intensity of the season and the sheer number of bulls killed emerge forcibly, as do the number of injuries sustained by matadors and the fact that they frequently perform under adverse conditions (e.g. injured or having travelled all night). In Rincón's case he contracted Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion following a goring, but continued his career as long as he was able. Interestingly, various aspects discussed by Shubert appear here in connection with the contemporary scene—the matador and *cuadrilla* as a version of rock musician and 'roadies', the importance of the specialist press, complaints about declining standards among bullfighters (Rincón representing in Josephs' opinion a welcome return to earlier, higher standards) and, in particular, complaints about the quality of the bulls. Overall, where Shubert takes the appeal of bullfighting as a given underpinning its commercial potential, Josephs gives some insight into the attraction of *corrida* for its audience.

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VERONICA CORTÍNEZ, *Memoria original de Bernal Díaz del Castillo*. Huixquilucan, Mexico: Oak Editorial. 2000. 332 pp.

In this book Verónica Cortínez studies the *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (1568) by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, examining what makes this chronicle an odd yet widely read text, and how the *Historia* has been read by contemporary Latin-American writers like Carlos Fuentes. The main focus is thus the literary elements of the chronicle.

In the first chapter, a Poststructural reading of the *Historia* (i.e., Barthes, Hayden White) allows Cortínez to focus on the characters and events configured by the narrative itself. Cortínez sees the chronicle as an obstinate, melancholic act of memory. Proper names are obsessively registered, a preoccupation that often disrupts the story itself, resembling more a requiem than a history. Bernal Díaz views Cortés ambivalently. He is criticized for some actions, but he is also deeply admired by Bernal Díaz (57). Cortínez argues that the characterization of Amerindians in the *Historia* reveals a double consciousness. On the one hand, there is Christian piety and admiration of certain Mexican elements: their cities, their courage in war, and their leader, Moctezuma. On the other hand, there is hate and prejudice. The double consciousness scheme proposed is evidently simplistic, and it bypasses the question of the representation of the Other. At the end of the chapter, however, Cortínez rightly argues that neither vision reveals much about Mexican culture, and that both are part of a paternalistic colonial discourse (87).

The second chapter, 'Una crónica extraña', discusses the text's genre, its intended audience, and its reception. The *Historia* is a historical project that somehow is overturned by constant digressions into minor, everyday events which seem important to Bernal Díaz. Cortínez notes that comparing his prose to López de Gómara's elegant style, Bernal Díaz is aware that his text is different and 'original' (104). It is not a *probanza de méritos y servicios* either, since the *Historia*

and his official *probanza* are quite different (104). The knowledge included in the *Historia* goes beyond the interests of the crown. The text is addressed to a 'curioso lector' (Cortínez, 99). Bernal Díaz serves as a cultural translator for this reader, often using Nahuatl words. The chronicler moves from one topic to another, seeking to maintain the reader's interest (114). The text, none the less, gravitates around the writer himself, 'yo, yo, yo', the chronicler writes (Cortínez, 163). Until the nineteenth century, the text had been read as a history. For contemporary critics and historians its classification is elusive: chronicle, history, *relación*, memoir, epic, confession or novel (95). In the twentieth century its literary elements have been underscored. Additionally, the *Historia* has been inscribed into national discourses.

The third chapter, 'Memoria y lenguaje', discusses the inherent limits of memory, its inconsistencies, errors, doubts and ambiguities. Bernal Díaz is concerned with the fragility of memory itself, drawing attention to the act of remembering and writing (180). He revises his manuscripts numerous times, often writing in between the lines and on the margins. Here Cortínez focuses on Bernal Díaz's style, seeking to better understand the work of memory. Bernal Díaz's prose is a long series of sentences, ill-connected—according to Renaissance rhetoric—plagued with digressions and conscious returns such as 'volvamos a nuestra relación' (Cortínez, 212). The chronicle is, in this view, a chaotic memory, full of anachronisms (213). At the end of the chapter, Cortínez compares the chronicler's prose to the works of Borges and Brodsky, suggesting that Bernal Díaz's style is in this sense quite close to literary discourse.

The last chapter, 'Bernal y Fuentes' examines how the contemporary 'boom' novelist, Carlos Fuentes, reads Bernal Díaz. In *Valiente mundo nuevo*, Fuentes discusses several contemporary novelists and the sixteenth-century chronicler. Fuentes, Cortínez argues, views the *Historia* as an open, dynamic work—in short, a novel (265). For Fuentes, the novel is an open, negotiating space. It is fundamental for his pluralistic cultural

project. Fuentes is, for Cortínez, a 'cronista mayor' seeking to capture the experience of the whole continent (230–31). In the story 'Las dos orillas' from *El naranjo*, Fuentes rewrites the *Historia* from a different perspective, revising his earlier, more favourable view of the chronicle (281). In the *Historia*, Bernal Díaz claims to have planted the first orange trees in the 'New' World. In contrast, Fuentes' story of the first orange trees is told by a character that lived in both worlds, Jerónimo de Aguilar, the lost Spanish translator that Cortés found in Yucatán. Planting these trees is a symbolic act of transculturation (279).

Overall, Cortínez's text seeks to highlight the literariness of the *Historia*, often comparing it with other literary works by Proust, Borges, Fuentes and others. As a consequence, colonial history is pushed to the background, and the main concern is most often literature as understood today, without questioning its colonial history. The question of knowledge and memory in colonial contexts could have been addressed as Walter Mignolo does in *The Darker Side of the Renaissance* (cited in a footnote). These issues, however, are approached here strictly from a Western perspective. The *Historia*, for example, is compared to the texts of Cortés, Gómara and others but not to Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, Hernando Alvarado Tezozomoc or the Florentine Codex. Briefly stated, although Cortínez does point out important discursive elements of the sixteenth-century chronicle, the critical standpoint of *memoria original* is clearly the *ciudad letrada*.

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THEODORE G. VINCENT, *The Legacy of Vicente Guerrero, Mexico's First Black Indian President*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 2002. xiii + 336 pp.

Born in poverty; of mixed African/Mexican race, uneducated and never better than semi-literate; survivor of ten years of guerrilla warfare and a bullet in the lung;

rising to become a national hero and populist symbol, then head of a Masonic order and President of Mexico, only to be driven from office after a few months; and after a couple of years, betrayed and kidnapped by an Italian adventurer, put up against a wall and shot by his own compatriots; and finally, a few years later, a state of the federation named in his honour. Even in the always fascinating annals of Mexican history, there can be few more compelling tales than the life and times of Vicente Guerrero, Mexico's first black Indian president, as Dr Vincent has entitled his study.

This is not, however, a conventional biography. It is a widely researched, often provocative, and at times debatable, study of Mexico during Guerrero's lifetime (1783–1831). The first part of the book is largely devoted to an analysis of the socio-economic background into which he was born, with the emphasis very firmly on the significance of race and the racial prejudice to be found in both late Spanish colonial society and early decades of Mexico as an independent nation. Dr Vincent is clearly anxious, perhaps too much so, to demonstrate the importance of the African element and its influence on the country's political, military and cultural development. He describes in considerable detail those regions of the country where 'the dark hued masses', as he calls them were to be found, skilfully recreating the world in which Guerrero was raised and lived. The future president's early experiences—he was a muleteer—and then his rise through the ranks of the insurgent armies during the long war of independence, occupy several sections. Guerrero, of course, became a national hero because of his success as a guerrilla fighter and his alliance with Agustín de Iturbide, 'that murderous individual' in the author's words (129), in the Plan of Iguala by which the war was in effect concluded and the end of Spanish dominion confirmed. Each of the main stages of the war is explained, with the emphasis again on the part played by the mixed races until by 1820, when Guerrero was the leading insurgent commander, 'he had a nearly entirely dark-skinned army' (114).

In the post-independence years, Guerrero's career prospered, particularly after the formation of the populist party represented by the yorkino masons. His status as a national hero was used by perhaps more astute political activists to promote their cause but he also seems to have sincerely shared the more radical, liberal beliefs of at least some of his allies. His rise to the top of the political tree is carefully analysed and there are good sections on the events which brought it about such as the 1828 presidential election—Guerrero lost—and the subsequent rebellion which brought him to power. Similarly, his few months in office, from April–December 1829, are examined, as are the final years after his expulsion from office until his execution in 1831.

The later sections are devoted to Guerrero's successors in the Afro/Mexican line. One deals with Juan Álvarez, autonomous chieftain of the state of Guerrero for almost thirty years and himself briefly president in the 1850s. Most attention goes to the Riva Palacio family into which Guerrero's daughter, Dolores, married in the same year as her father's execution. Their son, Vicente, became one of Mexico's leading intellectuals and historians and one chapter discusses his contribution to his country. Finally, bringing the story up-to-date, there is a chapter on 'Twentieth-century *Guerreroismo*' which largely concerns Guerrero's legacy and the activities of his descendants.

There is no question that this is an outstanding contribution to Mexican historiography. It raises issues, especially the significance of the African cultural and biological heritage, which few have previously considered. Some might find the interpretation and argument overstated and I have to admit that after years of study of this period, I was not aware that the racial issue was of such importance. As is usual in studies of this period, there are a couple of factual errors—Gómez Farías was vice-president not president in 1833 (179); Miguel Barragan, not Barrigan (140 and index). But these are minor. They do not spoil a provocative book which will be of

interest to all who seek to understand Mexico's history.

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CLAUDIO LOMNITZ, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2001. xxiii + 316 pp.

It is hard to believe that anyone could find much original material in the well-ploughed field of Mexican nationalism. Claudio Lomnitz's book will not revolutionize the field; his central insights are based more on a careful historical re-examination of existing theoretical interpretative schemes than the invention of new ones. Half of the essays in this book were previously published, and the book suffers to some extent from the usual problem in such collections that the essays are sometimes repetitive, do not always build on a single common theme, and are directed at different audiences. Nevertheless, his endeavour to produce 'grounded theory'—the confrontation of theoretical images with historical evidence—produces some important modifications of these images. The result should be of interest not only to specialists in Mexico, but also cultural historians.

The general reader is probably most familiar with Lomnitz for his polemical attack on Mexican historian Enrique Krauze as an example of sloppy historical reductionism and slavishness to the modern fad for democracy. While a lively read, the article (included as a chapter) is not Lomnitz at his best. In general, Lomnitz's treatment of the contemporary period is less thorough and more political than his reading of other historical periods.

In part, this results from his method: using meticulously researched evidence to take apart the content of nationalism to locate its sources in space and time. Strands of nationalism sometimes portrayed as separate or sequential, are shown to overlap; concepts sometimes portrayed as consensual are shown to be