

Civilization. A Study of the Indian and the American Mind, 1953) which show precisely how complex and changing the relationship between both opposing poles was.

Finally, to talk about the Argentine gauchos as “mestizos” and “nomadic” and make them vanish with the closing of the frontier, is to perpetuate a series of errors and legends which are really the product of fiction and badly understood history. Some gauchos were not mestizos and some were not “nomadic.” There were those who owned—as their “pure white” and also some of their Indian neighbors—a piece of land and a herd of cattle and horses. And they did not “disappear” as a distinct animal species would. What did vanish was a way of life in the open plains, or “pampas” of Buenos Aires and Patagonia, of which foreign adventurers and eccentrics like Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham and Lady Florence Dixie could also partake without being a “gaucho.”

Even Professor Sommer’s choice of “foundational books” is opinable. In the Argentine case, very few natives of that country would share her choice of *Amalia* (a greater number of them would surely not know what book she was talking about)—and among these few, a still lesser number would find her speculations about the gaucho’s weapons, swords, and phalocentrism of any great utility for understanding Argentina, or, for that matter, the historical period in which the novel takes place.

Much as it is necessary for literature to inform historical analysis, the reverse is also true. The weaknesses in *Foundational Fictions* stem from the fact that it tries to go a long way on literary interpretations alone.

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Bandoleros, abigeos y montoneros. Criminalidad y violencia en el Perú, siglos xviii-xx. Edited by Carlos Aguirre and Charles Walker. (Lima: Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1990. Pp. 393. Maps. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. No price.)

Ever since Eric Hobsbawm made bandits a legitimate subject of historical inquiry, Latin Americanists have debated their place in the region’s history. Two positions dominate the issue. One holds that banditry reflects class warfare irrespective of whether bandits played “Robin Hood.” The other views it as a virtually isolated act and attributes motivation to personal circumstances. The essays collected here by Charles Walker and Carlos Aguirre build upon the former view.

Of the eleven essays in this volume, three are set in colonial Peru, two study bandits in the early republic, three in the late nineteenth century and two draw attention to recent lawlessness. All the essays test the thesis that bandits generally are a product of rapid change in peasant societies—and touch on its corollary, that bandits are a figment of the popular imagination. Avoiding the excesses of roman-

ticism and the rigidities of class-based definitions of crime, the authors deftly shift the framework of banditry onto the grounds of race and environment.

Refinement of environmentalist arguments on banditry—and rejection of racism—occurs throughout these essays. Carmen Vivanco demonstrates the limited social qualities of late eighteenth-century banditry but also argues that the tax policies of the colonial state encouraged theft as an escape from economic oppression. An essay from the late Alberto Flores-Galindo's *Aristocracia y plebe*, illustrating how eighteenth-century banditry among escaped slaves around Lima fed the social fears of an aristocracy in crisis, follows. In Cusco Ward Stavig found copious evidence of Indian thieves supporting themselves by sacking their relatives, their own and other communities and hacendados without distinction. Sifting through testimony from victims, the state and the accused, Stavig wryly illustrates how the state mediated subtle tensions arising between Indians and non-Indians.

After the independence wars, uncontrollable disorder strengthened banditry across Peru. Charles Walker argues boldly that independence publicity tilted bandits liberalward, against state dominant conservatives. A difficult thesis to sustain, Walker employs it to illuminate the differences between liberals and conservatives and to suggest a rise in popular political consciousness during that poorly understood era. Carlos Aguirre singles out black slaves in the same period to whom banditry and flight were primary survival techniques. His analysis, showing clearly that the popular sectors keenly sensed the potential social damage from banditry, inverts the Hobsbawm thesis.

As the state spread its tentacles, late nineteenth-century bandits moved to the frontiers. Eric Mayer concentrates on Ayacucho, stronghold of the present-day Sendero Luminoso movement, and using SPCC software, strongly argues the primacy of environment in creating banditry. Lewis Taylor extends his earlier research in Cajamarca backward a bit to find that the dislocations accompanying post-war capitalist agriculture and factional disputes among local elites generated a high level of banditry. An essay by Erick Langer is reproduced to emphasize the Andean-wide nature of banditry.

The volume closes with essays based on interviews with bandits. Benjamin Orlove interviewed bandits jailed in Canchis, near Cusco, who explained how the deed is done from start to finish. Ricardo Valderrama and Carmen Escalante interviewed cattle thieves “in the field,” in Cotabambas province near Cusco in 1974, recording conversations filled with a rich mixture of curses, irony, violence and “justice” in Quechua and Spanish. Lastly, Deborah Poole nicely draws together scattered references to race while she incisively analyzes Peruvian criminal jurisprudence in the early twentieth century, suggesting the influence on it of Italian positivism and showing how it shaped indigenista thinking and legal reform in Peru.

A valuable introduction by the editors provides sufficient coherence to overcome the supposed failings of anthologies. Readers cannot help but benefit from the comparisons to be made between several of the studies. A good basic bibliography

on banditry in general supplements the heavy archival notations. This useful volume puts Peruvian banditry in world historical context, unmasking the meaning of criminality across classes and challenges the reader's assumptions on crime and justice in Latin American history.

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Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality: Brazil's Contestado Rebellion, 1912-1916.

By Todd A. Diacon. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991. Tables. Figures. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 199. \$42.50.)

For a brief period of three years some 20,000 agriculturalists located in the Contestado region of Santa Catarina state in southern Brazil rebelled against an onslaught of railroad construction, immigrant homesteaders, and loggers. Their rebellion has traditionally been interpreted as a conflict between peasants and a coalition of national capitalists and imperialists. In 1963, for example, in a time of great rural unrest, Rui Facó used the Contestado rebellion in his *Cangaceiros e fanáticos* to exemplify the long struggle of poor Brazilian backlanders against rich land speculators. While objective forces, including opportunistic modernizers, clearly threatened the material existence of peasants in the Contestado, Diacon's analysis skillfully emphasizes the subjective realm. If the rebellion was simply a class war, Diacon asks, why did it take a millenarian form?

Diacon uses such rhetorical questions to methodically punctuate the text as he gradually peels back the layers of myth characterizing the Contestado rebellion simply as a contest between modernizers and the tradition-bound. Informed by anthropological and sociological theory, Diacon continually returns to his central question. A mixed bag of men, women, and children, rich and poor, the so-called "fanatics," found that capitalist market relations and technological change threatened not only their livelihoods and way of life but also their spiritual convictions. Co-godparenthood (*compadrio*) still had profound significance in the patriarchal system of this remote region. Patrons who were *compádris* were bound by the church and God to act in the best interests of their clients. The arrival of the Brazil Railway Company in 1908 disturbed the system's moral economy by offering an opportunity for some patrons to enrich themselves by selling off their clients' land and by contracting them to work on the railroad. An "internal crisis of values" (p. 141) resulted, and the notion of millenarian salvation resonated among the victims as a means of resolving "both the material and spiritual nature of the transformation . . . gripping the Contestado" (p. 135).

Along with Robert Levine's recent reassessment of the Canudos rebellion (1893-97), Diacon's new book challenges conventional wisdom about Brazilian rural society and the impact of capitalism in the Third World. Informed, but not deter-