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Moraña and Gustafson (eds.), *Rethinking Intellectuals in Latin America* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, and Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2010), pp. 388, €24.00; £23.12, pb.

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section interesting, as there is far less written on Afro-descendant peoples and rights in the Latin American context than on native peoples. In chapter 8, she speaks more broadly about the application of the indigenous model to Afro-Colombian communities, while in chapter 9 she introduces a case study based on fieldwork that she did in several Afro-Colombian communities in the Caribbean. Engle is not afraid in this book to highlight tensions within advocacy organisations, and in chapter 9 she calls attention to internal debates in the community over how best to organise and frame its demands. Engle seems to be suggesting that honest critiques of movement strategies may, in fact, be more useful to marginalised peoples than pushing these tensions under the rug. If scholars present indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples and their struggles in an uncritical or romanticised light, indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples are then burdened with the responsibility of upholding unrealistic understandings of 'culture' and 'sustainability'.

These unrealistic understandings of culture, which become reified and fixed into law, are a concern of Engle's throughout the book. At times, she seems to suggest that indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples might be better off if they focused more explicitly on resource or class demands and less on culture-based demands. While I agree with her on this point, it is important to mention that many indigenous organisations in Latin America were, during the 1970s and 1980s, quite closely allied to left-wing unions and parties. Ultimately, however, indigenous peoples' demands were not adequately addressed within these organisations and many indigenous peoples left them because of rampant ethnic and racial discrimination. It is a minor point, but Engle might have drawn this out, given her emphasis on indigenous movement history.

In conclusion, Engle has written a provocative book about the use of legal strategies and the law in indigenous struggles for greater rights. Like all social phenomena, she argues, the law cannot 'save us', just as no single strategy or idea can. Yet, at the same time, she argues that indigenous peoples throughout the Americas have used the law to make claims and to exercise rights, and they have been successful to lesser and greater degrees. She does not discount the successes that have occurred, but urges us to understand them as having strengths and limitations. Engle's message is somewhat sobering, which may disappoint those who seek easier answers. Yet, finally, Engle's pragmatism and willingness to confront 'the dark side of virtue' (the term is David Kennedy's) left me feeling strangely elated. Certainly social science cannot save us from the limitations that are built into our social and political institutions, but it can help us to confront these limitations squarely and honestly and, in so doing, bring greater clarity and vision to our lives and our work. I believe that Engle does just that in this excellent book.

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Mabel Moraña and Bret Gustafson (eds.), *Rethinking Intellectuals in Latin America* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, and Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2010), pp. 388, €24.00; £23.12, pb.

This edited volume, consisting of 15 chapters organised in four sections, is the outgrowth of a conference held in St Louis, Missouri, in 2008. While most of its contributors, including established scholars as well as PhD students, hail from a

background in literature, other disciplines – history, sociology and anthropology – are marginally represented, too. What comes closest to a common denominator is that many chapters have something to do with Iberian colonialism and its legacies in Latin America in the broadest possible sense.

Even though several chapters are perfectly successful in their own terms, the volume as a whole lacks thematic and analytical coherence. In her introduction Mabel Moraña raises dozens of interesting questions about the role of intellectuals in Latin American societies, but she does not put forward a coherent framework of analysis for the chapters that follow. In fact, many of them deal with intellectuals only tangentially, insofar as every aspect of social, political and cultural life in every spatial and temporal context inevitably involves some sort of intellectual activity by someone. The volume's clarity suffers further from an all-too-frequent use of jargon and convoluted language, which may alienate readers from disciplines other than literature. As a result, the criteria for selecting the contributions as well as the volume's overall goals remain unclear.

The first two sections contain eight chapters, of which five deal with one or two individual writers: the sixteenth-century Peruvian Jesuits, Inca Garcilaso and Blas Valera; a nineteenth-century Afro-Uruguayan writer, Jacinto Ventura de Molina; an early twentieth-century Argentine nationalist, Manuel Gálvez; a French-Chilean poststructuralist, Nelly Richard; and an Argentine novelist, Ricardo Piglia. Among these, Ana del Sarto's chapter on Richard is the most polished, persuasive and relevant to 'rethinking intellectuals'. The other four offer credible interpretations of aspects of their respective protagonists' works, but their focus on the literary production of individual writers who lived in strikingly different contexts makes it difficult for them, even cumulatively, to contribute something substantial to a more general debate about the role of intellectuals in Latin American societies. The two chapters dealing with Brazil, by John D. French (on left-wing politics since 1980) and Jan Hoffman French (about the recognition of land titles for former slave runaway communities), apply a wider lens. Yet, while both are highly readable and convincing pieces in their own right, studying intellectuals does not seem to be their foremost goal. By contrast, the musings by a Cuban writer, Arturo Arango, do have this aim, but, for those uninitiated in the names and debates of Cuba's current cultural and political affairs, his arguments are difficult to follow.

Like José Antonio Mazzotti's opening piece on the two Jesuits, the third section (consisting of chapters by Catherine Walsh, Ixq'anil, Judith M. Maxwell, Ajpub' Pablo García Ixmatá and Walter Mignolo) is primarily concerned with the European/indigenous distinction. Most authors here tend to contrast the two in a rigid dichotomy, usually identifying anything that carries the label 'indigenous' as emancipatory. García Ixmatá, for example, opens with the assertion that 'Maya knowledges are the foundation for the construction of a society that is inclusive and egalitarian' (p. 227). Sitting uncomfortably with this conviction, Mazzotti expresses the hope that his research will render 'ethnic nationalism' (presumably, and hopefully, he does not mean all ethnic nationalisms) 'even more powerful and persuasive' (p. 29). Instead of championing 'ethnic nationalism', Mignolo prefers 'decoloniality', which he defines as a concept whose deployment 'questions Occidentalism, racism, totalitarian and unilateral global decisions, imperialist principles of knowledge' (p. 248).

Unsurprisingly, intellectuals pop up haphazardly on both sides of the binaries set up in these chapters, sometimes as agents of 'Occidentalism', racism and the other things

questioned by 'decoloniality', sometimes as harbingers of 'decoloniality' themselves. Walsh summarily condemns unspecified 'past intellectual projects' as 'white-criollo-mestizo and oligarchic', and opposes them to a present in which 'ancestral movements of Indian and African descendent peoples ... are leading and orienting the most significant intellectual projects' (p. 200). Mazzotti, by contrast, claims that already in the sixteenth century 'mestizo scholars ... argued from an "organic" position based upon their ethnic origin' (presumably the indigenous part of this origin) because the writings of the two (mestizo) Jesuits he examines criticised viceregal abuses of indigenous peoples (p. 43). The central analytical axiom here is not intellectuals but ethnicity, limned less as a construct than as a fixed category with cultural and epistemological corollaries. The authors thus tend to cast ethnicity as the most reliable predictor for the nature of intellectual activities.

The three chapters of the final section are more closely related to the volume's topic. Renato Ortiz mentions Latin America only in passing, but he does offer a thoughtful and stimulating comment on the globally rising use of English in (social) science publications. George Yúdice engagingly and persuasively considers the consequences of cyberspace and new forms of transnational political activism from the angle of Jürgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere. Finally, Abril Trigo detects a hidden agenda behind 'Hispanic Transatlantic Studies', which he diagnoses as 'irrevocably tainted by the ideology of Hispanism and the geopolitical designs of Spanish capitalism' (p. 345).

The ungrateful task of wrapping up the disparate contributions rests with the co-editor, Bret Gustafson. Instead of trying to establish some coherence, he mainly gives his opinion on current Latin American politics. He senses that 'the networks of the intellectual Right', which he apparently identifies with 'scientists' and 'neo-neoliberals', 'are at work trying to dismantle or contain transformations like those represented in the Bolivian constitution' (p. 368). As for the volume's overall goal, Gustafson holds that 'the "rethinking" of intellectuals in Latin America must negotiate multiple scales and forms of intellectual activity'. For those to whom this does not amount to saying anything, he specifies that 'in short, intellectual articulations are political networks' (p. 358). If this statement really sums up this co-editor's belief, it might go some way toward explaining why the reader in the end learns precious little about this volume's professed topic in spite of the merits of several of its contributions.

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Gian Luca Gardini, *The Origins of Mercosur: Democracy and Regionalization in South America* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, in association with the Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2010), pp. x + 267, \$85.00; £42.50, hb.

There is a widespread agreement that the regional level of global politics has become more important. There is also recognition that Latin America has been an important region for thinking about regionalism and that Mercosur represents one of the major regionalist schemes of the recent past. Most literature, however, concentrates on questions of economic integration and on the period of Mercosur's greatest success and development, namely the 1990s. The origins of Mercosur and the nature of the