Following a lucid introductory chapter, Campbell's eight subsequent chapters provide a panorama of contemporary Mexican comics. From the PANista and PRDista forays into the genre described above, the author turns to examine presentist irruptions in Golden Age classics, such as Gabriel Vargas's long-running *La Familia Barrón*, as well as experimental and provocative work produced by a generation of young graphic artists. Campbell's case studies balance formal and socio-historical analysis, offering perceptive narratological readings and a breadth of knowledge about Mexican popular culture and political movements. The interpretations are peppered with insights from Latin American cultural critics, such as Jesús Martín-Barbero, Carlos Monsiváis and Néstor García Canclini, as well as from Marxist, semiotic, and poststructuralist theory.

Campbell's overall project correlates the aesthetic registers of NAFTA-era comics with their respective ideological positions. In terms of critical values, the author tips his hand toward committed auteurism in several chapters dedicated to innovative projects that stretch the boundaries of generic formulae. Campbell's interpretations of community- and trade union-based comics, his discussion of Edgar Clement's noir fantasy, *Operación Bolívar* (2006), and his reading of Sebastián Carrillo's redux of the superhero narrative, *El Bulbo,* vindicate the artist-intellectual as memory keeper of the postcolonial longue durée, one who freely intercalates references to neoliberalism with iconography culled from the Conquest and other cataclysmic historical events. Rather than staking claims to cultural authenticity in a globalizing society, these graphic artists embrace strategies of self-conscious appropriation and the Mexicanization of a U.S.-identified image repertoire.

In the end, Campbell's survey problematizes left-right ideological oppositions, as it exposes underlying affinities between pro- and antiglobalization discourses in comics coming from both sides of the political spectrum. He demonstrates, for example, that in both the PANista and the PRDista comics, the "view from below is so effectively silenced that the global order is never questioned or resisted" (p. 46). Likewise, he finds fissures between nationalist and free-market sectors of the bourgeoisie and among different popular movements. Campbell's mapping of diverse perspectives on globalization nonetheless stresses that concepts of national identity still function at a narrative level to mediate interactions between local cultures and transnational movements of capital, goods, ideas, and people. This book is a valuable addition to the existing bibliography on Mexican comics by scholars such as Anne Rubenstein and Charles Tatum, and it would be well-placed in graduate and undergraduate courses dealing with visual culture and art history, cultural anthropology, literature, and other forms of expressive culture in the Americas.

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Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America. Edited by Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara. Foreword by Irene Silverblatt. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv, 262. Bibliography. Index. $84.95 cloth; $23.95 paper.

This collection features nine essays based on original research that share an interest in colonial notions and realities of race and identity in distinct regions of Latin America. The

essays represent recent trends in colonial social and cultural history, in which identity is central but multivalent. As Cynthia Radding puts it, "[r]ace and ethnicity do not constitute fixed categories or absolute values but develop as 'markers of difference' by diverse historical actors in different times and places" (p. 103). The volume slants toward history from below, yet the authors (eight historians and one anthropologist) understand that history from above is crucial in understanding identity within an imperial setting. The complex processes of self-definition, group definition, and labeling by others unfolded within the framework of the Crown's understanding of conquest, subjugation, and privilege.

The contributors all seek to reevaluate terms such as identity and race. Yet beyond the editors' introduction, the authors devote few pages to theoretical or historiographical debates. Most essays delve directly to the historical actors and their concerns. Beginning with early Peru, Jeremy Mumford brings to life the three-way struggle between kurakas, encomenderos, and the Crown to gain or retain power. Both kurakas and encomenderos sought to claim "lordship," while the Crown maneuvered to establish more direct control over the colonies.

The emergence of people of mixed ancestry challenged imperial dichotomous conceits of Iberian and Indian, slave and free. Core essays explore the stories and strategies of individuals who shaped their own identities. The definition of race that emerged in the nineteenth century, as biological or as blood, should be put aside. In these colonial stories race was rather a matter of culture: *crianza*, *calidad*, language, and community membership often defined an individual more than progenitors' race label (recorded in baptismal records). Thus, Jane Mangan describes the *mestizas en hábito de india* who opted to follow the indigenous lifeways of their maternal line. Examining the actions of free black individuals and collectives in Minas Gerais, Mariana Dantas posits that "race became one more marker of identity they chose at times to ignore and at others to embrace" (p. 136). This understanding fits well with David Tavárez's consideration of mestizos/Indians who came before the Mexican Inquisition. While we might expect these individuals to seek passing or Hispanization, these essays highlight much variety in action and strategy.

Ann Twinam focuses on race mixture, specifically on purchasing whiteness based upon careful reading of *gracias a sacar* cases, in which well-to-do people with some African ancestry sought status as white. Elites, officials, and petitioners agreed upon the alterability of race and whitening, relying mostly on older Spanish concepts of *limpieza* and *naturaleza*. A new stress on *color* emerged, especially from late colonial Venezuela where local elites reacted harshly to Afrovenezolanos' aspirations for whiteness. Twinam pays commendable attention to language and rhetoric. Yet this essay could reveal more if it considered the daily realities of most African-descent people, such as those explored in the essays by Dantas and María Elena Díaz (on Cuba).

As colonial rule waned, two rather contradictory patterns emerged. Sergei Serulnikov considers how, in the wake of the Túpac Amaru uprising, townspeople in Charcas lay aside ethnic differences and asserted a less racialized, creole identity based upon belonging to the *vecindario*. Likewise, the liberal thrust to abolish racial distinction emerged in the

1810s and impacted government reforms in newly independent nations. Karen Caplan explores how this played out in two Mexican states. Some citizens resisted the movement to remove ethnic identities and held on to older colonial notions of Indianness.

The collection's title, "Imperial Subjects," is almost ironic. The Cuban slaves, Pima villagers, and Andean kurakas often did not posit themselves as subjects submissive to the Crown. Rather we see them questioning their presumed status, creating new identities, and generally turning to strategies of what R. Douglas Cope aptly deems "creative adaptation" (p. 261). While scholarly in content, these short essays are readable and could be included in an undergraduate syllabus. The volume is crisply edited; many of the essays refer to each other. I highly recommend the volume for college and graduate courses. The essays invite comparison of different regions, in addition to offering intriguing lessons about the multiple ways that identities evolved in the colonial era.

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POLITICAL ECONOMY & GLOBALIZATION

Politics, Markets, and Mexico's "London Debt," 1823-1887. By Richard J. Salvucci. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. xiii, 328. Tables. Figures. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $85.00 cloth.

Richard J. Salvucci has done historians of Mexico an enormous favor by writing this book. In 300 pages he has managed to distill untold reams of complicated and sometimes virtually incoherent documents into a readable account of the effect of borrowing some 32 million pesos (or 6.4 million pounds sterling) from British banking houses in the 1820s. He offers us, in occasionally fulsome detail, most of the ins and outs of the original loans both in Mexico and in Britain, the various proposed and completed conversions, culminating with the eventual settlement in 1888. Thanks to him, this subject will never be *terra incognita* again, despite the use of a couple of the economic historians' bag of tricks. In the process, he also provides a running analysis of negotiations, the political situation in each country, the status of the bondholders both in terms of market price and exerted pressures, and Mexico's capacity to pay its outstanding obligations. It is a bravura performance. Special thanks must go to Cambridge University Press for using footnotes rather than another system of citation.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first concerns the loans made by the houses of Goldschmidt and Company, and Barclay, Herring, Richardson, both of which would soon go bankrupt. Here we are treated to the spectacle of Treasury Minister José Mariano Michelena wrestling with Francisco Borja Migoni, Mexico's agent in London, who detested each other. The rest of the book describes the impasses between the bondholders who believed that Mexico lacked the willingness to pay and Mexican leaders who believed that they did not have the capacity to pay. In the second chapter, Salvucci takes us through the default of October 1827 and the planned conversion to swap land in