

1991 constitution, approvingly noting that it “recognizes the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country, protects minorities, and acknowledges the existence of Indians in the nation by assigning two senatorial seats to the indigenous communities” (p. 2). This, she says, was a major improvement (though an incomplete one) on the 1886 constitution, which “denied diversity” (Ibid.). It is worth noting that this is a highly contestable characterization of the 1886 constitution. Some might counter that formal legal equality at the individual level does not deny diversity but upholds it. In any case, these are not historical questions, and readers might find Helg’s all-too-readily-dispersed contemporary political judgments distracting.

It would be unfortunate, however, for a reader bothered by these sorts of issues to put the book down, because it is well worth reading. What the persistent reader finds is a detailed analysis of the local history of towns and the countryside in the region, and a sophisticated, multi-causal answer to Helg’s three organizing questions. The most important factors identified include, among others: the continued resilience of local, hierarchically-organized communities dominated by whites; the lack of a well-developed system of communication; rivalries between local cities; “people of color’s preference for improvisation and adaptive strategies of resistance” (p. 10), which Helg sees as partially a function of the relatively high percentage of women among slaves and free persons of African descent in the region; possibilities for social advancement for individuals of African descent through various institutional channels, such as certain colonial militias and, more generally, the very “fuzziness” of racial distinctions in the region; and, perhaps most importantly, that geographical and political circumstances offered more opportunities for “exit” than “voice” (to make use of Albert Hirschmann’s well-known categories) for Caribbean-Colombians of African descent. “[I]n the end,” Helg writes, “the most abiding reason why the Caribbean region avoided large-scale social conflict and remained within New Granada was the continuing existence of vast uncontrolled hinterlands and frontiers as well as an unguarded littoral offering viable alternatives to rebellious and free-spirited individuals” (p. 262).

This fine book will be read with interest not only by historians and other social scientists concerned with the colonial and early-national history of Caribbean Colombia, but by researchers on nationalism and ethnicity more generally in the region.

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#### ETHNOHISTORY/INDIGENOUS POLITICS

*Yanomami: The Fierce Controversy and What We Can Learn From It.* By Robert Borofsky. Berkeley: University of California press, 2005. Pp. xx, 372. Illustrations. Map. References. Index. \$49.95 cloth: \$19.95 paper.

The Yanomami Controversy continues unabated in anthropological circles. In 2005 the American Anthropological Association voted to rescind its own earlier

report finding Napoleon Chagnon's actions during his fieldwork harmful to the Yanomami. This crisis came to a head after the publication of Patrick Tierney's book *Darkness in El Dorado* (2000), a book addressing a controversy Chagnon stirred up when he accused the Salesian missionaries of hiring a Yanomamo "hit man" to kill him after he accused them of keeping him out of the Amazon after Brazilian miners slaughtered a number of Yanomami.

If all this sounds confusing, it is but the tip of the iceberg. The issues involved in the controversy strike at the very roots of anthropology itself and its obligation to those peoples whom it studies. The 1993 murder of sixteen Yanomami by Brazilian miners who were illegally in Yanomami territory in Venezuela helped bring many festering issues to the fore. Chagnon attempted to conduct his own investigation into the slaughter even though the Venezuelan government had banned him from the Amazon. The official investigating commission included the Bishop of Amazonas, now the Cardinal Archbishop of Caracas. This bishop stopped Chagnon from continuing his research. As he told me, he believes that Chagnon was tied up with a shady politician who wanted to join up with Chagnon in controlling the Yanomamo territory and its mineral resources. Moreover, he deems Chagnon's writings helped reinforce the image of the Yanomami as fierce, savage subhumans. In a letter to the *New York Times*, Chagnon leveled a number of charges against the Salesian missionaries, who responded in kind. Venezuelan anthropologists, Yanomami and others joined in the fray. A number of American anthropologists were not far behind. In the interests of full disclosure, I should note that the Salesians asked me to investigate the charges. I did so and organized a session at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and published the transcript of that session. That session revealed the deep chasm within the profession regarding Chagnon's research as well as feelings regarding his responsibility for the depiction of the Yanomamo as "savage" and "fierce." The explosive nature of the occasion is captured in the transcript, and the shaky peace between the Salesians and Chagnon resulting from the meetings did not last very long.

In *Darkness in El Dorado*, Tierney stirred up further ire against Chagnon, raising serious charges about, for example, why an anthropologist would work for the Atomic Energy Commission and the ethics of his research. Unfortunately, Tierney made a serious error in charging Chagnon with complicity in the cause of the measles epidemic that took so many lives among the Yanomami. This erroneous accusation gave Chagnon's supporters an opportunity to brand all his charges as tainted. They are not and Borofsky's book does a good deal to clarify the major issues, scrupulously presenting a clear and reasoned examination of the material, the commissions, the AAA report, debates, letters, and so forth. If an author happens to quote or interview me, I tend to judge her or his accuracy by how faithful the quote or interview is to what I have said. Tierney accurately quoted my work. So does Borofsky. I was a bit surprised when he quoted me accurately regarding Yanomami's positive response to military presence and then chided me for not warning them of the dangers of such presence. He is confusing ethnography with

advocacy here. I, too, share his concern for military presence. However, would he have the under-armed Yanomami wage war on the miners who invade their area? I simply reported, not advocated.

That aside, I find Borofsky generally fair, certainly clear in his presentation, and easy to follow. Students will find this work a clear record of events, events that are still unfolding. To play advocate, I believe the AAA must live up to the ethical standards of its founders, rather than shying away from the hard issues of responsibility to those among whom we live and study. The recent rescinding of the report finding fault with Chagnon's work is an act of cowardice that, tragically, repeats earlier actions, such as the condemnation of Franz Boas when he reported the spying of fellow anthropologists during World War I. We can also add aid in recruitment for the CIA and other actions that appear patently reprehensible from our current vantage point, actions scholars such as Charles Frantz pointed out in the *Anthropology Newsletter* while he was the AAA's Executive Secretary.

Borofsky has done the profession a great service. His work deserves to become a standard reference on the controversy and model for the recording of future disputes.

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*The Devil's Book of Culture: History, Mushrooms, and Caves in Southern Mexico.*  
By Benjamin Feinberg. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. Pp. xiv, 272.  
Illustrations. Map. Table. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$55.00 cloth; \$23.95 paper.

Feinberg offers a new paradigm for Oaxacan ethnography with his well written work on Huautla de Jiménez and surrounding communities of the Sierra Mazateca. This region, home to indigenous Mazatecs, is well-known for its hallucinogenic mushrooms and its vast network of subterranean caves that attracts spelunkers from all corners of the world. To be certain, this is neither a book about psychedelic drug use (ceremonial, countercultural, or otherwise), nor is it a treatise on caving culture and locals' reactions to it. Rather, Feinberg examines the ways in which Mazatec identity is continuously produced and refashioned through complex discourses of indigenous history, mushroom use, and a literal and symbolic underworld represented by the caves.

In contrast with traditional anthropological notions of indigenous culture, Feinberg's aim "is not to describe identity in terms of this reputed struggle between local and global *identities*, but instead in terms of the relationship between different *styles* of representing identity, localness, and globalness; inside and outside, us and them" (p. 6). He develops a metacultural analysis of Mazatec identity and culture based on Volosinov's distinction between linear and pictorial styles of reported speech. The linear style of reporting is the most familiar way of talking about culture, compartmentalizing it into high versus low, absent or present. It characterizes the official language about the pre-