Harry E. Vanden and Marc Becker (eds.), *José Carlos Mariátegui: An Anthology* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011), pp. 480, $29.95, pb.

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create working understandings when the common goal is to cure the sick. In other words, depending on the context, miscommunication operates as both a centrifugal and a centripetal force, pushing apart or bringing together the parties involved. Also important is his decoding of each party's (mis)understandings at the service of distinct, even opposing, agendas: the doctor's imposition of medical protocols, the Yanomami either affirming their shamanic knowledge or advancing their *napë prou* ('become like whites') project. Equally fine is his description of the internal differences of the Yanomami along the Ocamo River and the continuum of experience with whites.

Also important is Kelly's description of the state health apparatus under Chávez, its achievements and its contradictions. We get the impression that, for all the popular (populist?) ambitions and social conquests of Chavismo, with regard to indigenous affairs and the Yanomami in particular the situation is one of 'plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose', give or take a few concessions. Medical assistance is precarious, indigenous territories are not demarcated, and respect for the Indians' cultural diversity is anathema to Chavista nationalist ideology.

Some aspects of the book are less appealing, however. One is the author's over-reliance on other ethnographers' work, as though descriptions and analyses of a Yanomami subgroup were applicable to all, which is not the case. Perhaps as a corollary, in dealing with mutual perceptions between doctors and Yanomami nurses and patients, Kelly's description of the former's point of view is not accompanied by an equivalent attention to the latter's position. The author's tenacious allegiance to one single theoretical model, perspectivism, is in part responsible for his insistence that the Yanomami take doctors and whites in general as affines, although his arguments are scarcely convincing. Such theoretical commitment has the effect of turning the Yanomami into hostages of alien theories: they seem to suffocate within the narrow walls of perspectivism. Between a Yanomami rendering and a generic academic schema, Kelly seems to prefer the latter. A contrasting example is the thoroughly shared project of Yanomami Davi Kopenawa and anthropologist Bruce Albert which resulted in *La chute du ciel: paroles d'un chaman yanomami* (Plon, 2010). Between narrator and writer there is no undue interference of extraneous theoretical models.

Vital statistics such as community size, gender balance (or lack of it) and age distribution are sadly absent. Also unclear is the profile of the 'civilised' Yanomami regarding status, gender, training, fluency in Spanish, family commitments and so forth. As a consequence, the Ocamo Yanomami appear to the reader to be rather faceless. One final note on the book's subtitle, *A Symmetrical Ethnography*: apart from the perspectivist jargon that pervades the text, one wonders what is symmetrical about it, and strictly speaking, the book is not actually an ethnography but in fact a long report on the Venezuelan health system in Yanomami territory. The book's intrinsic value, however, is sufficient reason to welcome it.

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Harry E. Vanden and Marc Becker (eds.), *José Carlos Mariátegui: An Anthology* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011), pp. 480, $29.95, pb.

Harry E. Vanden and Marc Becker are well known for their important contributions to the study of Latin American Marxism, Latin American revolutionary politics

and José Carlos Mariátegui's thought. Their new joint contribution is a volume that makes available to English readers a considerable number of Mariátegui's shorter texts.

Until now, English audiences could only read Mariátegui's famous *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, translated by Marjory Urquidi with an introduction by Jorge Basadre (University of Texas Press, 1971), some texts included in the few anthologies of Latin American Marxist thought published in English (see Luis Aguilar, *Marxism in Latin America* (Knopf, 1968), and Michael Pearlman's translation of Michael Lowy, *Marxism in Latin America From 1909 to the Present: An Anthology* (Humanity Books, 1992)), and a few scattered pieces translated and disseminated by small Marxist organisations. Several of these have been made accessible to broader audiences through the internet since the second half of the 1990s. In 1996, Michael Pearlman edited and translated an important collection of essays beyond the *Seven Essays*, entitled *The Heroic and Creative Meaning of Socialism: Selected Essays of José Carlos Mariátegui* (Humanities Press, 1996). Vanden and Becker's current volume goes further. Organized thematically, it offers extracts from the *Seven Essays*, from already translated and published texts and from some new translated pieces, mostly very short ones; the latter are mainly from among Mariátegui's newspaper articles, but also include theses submitted to political meetings and some texts based on his conferences. Thanks to Mariátegui's clear and direct style these short pieces and extracts written in the 1920s might be very suitable for teaching in a variety of contexts. Mariátegui, an undoubtedly gifted journalist, political author and literary critic, offers readers engaging and rich perspectives – mainly but not exclusively Latin American and Marxist ones – on some of the main issues that concerned European and Latin American progressive public opinion at the time. These translations are a welcome and useful aid for all engaged in teaching Latin American history and literature, the history of socialist ideas, *indigenismo*, world history, third world studies and so on.

The editors' introduction argues quite convincingly that unlike many Marxist twentieth-century authors, Mariátegui's thought retains its relevance for current generations of readers. Mariátegui 'broke from a rigid, orthodox interpretation of Marxism to develop a creative Marxist analysis that was oriented toward the specific historical reality of Peru and Latin America in the 1920s'. He was also no doubt 'one of the first to develop revolutionary socialist thought from within the Latin American reality'. Nearly all the scholars and Latin American intellectuals interested in his legacy would agree. However, the claim that Mariátegui 'developed what subsequently became known as National Marxism, an approach that addressed the realities of a local situation within the context of Marxist theory', is more debatable. This claim was put forward by Vanden three decades ago. Even if one could accept that some of the basic ideas and approach of various actors who decades later may be regarded as 'national Marxists' were already developed by Mariátegui, it is doubtful whether Mariátegui himself would accept the epithet. From Mariátegui's perspective, to develop a 'national' – that is, locally specific – analysis and to 'recreate' Marxism from a particular reality was the only legitimate way to be a true Marxist, one that does not mechanically replicate or apply formulas developed in a different historical context.

One of the most appealing ideas suggested by the authors in their introduction is the connection between Mariátegui's understanding that 'the indigenous peoples' culture, identity, and exploitation at the hands of the whites and mestizos could enable conscious organizers to incorporate them into the revolutionary movement' and the

actions of Guatemalan revolutionaries during the 1970s and 1980s. This idea will surely invite further inquiries and debates among scholars of Guatemalan society and politics.

The engaging introduction has two main problems. In its enthusiasm to convince readers why Mariátegui is such an interesting and important author, it fails to offer critical reflections on the limitations of Mariátegui's work. In certain respects this continues the idealised versions of Mariátegui propagated in the 1980s and early 1990s. The second problem has to do with certain inaccuracies in the presentation of Mariátegui's biography and social context. Perhaps the most consequential one is the claim that 'he acquired only an eighth-grade education'. Mariátegui had spent less than two years at school when he had to break off his formal studies following an injury at the age of eight; his consequent illness and physical limitations prevented him from ever attending school again, and he acquired his wide education mostly as an autodidact. His autonomous and peculiar perspective as a social critic is very much related to his experience as a social outsider, to his position at the margins of the cultural and political centres of Lima society, the brilliant son of a poor mestiza migrant carrying an aristocratic surname.

As with every anthology, one could ask why certain texts were included and others that one considers important or particularly interesting were not. The editors, so it seems, selected most of the texts relevant to their conceptual and thematic division of Mariátegui's thought. This is not the only possible approach, but certainly a wise one. Hence, the organisation of the texts would certainly be of help to students and scholars looking for Mariátegui's thought on certain topics. The price to be paid is the disruption of chronology, making it difficult to understand the evolving contexts and the political and intellectual process by which Mariátegui's ideas took shape. A short paragraph introducing each section is not enough to offer contextualisation of the texts selected on each theme. A related problem is that while the editors indicate after every text the source used for their translation, they do not refer readers to the original date of publication. Since some of the texts were translated from publications from the second half of the twentieth century, readers unfamiliar with Mariátegui's biography will not find this helpful when seeking to put such texts in some sort of historical sequence or locate them clearly in different phases of his intellectual work. These problems notwithstanding, the book remains an important and welcome contribution.

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Evan L. Balkan, *The Wrath of God: Lope de Aguirre, Revolutionary of the Americas* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2011), pp. ix + 225, $39.95, hb.

Lope de Aguirre has been almost universally reviled as one of the most evil figures of the sixteenth century, familiar from his portrayal, albeit fictional, in Werner Herzog's 1972 film *Aguirre, Wrath of God*. Yet suppose that this story, largely derived from the accounts of chroniclers with an axe to grind, was wholly inaccurate. Suppose that this Basque adventurer should really be viewed as an early rebel against the Spanish crown, who might more deservedly have received the encomiums granted to later liberators such as Simón Bolívar. This is the delightful revisionist interpretation that