

While still valuable, the conclusions of *Beyond Civil Society* are somewhat constrained by the fact that its analysis is rooted within a regional and temporal context marked by a political turn to the left. Seven of the fifteen case studies focus on Brazil, mostly under the leadership of the left-wing Workers' Party. Other chapters deal with similar contexts under "Pink Tide" governments in Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Argentina. What are the consequences for movements and civic participation as the region has increasingly turned to more right-wing leadership? Thayer and Rubin mention in the conclusion that what they call "an emerging postneoliberal Right" (333) has used similar strategies and discourses around civil society participation. Indeed, the book's chapter on Black social movements in Colombia shows how the Civil Society Agenda was also meaningful under a right-wing government during the same era. More explicit discussion of how to extend the book's analysis to non-Pink Tide contexts would have served to highlight its contributions as more than just documenting a moment that may well have passed. Nonetheless, the individual case studies of *Beyond Civil Society* include rich detail that will be of interest to activists and scholars of social movements alike, and the book's discussion of the Civil Society Agenda and its consequences is an important contribution to scholarship on Latin America, democracy, and collective action.

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**PETER WADE: *Degrees of Mixture, Degrees of Freedom: Genomics, Multiculturalism, and Race in Latin America*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017.**

"Race is a social construct, not a biological reality." For almost a century, humanists, social scientists, and biological scientists have attempted to counteract long-standing stereotypes and social constructs that for centuries had divided human societies into distinct races. Peter Wade's *Degrees of Mixture, Degrees of Freedom* tackles this complex process in Latin America. He argues that, although Latin American nations have tried to move past the racialized frameworks of *mestizaje-mestiçagem* that have defined their citizens, the cultural legacies of those modes of thinking continue to influence the ways that Latin American scientists approach genomic research into human diversity.

Wade's research probes the nexus of cutting-edge scientific research, historical memory, and socio-cultural scholarship. His goal is to understand how the assemblages that have supported racialized thinking continue to mediate the scientific study of human diversity in Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil. Wade uses

the concept of assemblages to encapsulate the networks of people, ideas, institutions, and structures bound together by “contingent and changeable relations” (p. 46–48). By viewing racial thinking and *mestizaje* as a historically constituted and ever-shifting assemblage, Wade probes the elasticity and persistence of older notions of difference in the face of new genomic science.

The introduction and first two chapters serve to lay out the underlying theoretical frameworks and historical context for the study. In the introduction, Wade argues that in Latin America, and elsewhere, mixture represents a “biopolitical process” that cannot be divorced from relations of power and culturally defined hierarchies. Importantly, Wade highlights the central paradox of *mestizaje* in Latin America: even as *mestizaje* undoes purity, it reproduces notions of purity. The first chapter delves most deeply into the cultural logics that mediate the relationship between purity and mixture in Latin America, although this tension reappears throughout the work. Even as scientists attempt to explore human diversity in ways that may undercut racial hierarchies, their view of national populations cannot be completely divorced from the between pure and mixed groups.

The second chapter traces how Latin American genomic scientists have approached the study of *mestizaje*. Wade highlights several common features of the assemblages that structured scientific thinking, and discusses salient national differences between scholars in Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil. Most significantly, this chapter notes that despite a desire to examine *mestizaje* as an exclusively biological process, genomic research in each nation consistently maps biological purity onto the founding populations of Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans. Additionally, most genomic research adopts socio-cultural attributes as proxies for the identification of discrete biological populations. For example, genomic scientists view indigenous cultural purity as representative of biological purity. When native peoples appear to be least influenced by European, or African, culture, they come to represent a pure biological type.

Chapters three through seven examine the specific national manifestations of these processes. Chapter three opens this section by examining the relationship between politics, multiculturalism, and genomic science. Wade offers a concise but comprehensive comparison of how political efforts to reduce racial inequity and historical racism have defined the landscape of scientific research into biological mixture. The next three chapters shift focus to the practitioners of genomic research in each nation.

Chapter four examines Colombia and notes the persistent significance of regions and regional identities in the definition of human difference in the nation. Additionally, Colombian genomic research showed little interest in uncovering a genetic understanding of the ‘*mestizo*’ instead favoring a search for indigenous or African “isolates.” Significantly, Wade notes that researchers’ preference for

isolates and regional differences predisposed them to ignore broader continuities in the face of minor differences.

Chapter five turns to Brazil and examines scientists' attempts to use genomic study to help alleviate historical inequalities. Wade highlights that results of genomic study have proven far more contentious in education than in healthcare. In education, genetic science has challenged an affirmative action quota system based on color. The widespread presence of African genetic markers, even in students who do not read as having African ancestry, has challenged the premise of the quota system. As healthcare is not granted on the basis of a contentious quota system, the application of genomic science to improve treatment of genetic disorders has faced less criticism.

Chapter six highlights the centrality of the "mestizo" type to Mexican genomic thinking. Although Mexican research tended to seek out indigenous isolates, few studies attempted to identify African isolates, or African contributions to the national genome. As in Colombia, Wade notes that scientific interpretations tended to harmonize genetic understandings with social ones. For example, some studies excluded indigenous samples as "genomic noise" when they appeared to be too similar to mestizo samples. In other words, when genomic findings drifted too far from historically constituted notions of Mexican mestizaje, the data or interpretations tended to be massaged back into conformity. Overall, Mexican genomic research emphasized the differentiation between indigenous isolates from a shared mestizo genome.

Chapter seven draws together the three nationally focused chapters to highlight continuities and differences. Genomic science frequently focused on aspects of mestizaje that were central to national identity. Wade notes that although scientists routinely denied the existence of biological races, these notions of race still frequently permeated the data and conclusions.

The last two chapters turn to the role of genomic science in national discourses. Chapter eight focuses on way that gendered histories of mestizaje have been influenced by genomic science. Here Wade shows that frequent use of Y chromosome DNA and mitochondrial DNA have tended to perpetuate a belief in gendered patterns of mestizaje (Spanish/Portuguese fathers and African/indigenous mothers), often to the exclusion of other parental combinations. Chapter nine examines how genomic research has shaped the way everyday people think about mestizaje and race. Using ethnographic methods, Wade shows the resilience of older assemblages of mestizaje. Even when they are well versed in modern genomic advances, many Latin Americans attempt to reconcile historically constituted socio-cultural understandings of mixture with new genomic data.

Overall, *Degrees of Mixture, Degrees of Freedom* illustrates the profound power inscribed in ideologies of racial difference. Although genomic science offers

a powerful tool for deconstructing discriminatory and hierarchical frameworks of difference, the cultural assemblages that support such notions have proven resilient. Scholars of modern Latin America, race, and the history of science will find much of use in this well written and conceptually ambitious study.

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DAVID KAZANJIAN: *The Brink of Freedom: Improvising Life in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016.

Este es un libro generoso, desafiante, difícil de clasificar en compartimentos disciplinarios, y por lo tanto, reseñarlo con justicia en todas sus ramificaciones constituye un reto. Kazanjian analiza el género epistolario (en un conjunto de cartas) de los colonos y líderes independentistas afro-norteamericanos de Liberia así como de los rebeldes mayas de la Guerra de Castas en Yucatán de mediados de siglo XIX. En su análisis, Kazanjian disecciona estos textos como si fueran tratados filosóficos en pos de hacer una historia de las prácticas de la libertad desarrolladas por estos sujetos. Este trabajo constituye una suerte de historia de las ideas desde abajo, que desestabiliza el triunfalista liberalismo blanco (racionalmente hablando) y capitalista de la época. De esta forma, este libro traza una propuesta teórica y metodológica a partir de prácticas de lectura y escritura que están entre los estudios culturales, la filosofía, y la historia.

El comienzo del libro apunta a 1847, cuando los colonos afro-norteamericanos (tal vez la mitad de ellos ex esclavos) planearon declarar la independencia de Liberia. Ellos habían llegado voluntariamente a través de la *American Colonization Society* desde los Estados Unidos, en donde no eran considerados ciudadanos por la mayoría blanca de ese país. Ese mismo año marcó el inicio de la Guerra de Castas, liderada por los indígenas mayas contra el estado yucateco y el estado federal mexicano. En ambas ocasiones, los protagonistas de estas historias improvisaron (y pusieron por escrito) nuevas concepciones de libertad e igualdad, las cuales se basaban en sus experiencias cotidianas y estaban en los bordes (de ahí el *brink* del título del libro) de la tradición hegeliana de emancipación que llevó a las revoluciones del 1848 europeo.

Como advierte el autor, esta no es una historia comparativa, sino que un análisis de la transversalidad a lo largo del mundo atlántico de situaciones cotidianas y de diferentes idiomas, de luchas simultáneas en Liberia y Yucatán, que llevaron a la construcción de formas heterodoxas de libertad. El objetivo aquí es considerar las cartas de los protagonistas como tratados filosóficos que

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