

ALEJANDRA BRONFMAN: *Measures of Equality: Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1902-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

The national ideology that developed during the Cuban independence movement in the 19th century was improbable. By 1898, Cuban leaders declared their nation a raceless polity, eschewing both the U.S. binary system and the Haitian model of a black republic. Alejandra Bronfman's cogently argued work demonstrates that translating these ideas into governance of an actual republic during the early 20th century proved a different matter. Bronfman shows how white Cuban scholars and writers, in dialogue with international intellectual currents, increasingly reified racial categories in their quest to determine who would or would not be fit for Cuban citizenship. In response, black intellectuals and political leaders advocated their own participation based on the suitability of their race, and later fought for rights in racially-based political movements. By the time Fulgencio Batista's regime outlawed racial discrimination in its liberal constitution of 1940, the ideal of race transcendence had lost its veneer of possibility, and the politics of citizenship had become overtly racial.

Bronfman shows how social science discourses of race and black leaders' attempts to claim political rights mutually shaped one another. She begins by tracing the convergence of cultural and biological ideas of race through controversies over African religious rites and hysteria over black male witchcraft in the first decade of the 20th century. As Cuban anthropologists and "anthropometrists" turned their attention to ritual objects and human brains, both culture and biology became crucial sites of investigation into the political suitability of Cubans of African descent. Under the influence of Italian criminologist Césaire Lombroso, Cuban social scientists imputed criminality to African ancestry – both biological and cultural – as hysteria mounted over the supposed ritual slayings of white girls. Bronfman shows that black intellectuals largely worked within, not outside, these emerging understandings of race, as they argued for their suitability as citizens. Rejecting accusations of barbarism, these leaders focused instead on blacks' historical contributions to Cuban society and their good moral character. In one case, black intellectual Fernando Guerra even advanced a scientific argument that Lucumí, a religion of African origin, was uniquely suited to the demands of Cuban citizenship because it was compatible with both Catholicism and democracy (94-5).

Such claims contributed to the uneven construction of black political identities. As social scientists increasingly rejected Lamarckian views of racial mutability and reform in favor of ideologies of racial purity, black intellectuals such as Gustavo Urrutia responded with their own rejection of racial mixing.

According to Urrutia, while in the United States 'Jim Crow' sought to eliminate the black race through oppression, *mestizaje* in Latin America would accomplish the same goal through biological assimilation (148-9). Meanwhile, the state became more receptive to black political movements, since supporting them enabled Gerardo Machado to pursue a more populist agenda without overtly antagonizing his capitalist supporters. Thus, by the eve of the revolution of 1933, racial categories created by anthropologists, criminologists and eugenicists had come to structure the political development of the island, and would continue to do so under Fulgencio Batista.

By simultaneously paying attention to the changing intellectual production of ideas about race and the development of racial politics, Bronfman avoids the common pitfall of historical anachronism in discussions of race. Rather than taking race for granted as an analytical category for the past, Bronfman traces the ways in which the protagonists of her narrative, many of them academics themselves, argued over the meaning of this category. Would Lamarckian ideas that environment could influence race persist, or would Mendelian ideas of biological racial purity dominate? As black political movements and the attempts to control them emerged and shifted, Bronfman aptly shows how the very idea of blackness changed from one period to another, and even varied greatly amongst different thinkers who were active at the same time.

Furthermore, *Measures of Equality* deserves praise for its apt management of the transatlantic context in which Cuban social science emerged. Bronfman depicts Cuban social scientists as active participants in international debates about the relationship between race, biology, criminality, environment and political participation. Viewing their island as a particularly useful laboratory for human sciences due to its extensive racial diversity, these scholars eventually became intellectual mediators between U.S. and European-based trends in social science and intellectuals conceptualizing race throughout Latin America.

Bronfman does not attempt to understand how these intellectuals' ideas were received and understood by the popular classes. For example, while she describes how U.S. black intellectuals influenced Cuban black intellectuals, she does not ask how the on-the-ground effects of U.S. military occupation affected poor black and white Cubans' ideas of race. It seems, however, that such an undertaking would actually be the subject for a different book.

Since it takes the very idea of race as a variable rather than as a given, *Measures of Equality* would make a useful teaching tool for a graduate or upper-level undergraduate course on race in Latin America or a cross-regional course on race. Indeed, students would get the most out of this book if it were placed in a comparative context. Bronfman's striking findings and sound argument have the potential to contribute to larger debates on the relationship between race, nation,

and imperialism in modern Latin America; one need only think of the development of the “cosmic race” ideology in Revolutionary Mexico during the same period as a dramatic counterpoint. Yet, Bronfman stops short of addressing these transcendent themes herself; although she mentions developments elsewhere in Latin America, she does not integrate them into a larger argument. As Latin Americanists follow her lead in utilizing increasingly nuanced frameworks for the study of race, one hopes that such region-wide arguments and understandings will become increasingly attainable.

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ASCENSIÓN MARTÍNEZ RIAZA: *¡Por la República! La apuesta política y cultural del peruano César Falcón en España, 1919-1939*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2004.

Por cortesía de la autocracia de Augusto B. Leguía, hacia 1920, tres jóvenes periodistas peruanos vagaban por Europa. Nacidos en la última década del XIX representaban a esa emergente mesocracia que, pluma en mano, impugnaba desde la prensa limeña a la “república aristocrática” criolla. Pagaron su audacia con un destierro dorado que incluía un estipendio gubernamental. José Carlos Mariátegui era uno de ellos: en el viejo mundo habría de descubrirse a sí mismo y a su país –diría más tarde– antes de volver para convertirse en uno de sus más célebres intelectuales. Opuesto sería el destino de su amigo Félix del Valle. En 1927 –terminado ya el subsidio oficial– relataría a Mariátegui sus peripecias en el invierno madrileño: “vivo peor que el más abandonado de los hombres; en un cuarto en que no me es posible siquiera escribir porque las manos se me entumescen de frío; almorzando cuando puedo, un solo plato”. César Falcón, por su parte, era ya por ese entonces corresponsal del prestigioso periódico español *El Sol*, nada menos que en la capital británica, inicio de una carrera profesional que le reportaría prestigio y reconocimiento.

De Mariátegui, por cierto, hasta el último detalle biográfico ha sido explorado más de ocho décadas después. Y si la trayectoria de Del Valle habría de perderse en la oscuridad, la de Falcón dejaría un sólido rastro escrito, apenas arañado, sin embargo, hasta ahora en que la historiadora española Ascensión Martínez Riaza publica este libro sugerente y refrescante, que abre trocha en un tema que tiene especial relevancia ahora que el Perú, por primera vez en su historia, cuenta con una significativa comunidad intelectual emigrante. Las estrategias de adaptación de los intelectuales a medios ajenos es el tema central de este trabajo.