

biguous and contradictory, while Reyes is urbane, serene, and with a tender regard for this large element of Mexican society. Mariátegui, an impassioned journalist and reformer, vigorously attacked the traditional institutions and conventional beliefs of Peru and called for a radical adaptation of all sectors of the society of his people to western science and thought. "I believe that there is no salvation for Indo-America without European and Western knowledge and thought," he declared, and his credo is available in English in the well-translated *Seven Interpretive Essays of Peruvian Reality* (Austin, 1971). The life and ideas of Mariátegui mark a decisive step in the disintegration of age-long institutions and traditions of Peru, and Professor Sacoto devotes his longest and wisest section to this figure. The summaries concluding each part, the summing up of the whole study in the conclusion, and the bibliography of the works cited admirably round out a brief but informative study.

Unidad y testimonio de las grandes letras hispanoamericanas suggests a neo-scholastic philosophic approach to the study of Spanish American literature. The author clearly explains the purpose and scope of his work in a *prólogo*, stating that it is "an interpretation of the *Poética* of Aristotle leading to a definition of literature." After a lengthy and erudite discussion of his general theory, he applies it to the *Comentario reales* of El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega; the little known *Venida del Mesías en Gloria y Majestad* of an expelled Chilean Jesuit, Manuel Lacunza; Bolívar's *Mi Delirio sobre el Chimbarazo*; Sarmiento's *Facundo*; and finally the work of Rubén Darío.

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The Black-man of Zinacantan: A Central American Legend. By SARAH C. BLAFFER. Austin and London, 1972. University of Texas Press. Maps. Tables. Illustrations. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 194. Cloth. \$7.50.

Change and Uncertainty in a Peasant Economy: The Maya Corn Farmers of Zinacantan. By FRANK CANCIAN. Stanford, California, 1972. Stanford University Press. Maps. Tables. Illustrations. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. vii, 208. Cloth. \$7.95.

Our knowledge of the Tzotzil-speaking community of Zinacantan is further expanded by these two welcome additions to Maya scholarship. Both works stem from the Harvard Chiapas Project initiated in

1952 and designed to provide a comprehensive view of a Maya township and to document the response of its 9,000 members to change engendered by an increasingly evident twentieth century. The great breadth of the project is underscored by the difference in approach and subject matter of these two books. Cancian's analysis of corn farming, based upon two and one half years of fieldwork, develops his theory of economic risk-taking, while Blaffer presents a structural analysis of a fairly widespread Mayan myth, drawing upon the analytical techniques of Lévi-Strauss and others. An expansion of an undergraduate thesis, Blaffer's book relies not upon fieldwork but on the fieldnotes of other researchers.

The basis of economic life in Zinacantan is the *milpa* system, and the bulk of Cancian's book details precisely the farming techniques, organization of labor, labor input, relations with land owners, crop yields, locations of fields, transportation problems, marketing, etc., all of which factors figure prominently in the *milpero's* world. The presentation is remarkably thorough and honest; inadequate or perplexing data are freely admitted and discussed. If there is a flaw it is an understandable omission of technical data on soils and micro-environmental variation which might affect crop yields.

Concentrating upon two of the fifteen hamlets which comprise Zinacantan, the areas used for agriculture are segregated into nine zones based on the time it takes to walk from the place of residence to the fields. Focusing upon change between 1956 and 1966, it is shown that Zinacantecos have made considerable shifts in the location of their fields and in their methods of crop transportation and marketing. In this ten year period people have taken to farming in zones more distant from their place of residence. The construction of several roads by the government has facilitated access to distant zones and has stimulated a shift from mule transport to reliance upon motor vehicles. Finally, the construction of government receiving centers paying standardized prices for corn has provided an alternative buyer for the farmers' goods thus reducing dependence upon the market at San Cristóbal Las Casas.

These shifts are documented, but the decision to change as faced by each individual is wrought with uncertainty, e.g. crops may fail in new, unknown areas. Arguing that the uncertainty about the outcome of a new activity negates the economic man model, Cancian suggests an alternative thesis: that social stratification may play a determining role in economic decision making. Establishing four categories of rank based on the amount of corn seeded in 1966, a curvilinear relation of risk-taking and rank was observed in which the high-middle group (middle class) tended to resist changes in economic activities. Eco-

nomic rank, then, is an "important predictor of innovative behavior" (p. 153). While I am in agreement with much of his argument, it is difficult to accept a definition of social rank based on the amount of corn seeded in 1966.

Sarah Blaffer examines a particular Maya spook, the sinister Black-man, a small, winged, black-skinned, curly haired demon who steals chickens and assaults women with his awesome six-foot-long penis. The Black-man trickster, impersonated by humans during two ritual occasions in Zinacantan, appears in several types of stories, but most frequently he either carries off and murders a woman, or he accosts one or two men and a fight ensues. Adopting the familiar approach utilizing binary oppositions, Black-man is regarded as occupying an anomalous position somewhere between such opposing poles as man-animal, culture-nature, rare-cooked, dead-alive. Not only is the spook transitional between opposing categories, but his victims are likewise seen to be in an anomalous transitional condition, either asleep, drunk, insane, or having behaved contrary to proper prescriptions. By attacking those who are temporarily or permanently in an ambiguous state Black-man serves to reinforce cultural norms, particularly those relating to sexual roles and ideal behavior.

In chapter 3 the derivation of the Black-man myth is briefly probed, with a plausible case being made for a connection with the ancient bat symbol. Just as this expostulation seems plausible, so does the entire thrust of Blaffer's argument—plausible but not entirely convincing.

Both of these books are essential reading for all Mayanists, and will be of interest to anyone concerned with Latin American Indians. Cancian's work will have a greater impact because of the theoretical position he develops and the presentation of so much first hand data.

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The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans. By MATT S. MEIER AND FELICIANO RIVERA. New York, 1972. Hill and Wang. Maps. Index. Pp. xviii, 302. Cloth. \$8.95.

Mexican Americans: Sons of the Southwest. By RUTH S. LAMB. Claremont, California, 1970. Ocelot Press. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 198. Paper.

Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle Toward Liberation. By RODOLFO ACUÑA. San Francisco, California, 1972. Canfield Press. Tables. Index. Pp. vi, 282. Paper.