

Associate Editor's Report

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In this issue, assembled just after the celebration of the XXVII International Congress in Montréal, Canada, and the last one for both outgoing president Charles R. Hale, and for myself as Associate Editor of the *Forum*, we decided to feature, once again, two issues of major import for LASA's ongoing internal debate. The articles forming part of the *Debates* section could very well be considered units of the theme of the Congress, "After the Washington Consensus: Collaborative Scholarship for a new América." As the LASA web page stated: "While the phrase 'Washington Consensus' was coined in reference to the neoliberal economic reforms championed by northern development experts, it came to represent, more broadly, a U.S.-centric perspective and style of governance. In the past decade these policies and their associated world view have been subject to deepening dissent and outright refusal: in the ballot box and in the collective re-visioning of economic and political futures for the region." In this spirit, we asked three people to address the issue from various angles and perspectives. The *On the Profession* section deals, meanwhile, with the ongoing Latin Americanization of LASA, an issue that remains contentious as we were able to witness in the *On the Profession* section of the Spring 2007 *Forum*.

As with all post-Strategic Plan issues, both debates represented in this issue continue to challenge the boundaries of traditional disciplines, their premises and methods, their knowledge system and their ethics, on the ongoing assumption—reaffirmed by recent debates in Montréal, including the inaugural speech by Canada's Governor General, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean—that all disciplines are, or should, take measures to rethink their roles in the context of the fluid transformations of our time, and

because of the self-evident inter-American immigrant patterns emerging in a globalized world.

The first essay in the *Debates* section is "¿Qué hay más allá del consenso de Washington?" by Margarita López Maya. Professor López Maya argues that these issues have been germinating in Venezuela for a decade as a reaction to neoliberal impositions, and these reactions were not only from the top down, but also manifested themselves through grass-root "innovaciones participativas" that she visualizes as creative answers to Washington-centered impositions. She offers two concrete examples, "la mesa técnica de agua," devised as a means to provide water on a regular basis to poor urban areas, and the "organizaciones comunitarias autogestionarias," created to solve the housing problem in similar neighborhoods. Professor López Maya argues that both experiences emerged prior to, or during Chávez's first government, and developed independently of him. Both have been impacted by Chávez moving in a different direction during his second government, and evidence the weakness of depending on public functionaries for their success, but they constitute, nevertheless, creative organic contributions dissenting from the Washington consensus. Margarita López Maya is profesora e investigadora de historia en la Universidad Central de Venezuela, y directora de la *Revista Venezolana de Economía y Ciencias Sociales*. She is the author of *Protesta y cultura en Venezuela*.

López Maya's article is followed by Eric Selbin's "Making the World New: Latin American Studies After the Washington Consensus." Professor Selbin claims that the "Washington Consensus" was really one forged by elites in the entire Pan-American area, one that slid from

neoliberal economic reforms to "political 'reforms' based on the United States model." However, the latter failed to take into account the intrinsic nature of heterogeneous Latin American civil societies, and the contradictory forces at work within them in the option for free markets. As a result, the neoliberal model has generated antithetic alternatives in the continent, and the popular cry against this model is finally becoming both visible and being recognized as such. Eric Selbin is Professor of Political Science and University Scholar at Southwestern University and the author of *Modern Latin American Revolutions* (1999), *Resistance, Rebellion, and Revolution: The Power of Story* (2009), and with John Foran and Jack Goldstone, *Understanding Revolutions* (2008).

The last article on this section by Marisol de la Cadena, "El Movimiento Indígena-Popular en los Andes y la Pluralización de la Política: Una Hipótesis de Trabajo," argues that present-day indigenous movements appear at the juncture of neoliberalism and colonialism to negotiate the occupation of lands exploited by mineral economic interests, yet ascribed to an alternative cosmological order by indigenous ritual and belief. In so doing, indigenous movements remove the epistemic site from which problems to be negotiated have been traditionally located. This implies a historical reconfiguration of the concept of politics, and of the traditional antagonisms that pieced together the continent for over 500 years. Marisol de la Cadena is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis. She's the author of *The Cultural Politics of Race in Latin America*, co-edited with Laura Gotkowitz (forthcoming) and *Indigenous Mestizos: The Politics of Race and Culture in Cuzco, Peru* (2000).

The *On the Profession* section explores the changing nature of LASA as the association, and the United States as a whole, becomes more Latin Americanized. It begins with Claudia Milian's "Locating the Ephemeral South in the Latin Americanization of LASA." Professor Milian argues that we have "to be mindful of the need to interrogate the knowledge formation and articulation of Latin American Studies as well as the academic organization investigating the field." In this sense, she sees LASA's contribution as positive overall, to the degree that "by taking the 'Southern' discursive location of LASA to the actual 'South,' we find a profoundly promising South-South exchange as well as a refutation of the expected North/South pattern." Without diagnosing this as a totally unproblematic solution, Milian adds that this shift nevertheless enables us to visualize the breadth of what we still do not know, as well as the people with whom we have not yet engaged. Claudia Milian is Assistant Professor of Romance Studies at Duke University.

Myriam Jimeno argues in a similar vein in "LASA y la conciencia de lugar." She contends that location, both in terms of subjectivity but also in terms of a place or locale of research, is important. This leads her to explore the notion of consciousness of place within LASA. She articulates this notion with that of decentralization as a means of embracing heterogeneity within the Association. Addressing the specific problem of obtaining visas as a trope of the problem of location, she visualizes the dynamics of exchange linked with decentralization of the Association as a political event that could very well spell a new form of egalitarianism for Latin American academics who are still being formed, and who need this exchange for intellectual growth. Myriam Jimeno is

Profesora Titular del Departamento de Antropología, Universidad Nacional de Colombia. She is co-author of *Estudio exploratorio sobre comportamientos asociados a la violencia* (forthcoming) and *Chocó, Diversidad Cultural y Medio Ambiente* (1995) among other books.

In "*Utaik tzij*: En búsqueda de consensos," Alicia Yvonne Estrada argues that the scarce representation of indigenous intellectuals in the U.S. academy is in itself evidence of the need to implement changes in academic institutions. While valuing the *Otros Saberes* initiative as a positive step to apprehend subaltern knowledge, and a means for enfranchising alternative knowledge producers within frameworks of cognition and scholarship, she feels that analogous steps will be needed for the academy to fully embrace the many subjectivities not yet represented within its ranks. She then cites the "indigenista" canon implemented between the 1930s and 1950s in Mexico and Central America as an example of a well-intentioned yet destructive policy, precisely because of its non-dialogization with the implicated subjects whose lives it was supposed to benefit, as a cautionary story to avoid in the present. Alicia Yvonne Estrada is Assistant Professor of Central American Studies at the California State University, Northridge.

In the fourth article in this section, "Angels Dancing on the Head of a Pin?," Gilberto Arriaza and Roberto Rivera state a case for LASA's transformation from the point of view of a growing Latino population in the United States. They argue that while this country becomes more Latinoized, this population "remains mired in poverty and despair." They posit that given LASA's multidisciplinary orientation, the Association could build bridges "with progressive North American colleagues who

are involved in Latino and Afro Latino Studies" to establish a poor/poor/poor connection to benefit the interests of subalternized peoples in the entire hemisphere and reposition ethically what it means to be an institution that houses knowledge producers. It is only from within an analogous framework to this one that debating LASA's goals, and its approach to scholarship, could prove fruitful for them. Gilberto Arriaza is Professor of Bilingual Education at the California State University, East Bay. He is co-author of *Collaborative Teacher Leadership: How Teachers Can Foster Equitable Schools* with Martin L. Krovetz. Roberto Rivera is Professor Emeritus of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University. He is the author of *A Study of Liberation Discourse: The Semantics of Opposition in Freire and Gutiérrez* (2004).

I cannot but say my *adioses* while wishing my very best to my successor, Antônio Sérgio Guimarães, named by incoming LASA President Eric Herschberg to become the *Forum's* new Associate Editor. Os méritos intelectuais de Antônio Sérgio nem precisam ser ressaltados. Boa sorte como agitador cultural e desbravador do conhecimento. ■