

BOOK REVIEWS

GENERAL

Cultural Transformations and Ethnicity in Modern Ecuador. Edited by NORMAN E. WHITTEN, JR. Foreword by HERNÁN CRESPO TORAL. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1981. Maps. Figures. Tables. Notes. References. Index. Pp. xvii, 811. Cloth. \$33.95.

Norman E. Whitten, of the University of Illinois, editor and inspirer of this collection of anthropological studies, has almost twenty years of fruitful dedication to Ecuadorian topics behind him. Twenty-seven papers are included, written by twenty-seven specialists, among them Whitten himself and his wife, Dorothea. He also wrote an afterword, as well as the introduction, assisted in the latter by Kathleen Fine.

The volume purports to cover all the geographical space of Ecuador. There is, however, an imbalance in favor of the eastern, Amazonian region. Seven papers on this topic make up Part four. Among them there are some really outstanding contributions, characterized by the classic clarity and precision of reasoning of the French school, like those of the French anthropologists Philippe Descola and Anne-Christine Taylor on the Achuar, one of various Jívaro tribes. Similarly outstanding are the studies of James A. Yost on the Wao (alias Auca), William T. Vickers on the Siona (or Secoya, alias Encabellados), and D. Whitten on Canelos Quichua ceramics. The papers of Ernesto Salazar on the Federación Shuar and William Belzner on Shuar music (the Shuar are another Jívaro tribe) are highly informative and conform to the excellent level shown throughout Part four. Three other contributions deal with Amazonian Ecuador: one by the editor, N. Whitten, another on colonization by the people of a sierra village written by Peter Ekstrom, and the third one on the Jungle Quichua by Theodore Macdonald. If added to Part Four and published separately, a volume of about 300 pages on eastern Ecuador would have resulted, characterized by high quality, unity of content, and a relatively thorough treatment of the area, including the valuable bibliography and maps provided by the authors.

Spreading out the volume's scope over the whole country negatively affects the overall value of this publication, first, because it produces a rather *pêle-mêle*, Gruyère-like vision of Ecuador. Worse than the geo-

graphical lacunae are the topical ones. Besides, the quality of the papers is extremely uneven. Among the best, I should mention Grace Schubert's on San Lorenzo, Ray Bromley's on sierra markets, and Joseph Casagrande's comparison of various highland Indian communities. The papers of Susan Scrimshaw on migrants living in Guayaquil, of Leslie Brownrigg on Lojano migrants in El Oro Province, and of Niels Fock on a Cañar community should also be commended.

The rest of the contributions do not lack informative value, but they are marred to a greater or lesser degree by certain shortcomings that point toward fundamental problems. There is evidence that some of the researchers have undertaken their field trips with only an inadequate knowledge of Spanish. This deficiency in communication ability is aggravated by a shabby methodology, consisting of sample interviews based on insinuating, "pretuned" questionnaires. Among other items, we are told that the inhabitants of Carchi Province are Pastusos; and the term *cristiano* or the phrase "God willing"—nearly the same as *ojalá*—receive an exaggerated religious connotation.

Anti-Catholic bias is present in various papers, and it is certainly not conducive to a fair understanding of the country. Outstanding in this bracket is Blanca Muratorio's paper on the activities of the Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) in the region of Lake Colta. Fiestas patronales and *mingas* become simple means of Catholic exploitation, while *selling pretuned* radios to the Indians apparently receives the author's approval. I do not doubt that Muratorio's interpretations, and her bibliography as well, would receive majority approval in Ulster. Thanks to Taylor and Salazar, we learn much more about the disruptive nature and capitalist ideology of the GMU. In any case, we learn from Muratorio that converts to the GMU brand of Christianity have increased during the past decade at a yearly rate of 33 percent; such Indians sing hymns and abstain from drink and sex. Even more important, they do not join labor unions. These *ethnics* are thus transformed into Bible-grasping zombies manipulated through remote control from some English-speaking New Jerusalem. (In her fieldwork, Muratorio received "sympathy and support" from the Department of Anthropology of Catholic University of Quito.) It is in this way that the descendants of the Puruá nation, conquered first by the Incas, then by the Spaniards, quichuanized by both, are now being transformed into a Protestant and Quichua nation set against their *impious* neighbors and set apart from the state of which they are citizens, by foreign agents of a foreign ideology: a metastatic tumor in the body of Ecuador. Yet, in the face of such a blatant *ethnocide*—a term cherished by Whitten and his disciples—nobody mentions the word. Rather, Muratorio asserts (pp. 526–527) that "the Quichuas are caught . . . in the predicament of asserting their ethnic identity, while

confronting the ethnocidal policies of the dominant elements of the national society. It is an intricate and difficult dilemma where, as Whitten has argued, 'the complementarity of ethnocide and ethnogenesis exists in the most tenuous balance'."

Ronald Stutzman's paper is the first one after the introduction. He sets the example in disparaging national government and national culture, as well as in the more general practice of transplanting models of United States racism to Ecuador. Stutzman noticeably insinuated such models to his informants. It looks like a technique of creating class-consciousness in order to foster class-struggle, which is certainly not conducive to national integration. To be sure, socioeconomic injustice is rampant in Ecuador; there also exists an undeniable racial consciousness, and there is some degree of correlation between both. Still, the United States model does not apply, and the use of the term *white* in the same sense in Ecuador is entirely incorrect. It passes over the fact that an important proportion of the country's poor are *white*, while the ever increasing process of *cortarse el moño* represents a cultural and not a biological change, facilitated by free education up to the university level. Even readers of Schubert's excellent contribution—I am not criticizing the author—if they are not fully aware of the workings of regionalism, might be left with the idea of whites exploiting Blacks, when it is essentially a case of serranos taking over the costa. This serrano-costeño dichotomy, a fundamental characteristic of the country, receives little attention in the context of ethnic and racial considerations. This is the more damaging when Quito regionalism (alias *centralismo*) is equated with Ecuadorian nationalism.

At the root of all this we find a lack of adequate historical knowledge. Many of the contributors omit historical references, since they do not need them. I should single out Vickers for using history correctly. Others depreciate their anthropologically valuable contributions by historical derailments. If historical knowledge is needed, one should go to the best works, and not to those most at hand or stick to high-school impressions. In certain cases, anthropologists would do well by turning ethnohistorians, but of course that means a lot of painstaking work in libraries and archives, a lot of patience. Some of the historical blemishes of this volume are incidental, like the statement—for example's sake—that the Cofanes moved to the upper Aguatico when fleeing from rubber companies: they were living in the same area in 1611 when some of them turned over the log serving as a bridge, precipitating Father Rafael Ferrer, S.J., to his death. In other cases, it is the lack of more general knowledge: the unawareness of the Spanish custom of kissing the priest's hand or of the importance of the Noche de San Juan (Midsummer Night) in Spanish folk tradition. (Even half of the encomienda tribute used to be collected on that day.) One must

also be surprised on learning that the fiesta in question includes references to “the holy dove that appeared when Christ baptized John” (p. 495).

But what is really important is the thorough antagonism between the historical and the anthropological interpretation of Ecuador, which concerns the very existence of the republic. Until the end of the fifteenth century, Ecuador’s territory was inhabited by a great number of tribes that communicated more in a north-south direction than from east to west, except where river systems modified this tendency. The Inca conquest of the sierra attached the Andean tribes to that state for a few decades. This first step toward integration was followed by the Spanish conquest, which not only integrated Ecuador in the Spanish monarchy and in the western world, but also started the process of nation-building through economic ties and shared economic interests, as well as through the creation of administrative jurisdictions. By the eighteenth century, national consciousness clearly existed, as witnessed by Juan de Velasco’s *Historia*, the publication of which, unfortunately, became the main cause for the hopeless distortion of the country’s history. Now, I willingly agree that “nation-building” through a mixture of Padre Velasco, Alfaroismo, and centripetal urban cosmopolitanism—the latter is an irreversible worldwide phenomenon and a long-standing historical trend—tends to destroy the very historical essence of the nation. (This process is blatantly illustrated by the renaming of prehistoric toponyms.) But the alternative seemingly desired by N. Whitten and his followers, which—as far as one can guess on the basis of this book—might consist of a federation of a central Quichua (perhaps Protestant; certainly not Catholic) nation, flanked by autonomous mini-*ethnic* territories (there are only 300 Cofanes), if possible managed by foreign anthropologists and missionaries, with “whites” tolerated (*quién sabe*) in unexpanding urban areas subordinated to the principle of serving the needs of the *ethnics*: this is equivalent to the destruction of Ecuador. Ignorance, or even the sheer denial of known historical facts, support such ideas, as when Whitten insists on Quichua being a language originated in eastern Ecuador: if so, Spanish could be tagged as antinational. Strangely enough, however, nothing is said or lamented about the fact that the Rio Protocol imposed on Ecuador cut in half both the Siona-Secoya and the Jivaroan nations.

Norman Whitten, who seems to have been hopeful of seeing his ideas launched on a practical course by President Roldós, who was killed in a crash before completing his first year in office, writes (p. 794): “By studying the founding polarities of contemporary nations in depth and in breadth, anthropology could pass over its own constraining limens and contribute critically to the breaking of neocolonial mentality.” And elsewhere (p. 781): “As the nation strives ideologically to transcend dependency by stressing the creativity of marginality, those in so-called marginal positions could

become dependent upon outside support to press their cases for quasi-independence within Ecuador's tightening political sovereignty and control of economic resources." And finally (p. 785):

Anthropology has long given at least lip service to a human universal called "psychic unity". By the use of this concept we affirm the powerful assertion . . . that peoples everywhere have the same abilities to comprehend the universe through the vehicle of their own languages In one imperialist mode, it may be argued that people must be "taught" the nature of their own lifeways, including the system of oppression within which they are embedded. In the alter imperialist mode, it may be argued that people must be "taught" to become members of the State, to "renounce" their distinctive lifeways.—The creative synthesis between these neocolonial antitheses is to teach peoples how to become citizens while at the same time teaching them to restore their own lifeways Neocolonial ideologies, even in their enlightened manifestations, seek to deprive humanity of its fundamental unity in diversity.

If I understand well, belief in Ecuadorian nationhood is such a neocolonial ideology. The Blessed Virgin, Santa Marianita, and San Martín de Porres save Ecuador from United States anthropologists!

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México: Un pueblo en la historia. Edited by ENRIQUE SEMO, with ENRIQUE NALDA and MASAE SUGAWARA. Mexico City: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1981. Maps. Diagrams. Illustrations. Graphs. Charts. Bibliography. Chronology. Index. Pp. 365. Paper.

Enrique Semo and his collaborators have produced another in the series of interesting synthetic works on the history of Mexico. The present volume consists of four parts: a long, somewhat discursive introduction by Semo, obviously intended to serve for the entire four volumes; a section by Enrique Nalda on the pre-Columbian civilizations of Mexico; one by Semo himself dealing primarily with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and a short concluding essay by Masae Sugawara on the era of the Bourbon reforms. The book is nicely illustrated with line drawings, maps, and plates, and the last bear intelligent captions, something relatively rare in such undertakings.

The authors have much to say that is interesting (if not particularly new). Nalda and Semo, especially, have strained a bit too hard to press their necessarily schematic presentations into the declared mold of the