WHO ARE THE PEASANTS?

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DISAPPEARING PEASANTRIES: RURAL LABOUR IN AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA. By Deborah Bryceson, Cristóbal Kay, and Jos Mooij. (London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 2000. Pp. 331. $29.95 paper.)

THE SPACES OF NEOLIBERALISM: LAND, PLACE AND FAMILY IN LATIN AMERICA. Edited by Jacquelyn Chase. (Hartford, CT: Kumarian, 2002. Pp. 250. $65.00 cloth, $25.95 paper.)

¿UNA NUEVA RURALIDAD EN AMÉRICA LATINA? Compiled by Noerma Giarracca. (Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, 2000.)

AN AGRARIAN REPUBLIC: COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE AND THE POLITICS OF PEASANT COMMUNITIES IN EL SALVADOR 1823–1914. By Aldo A. Lauria-Santiago. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999. Pp. 326. $45.00 cloth, $19.95 paper.)

FAREWELL TO THE PEASANTRY? POLITICAL CLASS FORMATION IN RURAL MEXICO. By Gerardo Otero. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999. Pp. 185. $60.00 cloth.)

LA NUEVA RURALIDAD EN AMÉRICA LATINA. Edited by Edelmira Pérez, Maria Adelaida Farah. (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2001.)

MISSION POSSIBLE: THE STORY OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LAAD). By Robert L. Ross. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000. Pp. 160. $32.95 cloth.)

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL AMERICA. Edited by Ruerd Ruben and Johan Bastiaensen. (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 2000. Pp. 252. $65.00 cloth.)

FARMERS OF THE GOLDEN BEAN: COSTA RICAN HOUSEHOLDS AND THE GLOBAL COFFEE ECONOMY. By Deborah Sick. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999. Pp. 169. $35.00 cloth, $20.00 paper.)

IN THE SHADOWS OF STATE AND CAPITAL: THE UNITED FRUIT COMPANY, POPULAR STRUGGLE, AND AGRARIAN RESTRUCTURING IN

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ECUADOR, 1900-1995. By Steve Striffler. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002. Pp. 242. $64.95 cloth, $19.95 paper.)

CURRENT LAND POLICY IN LATIN AMERICA. Edited by Annalies Zoomers and Gemma van der Haar. (Amsterdam: KIT Royal Tropical Institute, 2000. Pp. 333. $ 25.00 paper.)

This collection of books offers a variegated view of the extraordinary wealth of literature that continues to pour out of academe focusing on the peasant and peasantry in present-day Latin America. In this sense it gives meaning to the 1970s debate between *campesinistas* and *descampesinistas* in Mexico: in spite of erudite affirmations of their disappearance, peasants are still a significant segment of the population, and today they are playing an important role in shaping the future of their societies and the processes of integration into the globalized economy.

Several different types of books are included in this collection. There are three doctoral dissertations transformed into books by Aldo Lauria-Santiago, Deborah Sick, and Steve Striffler; there are six edited collections of conference proceedings by Deborah Bryceson, Cristóbal Kay, and Jos Mooij; Jacquelyn Chase; Ruerd Ruben and Johan Bastiaensen; Annalies Zoomers and Gemma van der Haar; Noerma Giarracca; and Edelmira Pérez and Maria Adelaida Farah; and finally, there are two monographs that offer uniquely personal interpretations of rural development in the region by Gerardo Otero and Robert Ross. Taken as a whole they attest to the vitality of social movements in rural Latin America. They also criticize the mistaken view of many policymakers that simply because the value of rural production is a falling proportion of national income, the sizable segments of the population that were chosen to remain there should be condemned to oblivion.

The two monographs offer starkly contrasting, but optimistic, views of rural development in the region. Ross's celebratory recounting of his twenty-six years of tenure as president of the Latin American Agribusiness Development Corporation (LAAD) is an unusual addition to the literature. LAAD "operates as a private, for-profit company; the developmental mission of the company remains paramount when selecting projects and clients" (5). He offers innumerable studies of investment projects that stimulated the commercial production of agricultural produce in the region. He recounts the frustrating negotiations with uncomprehending central bankers and the difficulties of developing marketing and other infrastructural networks that are so important for assuring the success of any business, and is pleased with what he identifies as the two most significant changes that profoundly affected agriculture: the decline in the role of the state in Latin America and in protectionism in the industrialized world. Although lamenting the lack

of human capital investment, he stresses the fundamental role that innovative entrepreneurs can play, taking advantage of opportunities created by organizations like LAAD, and using market information to reduce uncertainty, the farmer's major enemy. But this new environment is not for an independent peasantry: "Either [the peasant] finds someone to help him grow higher value crops and sell them in the market place, or he would be better off selling his land and going into another business" (142). The peasantry should become entrepreneurial and agricultural colleges should reform their curricula to teach general business skills "to enable their graduates to compete internationally" (ibid.).

Otero, an astute and active contributor to analyses of rural Mexico, is concerned with understanding the fate of its people. He provides readers with the minutiae of three important struggles that have lasted for more than half a century where rural collectivization prevailed (the Yaqui Valley, La Laguna, and Atencingo, where the author did his dissertation research) and is primarily interested in continuing to refine his place within the Mexican debate on the agrarian question. The book advances a thesis offered in previous writings: that agrarian reform was enacted specifically to entrench capitalism in the modern Mexican state. Otero places the "semi-proletariat" at the center of these struggles; this class is a key player in a complex process of political class formation "mediated by the prevailing forms of regional cultures, state intervention, and leadership" (149). The semi-proletariat refers to workers unable to earn enough to pay for their own reproduction. He argues persuasively against "class reductionism" and adds convincing evidence that the march towards democracy in Mexico continues at a turtle's pace, notwithstanding the electoral experiences of 2000 and 2003. The author reasserts his long-standing preference for the "proletarista" wing in the Mexican debate, although in this text he notes serious limitations to that analysis. He concludes by observing that democracy requires "a consolidation of subordinate groups and classes in civil society . . . [so that] the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional's (EZLN) political principle 'command by obeying' [can] be turned into reality" (160), a process that requires new forms of civil organization that have yet to emerge.

Sick's study of a Costa Rican community presents a sanguine analysis of the incorporation of a group of rural denizens into the global coffee market. She contextualizes her endeavor: Farmers "are not naïve . . . [and] have at their fingertips news of world events . . . and coffee prices. . . . As rising expectations and living standards and expanding trade agreements, such as General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), draw millions of smallholders throughout the world into international

markets, family farmers worldwide face a number of challenges, both old and new" (xiv). In this book, the author examines the complexity of changing strategies of the peasant families for survival and mobility, engaging in a variety of gainful activities, and their "enthusiasm for defining and solving community problems through collective, grassroots efforts" (75). She notes that "the choices available to [small-scale farmers] in large part have been shaped by state policies mediating between the global and the local" (120) and concludes that the peasants:

> have an important role to play in the health of developing societies. Intensive smallholder agriculture can absorb excess labor better than large extensive operations. . . . Given the opportunity to develop their human capital, and an environment in which they can pursue several economic options, household producers can use their skills and flexibility to move into the twenty-first century not as retrenched subsistence producers merely surviving, not as underpaid plantation and factory workers suffering from poor nutrition and ill health, not as perpetual migrants whose homes and families are disrupting by months or years of separation, but as the productive backbone of healthy societies. (131)

Lauria-Santiago's study of the emergence of a coffee-growing economy in nineteenth-century El Salvador offers a sweeping, critical view of many other studies that "rest on a very narrow empirical base . . . [and] are framed by the dilemmas of weak, emerging states . . . [rather than focusing] on peasants' political activities and their involvement in forming the nation state" (3). He hopes to provide "an enriched understanding of the country's past [that] will bring new visions for its future" (237). His story develops "within the context of processes traditionally perceived as external to the peasantry (agro-exports, state formation, elite political culture)" (2). The heritage of the colonial system was based on indigo, with which the commercial agriculture of sugar, cacao, indigo, and cattle on the haciendas coexisted and competed with a smallholder society structured around collectively owned lands for Indians and *ladinos*. A strong tradition of local control and the export economy spurred the creation of new sectors of successful farmer-entrepreneurs. As a result, "community and village structures sustained the relative prosperity of the peasantry even as social and economic differentiation emerged" (14). A weak state throughout the nineteenth century forged shifting popular alliances to woo support from an active and knowledgeable peasantry. The fortunes of this social sector were rapidly reversed with the concerted effort to wrest the collective control of the land from communities and to privatize state-owned *baldíos*. The peasantry became vulnerable to losing its lands because of debt, and the "growing number of descendents could only become migrant workers or tenants on other people's lands" (233). "This contradicts the view that the land concentration of the late twentieth

century was a direct inheritance from the colonial period or the late nineteenth century liberal era" (ibid.). In this context, proletarianization and the lack of an alternative political project of wealthy groups created the conditions for the authoritarian politics of the 1930s based on support from the middle sectors. Lauria-Santiago concludes that the radical concentration of wealth was not the inevitable result of this agrarian history, but rather a product of the interaction of political factors with market mechanisms that impoverished successive groups of exporters. In this context, the Frente Farabundo Mark para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) emerged to wage "war against an uncaring, unresponsive, and authoritarian state" (237).

Striffler sets himself an ambitious goal: "to demonstrate how the political struggles of peasants and workers have been central to broader processes of transformation . . . Histories of partial and sometime total defeat must be traced alongside and within what are almost always *partial* victories" (17). His account of the United Fruit Company's (UF) troubled history in southern Ecuador places politics at the heart of "economic" processes and seemingly abstract categories such as capital, the state, and class struggle. He traces the shift from corporate ownership of a banana plantation to the global system of contract farming, "a conflict-laden process in which local struggles play a central role in determining the constitution of global outcomes, actors and histories. . . . Once actual participants are placed at the center of structural processes . . . capital no longer is seen as an omnipotent and nameless force, but comes in a variety of differentiated forms" (9). He does this at each point in history, showing how in the first period following the Company's arrival in the 1930s, the peasantry's movement for land and community had its own logic and timing, involving alliances with local military forces, state agencies, and other outside groups. In the 1960s technological changes accompanying the introduction of a new variety of fruit (Cavendish) facilitated the dismantling of the plantations, along with the agricultural labor unions and peasant movements of the land; the social relations of production were reworked, increasing productivity, lowering costs, and placing greater control measures on capital as a result of the increasing technical requirements of the new production system. Striffler shows how UF reacted to a popular uprising, transforming its initial setback into a new opportunity, by shedding an obsolete structure. A weak agrarian reform law only exacerbated the problems of the peasantry, subjugating it to the new patterns of capital accumulation in which UF, Standard Fruit, Del Monte, and Noboa are able to impose conditions far worse than those experienced by the peasants in subsequent generations. This dynamic process has not ended, the author assures us, for future struggles will continue to emerge, challenging existing forms of domination and exploitation.

The six collections of papers presented at thematic conferences offer a potpourri of materials on agrarian questions in Latin America. With more than 2200 pages of materials contributed by almost 100 authors, it would be impossible to give them all a fair treatment. Rather, I examine some of the principal themes that the editors have identified as crucial in understanding present-day processes affecting the peasantry in the region. Bryceson, Kay, and Mooij have assembled a very useful collection that addresses the question of the character of peasant labor in Latin America today (they also cover Africa and Asia, but I do not examine these materials). Bryceson's analysis of peasantry theories and smallholder policies offers a superb review of the literature and a fine introductory bibliography. She provides a concise introduction to past debates on agrarianization versus de-agrarianization and peasantization versus de-peasantization as well as an exegesis of writings on Marxist rural transformations and the modes of production; she also gives references to reflections from the "mainstream" development writings on smallholders and intersectoral social and economic relations. She does not shirk from critical comments on the "analytical reductionism of neoliberal perspective" which forces its practitioners to "narrow their analytical gaze" by retreating to microhistories that allow them to "circumvent controversy" (28). She concludes that "One could argue that peasants are now more elusive than ever before. . . . In a situation of rapid flux, peasants disappear, then reappear as if by some conjuror's trick. . . . Peasant transitional processes are more complex [than synchronous analysis permits]" (30).

Among the thematic chapters, Cristóbal Kay presents a brilliant historical review of the region's agrarian transformation, from "the colonial legacy [to] the emergence of neo-liberalism and export agriculture in the 1980s" (123) that would be excellent for classroom use. He traces the changing social composition of the peasantry and concludes: "If the Latin American peasantry is far from disappearing, its relative importance for agricultural production is declining. . . . [It is] stuck in a state of permanent semi-proletarianization" (132). Although current schemes of economic integration offer new possibilities for capitalist farmers and agro-industries, for most peasants and rural laborers, employment conditions have become temporary, precarious, and flexible.

> A viable peasant road to rural development ultimately raises questions about the political power of the peasantry and their allies. For a peasant path . . . to succeed would require a major shift away from the current emphasis on liberalization, a development which at present appears unlikely. (133)

Peasants are playing a crucial role in new social movements that are challenging neoliberalism; they have reaped some short-term improvements, but they still have to define a viable long-term strategy.

Carmen Diana Deere's analysis of the Cuban peasantry makes use of a unique retrospective survey of life histories of a continuing search for a socialist path. The substantial regional differences, even on the small island, meant that the implementation of state policy "at the local level was never homogeneous. Rather it was 'path dependent' interacting with such factors as the natural environment and infrastructure, previous land tenancy and class relations, and local peasant party relations, to produce heterogeneous outcomes" (156). She concludes that ultimately its success will depend on the country's ability to implement its program of re-peasantization. Magdalena Barros-Nock addresses the shock treatment applied in the Mexican countryside. The privatization of the *ejidos,* the withdrawal of subsidies and reduction of credits, and the lifting of many trade restrictions removed the peasants from the accumulation process; most do not have the means to make the transition to commercial success. She concludes, pessimistically, that for many Mexican peasants poverty today is not a new condition, but is a worsening of their preexisting situation. Luis Llambi's case study of a community in the Venezuelan Andes reminds us of the need for "deep local historical knowledge" to fully understand the ecological and human costs of intertwining of global and local processes. Concerned with overcoming the limitations of the globalization approach, he integrates two crucial facets of the macro analysis—the market integration of transnational finance controls, commerce, and production alongside a continuing renegotiation of the rules of the game in the emerging world order—to frame a crucial question: who are the peasants today? In responding, he points to a key trend: the need for workers (producers) to organize beyond their immediate localities, develop alliances, and also construct room for maneuver in the local arena. The new ruralities are enhancing the value of spaces neglected by import-substitution industrialization (ISI) (inward) development, and thereby empowering new social actors.

Cristóbal Kay's preface to *Current Land Policy in Latin America* says that it "is the most comprehensive evaluation to be made of the land policies implemented in LA since the 1980s"[1] (15). He continues:

> land privatization and individual titling granting full-fledged ownership of land are the cornerstone of neo-liberal land policies. . . . [The book's] objective is to present an overview of experiences with the privatization and individualization of land rights in different countries . . . [to identify] who were the winners and losers and assess the contribution to sustainable development. (11–12)

1. This is one of two books resulting from the 1999 workshop. The second book, *Land and Sustainable Livelihood in Latin America* (Amsterdam: KIT Royal Tropical Institute, 2000), contains a selection of papers on the role of land in the livelihood strategies of farmers.

In their evaluation of the overall situation in Latin America, Zoomers and van der Haar draw together the results of the workshop to conclude that "the effects [of neoliberal reforms] have been rather limited . . . too small, too late, too underfunded, too dictated from above, too hierarchically organized and too infrequently responsive to pressures from the grassroots" (19). The efforts to create active and transparent land markets "will not contribute in a direct way to sustainable or equitable economic development" (21). Rather, Zoomers concludes the book with the judgment that instead of access to land, it would be better to search for flexible solutions (such as rental, long-term loans, and leasing) and that "the emphasis in the new debate should be placed primarily on access to resources and security of life." (302)

In the first section on neoliberal land policy, the authors describe a litany of errors in the design and application of the reforms, resulting in increasing inequality and unrealized expectations. Even worse, although farmers are not becoming competitive, governments are plowing ahead with free-trade arrangements as if markets were functioning (M. Carter). Since there is no understanding of the importance of indigenous knowledge and cooperation for ecosystem management or resource use, social arrangements have been generally ignored during the reform process (N. Forster). The next part addresses problems of gender and ethnicity in the context of agrarian reform. Many reforms have advanced the rights of women, including joint titling for couples, but ironically in those countries where indigenous rights have also improved (Mexico and Peru), women remain subjugated to the traditional pattern of social organization (C.D. Deere and M. León). Indigenous demands for a greater measure of autonomy or self-government have yet to be effective in national reform processes, although Van der Haar points out that one community in Chiapas has been able to use its historical heritage to assert this right. W. Assies predicts that new configurations among indigenous peoples will further autonomy drives. In his contribution, he shows how indigenous communities long ago transcended the territorial boundaries of their ancestors or their resettlement areas to forge hemisphere-wide alliances to formulate common programs and coordinate collective actions; in doing so, they reject the community or spatially based approaches to co-existence, as essentially new forms of hierarchical subjugation. The demands for autonomy and pluralism involve fundamentally different concepts of participation and negotiation, as well as alternative routes to improve material and social well-being. A. Henkemans informs us that in Bolivia new legislation favors common property arrangements with exclusionary processes that protect indigenous communities. The third section illustrates how customary rights continue to be effective, even in the environment of neoliberal individualism; the examples from Mexico, Bolivia, and

Honduras are quite explicit in showing why the market reform process has not proceeded as its framers would like.

Ruben and Bastiaensen have compiled a collection of essays about the workings of markets, based on Central America's experience. Drawn from the 1997 European Conference on the region, their examination of markets for commodities, land, rural financial services, and labor offers a rigorous analysis of the impacts of neoliberal reforms on rural society. They document a "wide array of market and institutional failures" and follow the great creativity of the peasantry in altering "social relations and derived livelihood strategies" in response to "the modified exchange conditions" (16–17). The twelve studies in this volume belie the optimism shown by modern-day reformers when imposing "a neutral and rule-bound organizational realm" in a world that carries the historical burden of Central American societies. Using diverse methodologies, they show that markets are embedded into complex real-world exchange and social networks and that structural rigidities as well as changing relative power balances impede the smooth flow of resources. Even more troubling, as the authors reveal the inner workings of actual markets, we find the exacerbation of income concentration and social polarization, sometimes favoring entrenched elites, sometimes creating new ones, but always assuring the lion's share of the benefits to those who control the global markets to which the region's local systems are inextricably tied. As a result, the individual authors call for reforms to implant "fair trade" more widely, and to facilitate access to investment, innovative rural financial institutions, and more appropriate technologies, among others. In the end, in spite of their predilection for market mechanisms, the editors wonder "whether, in some cases, the efficiency loss associated with state intervention in exchange might not be preferable to the shallowness of private markets" (5).

Chase's book brings together some outstanding contributions from a conference entitled "Space, Place, and Nature: Reconstructing Neoliberalism in the Americas," convened at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in fall 1998. Although two of the nine chapters (Kay and Deere and León) retell the stories presented in other books reviewed here, the collection is perhaps the most accessible of the materials reviewed for classroom use in the United States. In his foreword, Arturo Escobar highlights its contribution: by focusing on the "geographies of neoliberalism as a complex process of spatial, cultural, and economic processes, [the essays analyze] how local groups are transformed by globalization as they change their local modes of operation"(viii). Chase offers a brief introduction to a diverse literature that usefully recalls Karl Polanyi's early contribution to our understanding of markets. People's attachment to place is constantly redefined, as indigenous and peasant groups are driven to new levels of national and global activism

when neoliberal policies privatize communal lands and generate other threats to territory and resources (as in S. Hvalkof's chapter on indigenous politics in Peru). Along with privatization and free trade, which undermine the productive structures and capacities of many producers, these developments impoverish new social groups, accentuate inequalities, weaken the very foundations of community, and imperil sustainability. The imaginative use of space in this collection, and in the literature from which it stems, leads us to "imagine a kind of traffic between the global and the local" (130) and a defense of community that currently involves transnational communities modifying traditional patterns and institutions.

Chase's study of privatization in Minas Gerais, Brazil, examines how "household and community economies, gender, fertility, and migration are central to the outcomes of neoliberalism" (17). H. Safa highlights the rise of female-headed households as a cultural feature in the Caribbean; their responses to changing conditions, as they participate in the export manufacturing economy (*maquiladoras*), and as they have modified historically determined patterns of race, colonialism, and family structure. As she has done elsewhere, Safa also traces men's reactions to their diminished status as breadwinners, creating the myth of "sexually promiscuous" women with a lack of commitment to family values, as they abandon the Dominican Republic for greener pastures. S. Gudeman and A. Rivera-Gutiérrez use their ethnographic research in a variety of Guatemalan settings to show:

> how humans make and remake communities in relation to market practices. . . . [Their insights show that one set of] many solutions to contemporary environmental problems need to come from "outside" the realm of the market and private property, and that "the economy," . . . [of] contemporary discourse, does not encompass all forms of material behavior. (160–61)

The final chapters on Mexico point to the dynamic nature of restructuring in the present system. González de la Rocha and A. Escobar Latapí write about the declining prospects of many families in Guadalajara, in spite of its efforts to recreate itself as a "new Silicon Valley" because limited employment opportunities intensify migratory pressures and erode traditional structures of collective responsibilities among generations and within extended kinship structures. O. Pi-Sunyer's report on the effects of a rapidly growing sector of the global system—tourism—and blends a study of the changing character of "Mayan-ness" with an inquiry into the deepening relationship of local people with powerful forces of national memory and globalization.

Re-reading these books from the vantage point of rural studies in Latin American, one cannot help but offer a conjecture about the growing abyss between studies coordinated from the North and those originating in the South. The working group or rural development of the

Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) has steadfastly supported scholars in the region who are enquiring about the dramatic transformations in rural society as a result of the process of international integration on which our countries are embarked. As coordinator of the working group for several years and coordinator of the book, *¿Una Nueva Ruralidad en América Latina?* (Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, 2000), Giarracca insists that:

> we can no longer continue thinking with the same parameters of past decades; too many things have happened in our countries and in our social theories. The new landscape encompasses firms using complex technologies, subsidiaries of transnational giants, agro-tourism businesses, alongside of heterogeneous rural worlds with peasants, farmers, and rural workers interacting with processes of mechanization, indigeneity, and new styles of unemployment. (11)

The authors of the sixteen chapters generate a multitude of meanings for the concept of rurality, in the realm of power, environment, and technology, focusing on intergenerational and intercultural pacts with their surroundings (neighbors and ecosystems) that have created the most unexpected of alliances and the most creative proposals for building new worlds. The text takes us from macro critiques and searches for solutions to a recounting of the dynamism of agrarian actors in the arena or negotiation and resistance to a reconsideration of the changing world of work. This collection offers us a richer picture of the varieties of rural struggle ongoing in Latin America, whether they are the violent confrontations of the landless movement in Brazil and women in Argentina or the more pacific forms of resistance in other parts of the hemisphere. Fortunately, recognizing its own limitations, CLACSO has made this book, as well as others in its rapidly expanding collection in the social sciences, freely available on the Internet.[2]

Another center that has a long history of promoting innovative thinking about rural Latin America is the Rural Development Program at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá. To celebrate their twentieth anniversary, the former and present directors of the master's program in rural development, Pérez and Farah, convened a symposium and produced a two-volume collection of some of the most outstanding ideas about the emerging concept of *La Nueva Ruralidad en América Latina*. Unfortunately only available in print in Bogotá, the twenty-seven essays cover the field of rural studies in the same way as do the conferences of the Latin American Rural Studies Association (ALASRU), but with a consistently high quality that is often missing in other collections. The global analysis of rural change enhances the analyses of the characteristics of the "new rurality" that is further deepened with a serious treatment of the way in which recent thinking about the

2. Available at http://www.clacso.org/libros/rural/rural.html.

environment and sustainability has modified our understanding of the contribution of rural peoples to global welfare. The Manichean plans of the Western powers to reshape Latin America are contrasted with alternatives that are still under construction in the region. The impact of new grassroots organizations and the complex varieties of actors are examined as is the dramatic recasting of the role of higher education in assuming a new responsibility for responding to the demands of rural peoples. This collection is the only one reviewed here that accords serious consideration to the problem of illicit crops in Latin America.

The peasantry is alive but not well in Latin America. Even more than many other sectors, the peasantry and indigenous peoples in rural Latin America are being crushed by the burdens of international economic integration and the chimera of prosperity driven by free trade. Unlike many other social groups, however, many rural societies are successfully reclaiming their own spaces, the territorial and/or political, where they are attempting to construct their own alternatives to the onslaught of globalization. This diversity is one of the single most notable characteristics of rural life today—one that often escapes the notice of northern observers.