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*Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (review)

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intensify the religious experience among believers and tie all Catholics clearly to the Church hierarchy. Vatican actions and directives, as well as the broad and deep sweep of nineteenth-century apparitionism were central to his plans and ultimately related to the limits of their implementation. Wright-Rios shows that the bishop had more control over Oaxaca City, its Church activities and seminary-trained priests than he had over the autochthonous beliefs and practices of his rural parishioners who, ultimately caught up in the ambiguities of modernization but clinging to longstanding apparitionist traditions of their own, responded to the clash between secularism and religious revival in complex ways. The author argues that all the levels of society and Catholicism were connected and in significant communication, but the pretense of top-down revivalism was at least partially subverted by local, popular initiative and relative autonomy *vis-à-vis* clerical preference.

Gillow had to contend with this inveterate religious localism and its vibrant community organizations in his devotional and liturgical reforms. But he and other diocesan authorities would face even stronger manifestations of the same in the persons of Barola Bolaños and Matilde Narváez, convinced advocates of sacred apparitions in two distinct parishes. It is through their stories that Wright-Rios graphically points up the partially centrifugal tendencies of Oaxaca's Catholic pueblos, but also highlights the inherent tensions to the increasing lay and especially female presence in the spiritual associations and spirit of Catholic revival. With distinctly different outcomes, Bolaños and Narváez championed local apparitions and their conversion into regional devotional movements. Bolaños successfully navigated the clerical and organizational complexities necessary to success. But Narváez did not. These stories are wonderfully recounted and brought to bear on the whole question of the Mexican Church and its successful, if accident-filled, response to secular nation-state building and the perils of state-led development.

Wright-Rios has produced an elegantly written book that reflects a deep knowledge of colonial and national Mexican and Mexicanist historiography. This carefully researched and thoughtfully articulated study is a major contribution to the rethinking of Mexican Catholicism and Mexican Catholics in a country whose formal constitutions (1857, 1917) and political elites have been prevalently oriented to secular liberalism, national development and social reform since the mid-nineteenth century, and especially after the revolution of 1910.

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## POLITICS & GOVERNANCE

*Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History.* By Susan Buck-Morss. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009. Pp. xii, 164. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. \$45.00 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

When Susan Buck-Morss published the essay, "Hegel and Haiti," in *Critical Inquiry* (2000), it prompted responses in fora as varied as art catalogues, workers' newspapers, and

the blogosphere. While the essay earned praise for undermining Eurocentrism, it also was criticized for reviving the idea of universal history. In this book, Buck-Morss develops the essay's humanism more forcefully. Linking her project to the post-9/11 era, she proclaims its "political urgency" (p. ix). Buck-Morss is a political theorist, and her treatise is more ambitious than conventional monographs. At its narrowest level, the work intervenes in Hegel scholarship by revisiting a classic question in that field: "Where did Hegel's idea of the relation between lordship and bondage originate?" (p. 48) Where other scholars have sought answers in the writings of other European intellectuals and seen Hegel's discussion of slavery as abstract, Buck-Morss builds on the work of Pierre-Franklin Tavarès and Nick Nesbitt to argue that Hegel was deeply aware of—and responding to—events in Haiti.

This argument is apparently revolutionary within Hegel scholarship. However, its importance may not be apparent to scholars of the Caribbean, for whom the relevance of any single European philosopher is not self-evident, even one who was foundational for both Marx and Aimé Césaire. Moreover, as Buck-Morss admits, Haitian academics already knew about the Hegel-Haiti connection when she spoke on the island in 2005. Nevertheless, even if the Hegel-Haiti linkage is either obvious or of peripheral interest to historians of the Caribbean, the author's reflections on how it has been erased provide much food for thought. She makes several meta-arguments. First, she sees the disconnecting of Hegel and Haiti as providing an important vantage point into the historical construction of Eurocentrism. The shock of the Haitian Revolution, she argues, spurred the development of a European culture that insisted, despite all counterevidence, on its own superiority and commitment to freedom. In fact, she notes, Hegel's later writings, reflecting growing horror about Haiti, fed nineteenth-century justifications of imperialism. In this regard, the book is an intriguing addition to recent studies of the aftereffects of the Haitian Revolution.

Beyond Eurocentrism, Buck-Morss's greater opponent is disciplinarity, which she believes obscures the interconnectedness of humanity. It is one thing, she argues, for Enlightenment writers to have deemed freedom their highest value at the same time as colonialism and slavery expanded, and for them to have ignored this contradiction. However, the fact that modern political philosophers still can construct "Western histories as coherent narratives of human freedom," without reference to Haiti, is to her a sign of the dangers of specialization: "Disciplinary boundaries allow counterevidence to belong to someone else's story" (p. 22). Buck-Morss links this kind of blindness to a modern politics in which the disavowal of inconvenient truths runs rampant, with deadly consequences.

Buck-Morss's largest goal is a humanistic one. While she shares with many modern post-colonial theorists a critique of Eurocentrism, she also believes in the necessity of "salvag[ing] modernity's universal intent, rather than calling for a plurality of alternative modernities" (p. ix). The latter outlook, she argues, has made it too easy for powerful nations to treat others differentially, as "political collectives proclaim themselves champions of human rights and the rule of law and then deny these to a whole list of enemy exceptions, as if humanity itself were the monopoly of their own privileged members" (p. 149). Buck-Morss urges scholars to recover moments and anomalies when the promise of universal freedom was glimpsed.

Certainly, Buck-Morss's book adds little empirically to existing studies of the Haitian Revolution; her depiction of intellectual historians (people who write apologetics for past thinkers in the guise of contextualizing them) is also outdated. However, this brief review cannot do justice to the many ways her provocative and beautifully written book forces us to reexamine our academic labors. Buck-Morss also deserves praise for placing the Haitian Revolution firmly at the center of modernity—and insisting that scholars in many fields contemplate its lessons.

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*Dilemmas of Modernity: Bolivian Encounters with Law and Liberalism.* By Mark Goodale. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009. Pp. xv, 245. Maps. Illustrations. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$24.95 paper.

With *Dilemmas of Modernity*, Mark Goodale intends a critical ethnography of key ideas that have shaped the unfolding history of Bolivia. These cluster roughly under the rubric of modernity, approached by Goodale as a pattern of intentions that informs the Bolivian national project and the sorts of civic subjects that project at once produces and requires. This is a thoughtful ethnography of law that reframes the category in two ways. On the one hand, Goodale presents a robust sense of law as never merely about the practices or written codes explicitly known as “law.” Law, in his treatment, is always a cloud of intersecting discourses and practices, operating on multiple levels, and, in a country like Bolivia, inseparable from liberal imaginings of a postcolonial destiny. This is the second framing, as law is functionally approached as a shifting field of discourses and practices that participate in the imagining and realization of a Bolivian modernity. The very category of law here implies a genealogy of a relatively coherent liberal modernity.

Goodale anchors his discussion in the provincial highland town of Sacaca. Here is the capillary endpoint of the classically understood legal system, a space informed by codified norms and values of Bolivian jurisprudence, their vernacular realization by participants at the lower rungs of the system, and the various social mores of day-to-day life for indigenous and mestizo Bolivians of the region. Across this cuts a set of transnational discourses, of which discussions of human rights promoted by development NGOs are of particular interest to Goodale. Goodale offers us law as a lens through which to view this complex cascade of norms and ideals. Within this cascade, different actors participate in a shared or commensurably variant modernity, approached from different points of purchase in Bolivian and transnational society. In this regard, the law provides an encompassing framework for indigenous and nonindigenous, elite and subaltern actors; it also provides threads of continuity across a national history portrayed by some as marked by revolutionary ruptures and encounters between radically disparate sociocultural orders.

These are salutary points for research on Bolivia, and the book is salted with insightful observations that will ring true to many familiar with the region, particularly about the complex social and political spaces of provincial towns and about the points of continuity