Bonnie A. Lucero, *Revolutionary Masculinity & Racial Inequality: Gendering War and Politics in Cuba*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018. 345 pp. (Cloth US\$ 65.00)

At least three persons should be very happy about this book. Let's call them the "Cienfuegos Trio." The main subject concerns constructions of Cuban masculinity under the conditions of "no end after the end," meaning the continuing hierarchies of colonial constructs of race after the official end of slavery and colonialism. Bonnie Lucero sets all this the context of an anticolonial revolutionary war, the war of 1895–98 in Cuba (exactly from the perspective of the center of the island, the old province of Las Villas/Santa Clara, but with consequences for the whole island, and the Fourth Corps of the Cuban Liberation Army/*Ejército Libertador de Cuba* [ELC]).

Cuba, as we all know, is "raceless" in discourse but was heavily racist in reality until 1959, and is still racist under, besides, beyond, and also inside the revolutionary juridical and social ban of all types of racism since the Revolution.

The book's Part One helps us to understand Cuban realities up to the present day through an analysis of the insurgent men as raceless (or better, "color-blind") in war actions. All of them felt superior to the "feminized" men who preferred to stay under the colonial control of Spanish men. These ideas had mainly to do with the ongoing devaluation of black womanhood and even women in general; the exception was white mothers and spouses of the higher white generals. (The mother of Antonio Maceo is an exception by being constructed as an exemplary mother rather than a woman—not in the period of the book, but later.) Despite the equalizing color-blind discourse and behavior in the army (the Fourth Corps of the ELC), the racial hierarchies of the colony stayed intact and would be reproduced, first of all at the end of the war, with many arguments (and structures, of course), first of all with the argument of "cultura" (literacy) and "order."

Part Two shows the complicated struggles, on both local and regional levels, to apply the revolutionary-gendered masculinity ("new man") in struggles over power. Black and white ex-officers claimed political power as a natural extension of their military ranges and merits. Whites won in nearly all cases. Black officials challenged this evolving white order. They were successful as *jefes* of their clientele (often work gangs and former military units) and as patriarchal protectors of black and mulatto women. When the United States controlled Cuba (1899–1902), white veterans, first of all Calixto García (but also many others), disbanded the color-blind army, and enforced the laws, the cultural argument, and the debates over black criminals and "*brujos*" (practitioners of

slave religions such as Santería and *Palo Monte*). Remember the first book of Fernando Ortiz: *Los negros brujos* (1906).

Part Three begins during the period of U.S. occupation, when the revolutionary men of the liberation troops had delivered their guns in 1900 (to some extent ... some hid their weapons). This part examines how white comrades of black soldiers called on the fears of black men who were using their revolutionary masculinity in electoral politics and policing. So the political authority of black soldiers and officers was destroyed. Black criminality, the lack of “*cultura*,” and black witchcraft (*brujería*) justified racialized policing and electoral politics, bringing white men to power (and well-paid jobs) in nearly all positions.

The book has a very profound introduction, “Gendered Language amid Racial Silence in Cuba,” which explores the way gendered language reflects and leads to racial silence. It reveals a strong, but discursive hidden racism in reality. This racism is the theme of the book’s conclusion, “The Racial Limits of Revolutionary Masculinity.” Two particularly impressive parts of the book, both on military aspects and in some ways about the question of what material elements (weapons) could play in history, are “‘To Enter into Negotiations with Their Dignity’: New Men’s Complicity in the Disbandment of the Liberating Army” (pp. 156–64), and “Rural Law Enforcement ‘Reform’ on the Road to Municipal Elections” (pp. 186–95).

Revolutionary Masculinity & Racial Inequality is very well written and excellently documented; *tiene fuego*, I would say in Spanish, as a way to complement its clear structure. It is an important book for Cuban history, both for the regional (though not so microhistorical), and the national dimensions, and also for the history of so called “raceless societies” up to the present day.

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