Desencuentros: Sovereignty, Revolution and Neo-anarchism in Latin America

Indiana Memorial Union - Dogwood Room

April 20 - 21 2012

“Llovizna” — Oaxaca, Mexico
Courtesy of Dan Suslak

Conference Program
Desencuentros: Sovereignty, Revolution and Neo-anarchism in Latin America

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Friday, April 20, 2012

Opening remarks, 9:00-9:15
Jeffrey Gould (Rudy Professor of History, Indiana University)

1st Session, 9:15-10:45
Contesting the Sovereign: Popular Insurrections

The Contested Meanings of Insurrections, the Sovereign People, and Democracy in Ecuador, Venezuela, and Bolivia
Carlos de la Torre (Director, International Studies, University of Kentucky; FLACSO Quito)

Absolute Hostility and Ubiquitous Enmity: "The Party of the Poor" and the Militarization of the Political, 1967-1995
Gareth Williams (Professor of Spanish, University of Michigan)

Commentators:
Jon Beasley-Murray (Associate Professor of Spanish, University of British Columbia)
Timo Schaefer (History PhD Student, Indiana University)

2nd Session, 11:00-1:00
Indigenous Politics: Beyond the Multicultural

The Consumption of "Colonialidad"? Theoretical Problems for Indigenous Politics at the Twilight of Neoliberal Multiculturalism
Charles Hale (Director, Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and Professor of Anthropology, University of Texas)

Political Imagination at the Margins of the Plurinational State: Perspectives on Bolivia’s 2006-07 Constituent Assembly
Laura Gotkowitz (Associate Professor of History, University of Pittsburgh)

Pe jana ira: petróleo y minería en la última frontera en Colombia
Erna von der Walde (Universidad Pontificia Universidad Javeriana)

Commentator:
Shane Greene (Associate Professor of Anthropology, Director of CLACS, Indiana University)

Open break for Lunch, 1:00-2:25
3rd Session, 2:30-5:00
Broken Hegemonies: Arguedas, Borges, and Bolívar Echeverría

A Short Andean History of Photography: Yawar fiesta
John Kraniauskas (Professor of Spanish, Birkbeck College, London)

Los límites del ethos barroco: Jesuitismo y dominación principal
Alberto Moreiras (Professor and Head of Spanish, Texas A&M)

Borges, or Why Theory Never Took Place in Latin America or Elsewhere
Brett Levinson (Professor and Chair of Comparative Literature, State University of New York at Binghamton)

Commentator:
Jon Beasley-Murray (Associate Professor of Spanish, University of British Columbia)

Saturday, April 21, 2012

4th Session, 9:30-11:00
Brazil: Lula and the Evangelical Challenge

To Fight for Life Against Death": Moralism and the Eclipse of Brazil's Evangelical Left
Ben Cowan (Assistant Professor of History, Dalhousie University)

Nurturing Hope, Deepening Democracy, and Combating Inequalities in Brazil:
Lula, the Workers' Party, and Dilma Rousseff's 2010 Election as President
Alexandre Fortes (Programa de Pós-Graduação em História – UFRRJ, Mellon Visiting Professor, Duke University)

Commentator:
Micol Seigel (Associate Professor in American Studies and African American and African Diaspora Studies, Indiana University)

5th Session, 11:15-1:00
Rethinking Latin American Anarchism: The Chilean Case

An Anti-clerical Agitator in Chile
Lessie Jo Frazier (Associate Professor of Gender Studies, Indiana University)

Anarchists and Alterity: The Expulsion of Casimiro Barrios from Chile, 1920
Raymond Craib (Associate Professor of History, Cornell University)

Commentators:
Jeffrey Gould (Rudy Professor of History, Indiana University)
Daniel James (Bernardo Mendel Chair of Latin American History, Indiana University)
We work with an original analytical concept that has emerged from our research:

Desencuentros

A Spanish word with greater reach and resonance than the individual English synonyms: "misunderstanding," "disagreement," "failed encounter" but also "a romantic relationship that ends in disappointment." Desencuentros between the forgers of counter-hegemonic attempts to take control of the state and subaltern groups who had traditionally been excluded from the nation's civic and political life often involved unexamined linguistic, cultural and political differences.

Our usage of desencuentro also echoes the French philosopher Jacques Rancière's term "disagreement" [mésentente], which informs the understanding of politics as a dispute over the meaning of words and of who is authorized to define them—in other words, over what counts as intelligible speech and what gets discounted as mere babble in a given social and historical context.

At the same time, the association of the term desencuentro with disappointment or failed romance opens the door for consideration of what roles emotion and affect might play in political processes. The connection between emotion or affect and politics was indicated in a classic study by Freud and, more recently, has been taken up again by political theorists such as Ernesto Laclau. In establishing a dialogue with these theoreticians we expect to shed new light on specific Latin American historical contexts while also opening up new terrain for future theoretical work in this area.

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