Law of 1853, and reminds us of the expulsion of Juárez and Ocampo, though without comment. Opinion in Xalapa quickly cooled towards the resplendent general. The author might have made some mention of Santa Anna's catastrophic behaviour at Cerro Gordo in 1847, which allowed the US invaders entry into central Mexico.

Santa Anna stands out in the book because few other local figures appear consistently. Instead, there is constant reference to 'Xalapeños' and 'Orizabeños' without saying who any of them were. Here the comparative dimension might have taken a grip: in what ways, for instance, did the personnel of the town councils of the two cities differ from one another and over time? If they did, how significant was this? Postmasters are given considerable attention, but Orizaba's resident writer, Rafael Delgado, is not mentioned once despite probably being Mexico's most important nineteenth-century novelist.

On p. 101, the author tells us that the experiences of Santa Anna and the War of Reform radically altered the relation of Xalapa and Orizaba to the central government. Although we have Santa Anna, the reform, by comparison, has somehow slipped out of the picture. Much could have been made of the different experience of the two towns during this period of intense conflict. We are told about pamphlets, broadsheets and periodicals, but how did the great issues of the day divide opinion?

These remarks are designed to encourage a 'sequel' to the present *Forty Miles from the Sea*, which this reviewer would certainly welcome. The two towns, as I have intimated, make a marvellous research topic when taken together – that is, as opposed to histories of one or the other written in isolation. The State of Veracruz is rich and diverse and has a long and varied history. Although current historiography has placed attention on peasant and Indian communities in the northern areas – Papantla and the Huasteca, for example – the central core towns and the south have been strangely neglected. Rachel Moore's research makes a helpful contribution to remedying this neglect, and I hope she continues with this theme.

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Ernesto Capello, *City at the Center of the World: Space, History, and Modernity in Quito* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), pp. xx+290, $27.95, pb.

This book is not for everyone, and it is certainly not for those hoping for a comprehensive history of Quito from the 1880s to the 1940s. Instead, Ernesto Capello offers a more idiosyncratic selection of topics, focusing on what he terms the construction of 'chronotopes,' or variously, 'phantasmagorical chronotopes' (p. 159), the 'synechdochal chronotopical' (p. 171), 'heuristically developed chronotopes' or the 'polyvalence of multiple chronotopes inflected by an extended history of refraction' (p. 213).

What interests Capello is the unmasking of the essence of Quito's urban milieu. To do this he has selected several episodes in the city's history – moments, he thinks, when the shared perspective 'of a particular group ... [was] at the center of a global metanarrative' (p. xvii). Capello considers in turn the 'totalizing discourse[s]' (p. xvii) of rich white intellectuals, city map-makers, some members of a nearby indigenous community, and the Durini family architectural firm that worked for a time in the city. When the Spanish first came to the highlands of Ecuador in 1534 the local

indigenous people understood the valley's name, Quitu, to mean 'the center of the world'. Today the equator marker – *mitad del mundo* – lies just north of the city. Capello translates this phrase also as 'the center of the world', and to him many Quiteños saw their city in this way.

After President Eloy Alfaro took office in 1895, more national revenues generated by the busy commerce of the coast started flowing into the capital. Tapping into this resource, Quito enjoyed a time of urban renewal. There was special national attention given to dressing up the capital for the 1909 and 1922 centennial celebrations of key events in the process of independence. Capello does a fair job in exploring the struggles for local control over the building of potable water lines, sewers and other urban sanitation measures in these years.

To Capello, however, what most defined Quito in this era was its determination to market itself as a tourist destination, with the colonial old city as the principal attraction. It succeeded in this effort, he argues. Especially after the railway reached the capital in 1908, Quito developed 'a vibrant tourist economy' (p. xv) and 'transcended its relative provinciality to become a site of world historical importance' (p. 215). The city, he concludes, 'was established at the center of the world' (p. 217). But distant Quito, tucked away in the towering Andes, is hard to see as a big draw for tourists during these decades. Some convincing regarding 'the growing tourist trade' (p. 52) is surely in order. Even if one cannot accurately count the number of visitors, it should still be possible to count the number of new hotels. Capello does not do this. Nevertheless, he asserts that the tourist industry soared as city fathers acted forcefully to protect the old colonial city's architecture. It is not clear, however, how much forceful protection was really needed. Indeed, if it were the case that not much new business was actually coming to the city, it may have just been easier to add such structures as were needed outside of the old town in the open lands to the north.

Capello spends a good deal of space offering his thoughts about city maps from the era. To him maps were used not so much to find one's way around as to convey culturally coded messages. Although it takes him many words to decode these discourses, the uncovered messages do not always surprise – for example, that maps made for the rich focused on area businesses and did not always sketch in the poor neighbourhoods.

Many pages are given over to Capello's examination of several minor Ecuadorian works of fiction from this period. He labours through the content of a small journal, *Caricatura*, justifying this time allocation by stressing how popular and influential the publication was. The trouble is that the journal folded after just three years. Capello likewise presents a detailed family history of the Durinis, but aside from having designed a few city buildings and statues, it is not clear how important this family was.

Capello then turns to scrutiny of a minor land dispute involving the Tumipanba family in Santa Clara, a tiny hamlet away from the city. This 'tussle' (p. 189), as he terms it, concerned a small, unworked and evidently abandoned plot. It is hard to share in Capello's enthusiasm for working through the court records of what appears to have been a rather inconsequential quarrel.

This book is marred in several ways. Several of the map reproductions are so dark that they cannot be read. There are many errors of fact. Ecuador joined Gran Colombia in 1822, not 1824. Gabriel Garcia Moreno took power in 1861, not 1858. The Julian Revolution in 1925 installed a government that was in some ways mildly reformist, but was certainly not 'socialist'. Elected presidential

candidate Neptalí Bonifaz Ascasubi was born in Quito, not in Peru. The writing is an issue, too – to Capello, people aren't rich, they 'perform ... prosperity' (p. 198).

I do not know if what Capello is attempting is in fact doable. It may not be possible to find a core essence of a city, a 'totalizing metanarrative'. Cities are at least as complex as the people who live there, and whatever they may think of their cities, there are surely more opinions than there are people, depending on the day and one's mood. Capello's core assertion – the centrality of Quito – remains highly problematic. Quito is not now nor has it ever been at the centre of things, and it seems unlikely that many Quiteños ever really made this claim. Quito is a city near the equator. Quito is not a city at the centre of the world.

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Ximena Soruco Sologuren, *La ciudad de los cholos: mestizaje y colonialidad en Bolivia, siglos XIX y XX* (Lima: CANJE, IFEA and PIEB, 2011) pp. 258, pb.

The author of this book, published under the aegis of the French Institute of Andean Studies, has a PhD in literature from the University of Michigan, but the study is delightfully free of the enforced vanities of contemporary scholasticism. There is no barrage of tenure-track footnotes, and the reader is spared serial deconstructionist *enfilades*. One warning, though: if you prefer your etymology free of proctological intrusions (or vice versa), avoid p. 106, where Foucault makes a solitary and entirely apposite appearance. This is an interdisciplinary work well beyond the mainstream sense of some petty larceny from a neighbouring social science. Soruco varies her expressive register for the paintings (Melchor María Mercado for the mid-nineteenth century), novels (Nataniel Aguirre for the nineteenth century, Armando Chirveches and Enrique Finot for the twentieth), photographs (principally the Cordero studio, 1900–1960s) and dramas (largely the work of Raúl Salmón, 1940–70) that provide the 'textual' core of a rich cultural history of creole depiction of the *mestizo/cholo* over the last 150 years. The author herself refers simply to her historical 'register', and, already armed with an abundance of literary and visual evidence, makes modest reference to statistical, journalistic or other documentary sources. So, even though we are given a compellingly concise depiction of late nineteenth-century property disputes through the Arteche mining case, the primary concern here is with politico-cultural power as deployed through projections of race. The outstanding quality of the book's argument is its demonstration of the shifts in elitist essentialism over time, and in this chronological calibration it possesses a firm historical sensibility. The theory that underpins this account is indeed worn lightly, but this is by no means an under-theorised work – Soruco has shown elsewhere that she quite enjoys a little taking of abstractionist vapours, and here the ideas of Benedict Anderson and Doris Sommer are most politely demonstrated not to work for the case of Bolivia. Equally, as a politically engaged intellectual, Soruco brings her analytical reach allusively forward beyond the revolution of 1952, through the *katarismo* of the 1980s, to the government of Evo Morales, which could be depicted in terms of the lexicons identified here as Indian-mestizo (as opposed to the mestizo-creole racial register adopted after the 1952 revolution, the creole-mestizo voice emerging in the 1930s