only the colonial state but also the privileged position within it of this indigenous elite. Its almost unanimous response, as chapter six shows, was to proclaim allegiance to the Spanish crown and participate actively in the brutal repression of the rural insurgency that continued until 1783, notwithstanding the execution of Túpac Amaru and his immediate family in 1781. However, to the surprise and dismay of the collaborators, the inflexible peninsular bureaucrats who dominated local administration in the aftermath of the rebellion, preoccupied with both restoring order and increasing the yield of tribute, pursued a conscious policy of marginalising the potentially subversive Indian elite. Increasingly, *caciques* found themselves liable to be registered as tributaries, and local communities witnessed the tendency for the *audiencia* of Cusco to confirm the appointment to *cacicazgos* of well-connected creoles, essentially as tax collectors rather than as the defenders of indigenous rights. Conversely, the ethnic identities incorporated in the structures of the Hapsburg period were further blurred by the attempts of local creoles to appropriate an imagined Inca identity and legitimacy as part of their quest for regional autonomy from Lima, and even, as the so-called Rebellion of Pumacahua of 1814–1815 demonstrated, the creation of an independent Peru with Cusco as its capital.

This is a rich, complex book, which throws much new light upon the history of the indigenous elite of southern Peru, particularly after 1780. It concludes with the conventional observation that the maladroit attempts of Simón Bolívar to improve the lot of the Indians by abolishing not only tribute but also *cacicazgos* and the inalienability of community lands brought in their train the marginalisation and pauperisation of the indigenous population of southern Peru in the post-1824, creole-dominated republic. One suspects that the next step for revisionism will be to question if this was really what happened, particularly in the Titicaca basin.

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Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia 1795–1831* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), pp. viii + 203, $60.00 hb, $24.95 pb.

*Myths of Harmony* by Marixa Lasso is a thought-provoking and timely new study of racial discourse in the formation of the Colombian nation state during the long independence period. The central argument of the book is that during the independence period a myth of racial harmony was developed in Colombia which has endured until recent times. Lasso holds that Colombian patriots during independence declared legal racial equality and constructed a powerful nationalist ideology that proclaimed the fraternity of Colombians of all colours. As a consequence, both racial hierarchies and conflicts based on race were deemed unpatriotic (p. 9). To claim that such a myth exists in Colombia and in Latin America more generally, is of course not new. The novelty of Lasso's study is rather the ways in which she explores the construction of the myth from various perspectives, how it surfaces in different texts and situations, and in particular how the myth structured political space and limited the aspirations of *pardos* or Afro-Colombians (the terms preferred by Lasso) in the early republic.

This short book contains seven dense chapters. They are presented in a loose chronological order and treat the subject from varying perspectives and within

different geographic contexts, although the city of Cartagena figures prominently. While the first, titled 'The Wars of Independence', reads like a conventional introduction, the second – 'Racial Tensions in Late Colonial Society' – focuses on the province of Cartagena and includes brief discussions of the demographic importance of *pardos* in colonial society, the heated debates between creole elites and bourbon reformers over the *gracias al sacar* and the possible repercussions in Cartagena of the rumours about racial disturbances elsewhere in the Caribbean. This is the least interesting part of the book, partly because social and political aspects of late colonial society in the Colombian Caribbean have recently been studied in more detail by other scholars and partly because Lasso claims that experiences of racial domination were essentially similar across the Americas. The contestable implication of this view is that we should pay less attention to the colonial origins of racial identities, and instead focus on how the different national and republican myths of racial relations were constructed on the base of allegedly similar colonial and racist experiences.

Chapter three focuses on the discussions of race and citizenship in Cádiz between 1810 and 1812, the responses to the Cadiz constitution in New Granada, and the background development of a republican ideology of racial harmony. The perspective in this chapter is top-down. Lasso identifies elite positions on race and citizenship as these developed among leading deputies at the Cortes, in newspapers and other contemporary published media, in the decrees of the Cartagena and Caracas juntas, and how they were reflected in speeches of leading patriots. She efficiently describes how legal racial equality became a cornerstone of patriot rhetoric and served as a fundamental basis for framing Spanish despotism and colonialism in opposition to American independence and equality. Wisely, she leaves open the question of whether the new rhetoric reflected primarily strategic interests or more humanitarian and democratic ideals.

The fourth chapter – 'The First Republic and the *Pardos*' – is a detailed analysis of the independent republic of Cartagena (1811–1816), the political conflicts that permeated its short existence and their racial underpinnings. Complementing and in part challenging recent narratives by Alfonso Múnera and Aline Helg on the same subject, Lasso has the *pardos* playing a crucial role as supporters of the radical faction of Gabriel Gutiérrez de Piñeres in opposition to the *aristocrátas* led by José María García de Toledo. Again, Lasso's primary interest is the dynamics of political language; more precisely how *piñeristas* used against the local aristocracy the very same principled arguments on equality, merit and virtue that the American deputies used against *peninsulares* and royalists. Piñeristas accused the *toledistas* of being aristocratic, harbouring secret pro-Spanish sentiments and acting in ways contrary to the principles of independence and republicanism. The toledistas in turn, responded by charging the piñeristas with instigating disorders that could lead to another Haiti. The real or imagined fear of race war, according to Lasso, henceforth became a constant element in the Colombian myth of racial harmony and was used against those who criticised the democratic shortcomings of the republic.

Chapters six and seven, 'Life-Stories of Afro-Colombian Patriots' and 'Race War', constitute the most interesting part of the book. They illustrate both the limits of racial equality in early republican Colombia and the extent to which race became a political taboo, making overt state racism impossible. Based primarily on court cases from the 1820s, chapter six discusses the fortunes of master gunpowder maker Buenaventura Pérez, shoemaker Cornelio Ortiz, slave Tomasíco, *alcalde* Valentín

Arcía, colonel Remigio Márquez and admiral José Padilla (all Afro-Colombians in Lasso's view) and their varying degrees of success in challenging white domination through the justice system. It shows how the new republican language of racial equality both enabled *pardos* to seek justice, positions and rights that had previously been denied them *and* at the same time limited their possibilities of expressing their aspirations in terms of racial grievances. The slightly misnomer chapter 'Race War' discusses the possible meanings of the rumours of race war that circulated during independence and the early republic but which never materialised. Instead of explaining the absence of outright racial rebellions, Lasso tries to show how the rumours of race war found in secret reports, closed senate hearings and private letters constituted a crucial aspect of the early republican political disputes and discourse on race, especially in the conflict between the supporters of Bolívar and Santander. The final outcome of the political struggles of the 1820s was that racial grievances became a taboo, 'not by further repressing *pardos*, but by upholding the notion of racial harmony' (p. 150).

Although readers familiar with Colombian historiography on the nineteenth century may object that Lasso simplifies the complexity of early republican political conflicts and reduces them to one-dimensional debates over racial issues, her study shows at least that the racial aspect cannot be ignored. *Myths of Harmony* is thus a valuable contribution and a novel interpretation, making it compulsory reading for any serious student of early nineteenth-century Colombia.

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Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *La revolución política durante la época de la independencia: El Reino de Quito, 1808–1822* (Quito: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar; Corporación Editora Nacional; Biblioteca de Historia vol. 20, 2006), pp. 238, pb.

It is a sobering thought, as 2010 inexorably draws nearer, that most of the major Spanish American countries are planning lavish celebrations to mark the bicentenaries of premature bids for independence which, with the arguable exception of the *25 de Mayo* events in Buenos Aires, hindered rather than helped the creation of independent republics. The case of Ecuador is particularly poignant for the country's national day commemorates the 'Quito revolution' of 10 August 1809, the clear aim of which, as Jaime O. Rodríguez explains, was not to secure independence but, rather, to pledge fidelity to the captive Ferdinand VII. Although it is true that the decision of the city's *cabildo abierto* to establish a governing *junta* in the king's name was preceded by a period of tension between peninsular and creole factions within the urban elite, it was only the violent reaction to it of the hardline viceroy of Peru, Fernando de Abascal (1806–1816), already in control of the rival city of Guayaquil (the entire province had been transferred from the viceroyalty of New Granada to that of Peru in 1803) that created the myth that the *quiteños* were aiming to secure independence. The outcome was a brutal repression, which included the sacking of the city by black soldiers of the Royal Regiment of Lima, severe judicial sanctions and, in August 1810, the slaughter of many of the leaders of the 1809 movement in response to an attempt by the citizens to free prisoners. Throughout these tense twelve months, other towns and cities in the presidency of Quito – Cuenca, Loja