and legal rights which militia service implied and which the authorities ultimately denied.

Out of this came the rebellion, whose scope and implications Childs recounts vividly, stressing its historic significance: for he argues, almost certainly correctly, that the rebellion – which included the demand for independence in its discourse – was the strongest factor in guaranteeing *criollo* loyalty to Spain, at precisely the moment when other *criollos* in the continent were contemplating separation. However, Childs also argues something else of importance: that, rather than seeing Cuba as an exception to the Spanish American norm – of an increasingly separatist *criollo* population, we should instead see the island's historical experience (in this respect) as following a different pattern, that of the wider slave-owning Caribbean. Indeed, within the latter context, the exception was Haiti and not Cuba; for elsewhere, the spectre of more or less simultaneous slave revolt (three such incidents are recounted briefly by Childs: in Jamaica, Virginia and Guiana) was sufficient to guarantee continued conservatism, loyalty and historical amnesia.

The overall impact of this study, therefore, is a welcome contribution to the debates about slave rebellion and also about the nature of the societies of both the slave-owning Caribbean islands and of the free people of colour. Its detail is always fascinating and telling, and its argument sound and much needed.

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Matthew Brown (ed.), *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital* (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. xi+274, £19.99; €27.00, pb.

Rarely does a single volume illustrate so clearly how new methods can improve an already venerable body of historiography. The distinguished historians and literary theorists who came together at the January 2007 conference that resulted in this book were motivated by Ann Stoler's recent suggestion that informal empire is an 'unhelpful euphemism'. The essays in this book argue instead that despite a wide variety of views regarding the extent of exploitation, empire remains an important paradigm through which to view the Anglo-South American relationship.

The book's title is a bit misleading and could do with some qualifications. Rather than describing informal empire in Latin America, this book is specifically about British informal empire in South America. To narrow it further, six of the nine chapters are entirely about Argentina, with one other at least partially on that republic. A notably straightforward contribution by Malcolm Deas on Colombia should be read as the exception that proves the rule. Deas explains that as a country lacking trade and foreign interests, Colombia was not part of the informal empire of any other state throughout the nineteenth century. The concept of informal empire should obviously not be used as a blanket that covers all of South America, but rather as a paradigm for how Argentina, and perhaps a few other republics including Brazil, related to the outside world.

And even within these limited geographic parameters, the overall sense is that the informal empire was less hegemonic than historians over the past decades have tended to believe. Now-traditional descriptions of empire based on political or economic dominance, the so-called imperialism of free trade and its progeny, are being modified but not supplanted by scholarship focused on cultural aspects of

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imperialism. At its best, the extension of postcolonial theories to the study of Latin America brings illuminating results. Louise Guenther's chapter on the gendered discourses of Britons in Brazil provides new insights into the mentalities and prejudices of these merchants and their semi-insular communities, while pointing out in surprisingly vivid terminology how their surroundings 'invaginated' and transformed the merchants themselves. Such cultural history proves that imperial influences were a two-way street. Other literature-based chapters are less successful. Charles Darwin's impressions of Patagonia are in themselves interesting, but it takes a theory-driven leap of faith (rather than adherence to tangible evidence) to conclude that Darwin's descriptions of the landscape as 'sublime' made any difference in the Argentine authorities' decisions to wipe out the native populations of that undeniably visually striking region. As other chapters argue quite persuasively, Britain's overall cultural impact on Latin America in education, politics and civic life, was far less than that of Spain, Italy, and even France, despite the comparative dominance of British investments and trade through much of the region.

Such contributions from scholars noted for their adherence to newer literary theories help to convey a sense of the overall possibilities when such theories are applied to Latin America. However, the essays from seasoned political and economic historians best exemplify the most intriguing results of interdisciplinary postcolonial studies. Alan Knight and David Rock, eminent historians of Mexican and Argentine politics, respectively, contribute chapters suggesting the limitations of viewing the Anglo-Argentine relationship as an imperialist one. Both suggest that it is incorrect to state that Britain had a powerful influence on the culture of individual Argentines, or that either the Britons or Argentines who interacted with each other in the long nineteenth century believed that imperialism was in evidence. Perhaps the most telling example of this open mindedness of traditional historians to new methodologies is the fascinating chapter by Charles Jones on attempts by British banks to undermine political nationalism in Argentina between 1880 and 1892, an episode often portrayed as exemplifying British imperialism. His dissection of the mentalities of two of the leading participants in this crisis leads him to suggest that there may have been an informal empire in South America, but there was little imperialism in the intentions of the men who lived it. Jones quite bluntly criticises his own past scholarship for leaving out the personal, recognising his own intellectual transformation and his growing appreciation for the possibilities of blending innovative ideas with older styles of scholarship. As Jones's chapter shows, it is undoubtedly worthwhile for historians to learn new tricks. It is precisely this merging of more individual-centric cultural history with economic and political history that Andrew Thompson, in his conclusion, suggests should now be at the top of the agenda for historians of informal empire.

There are of course some weaknesses. Thompson is right to suggest that the study of informal empire in Latin America over the past two centuries would benefit from comparative approaches, linking the region both to the 'British world' and to the broader world of globalised capitalism. The consistent focus on British relationships with South American states and people comes at a cost, as the writers ignore other imperialist motivations such as British competition with other western powers. In any collection from various contributors, there will be inconsistencies and repetitions. For example, descriptions of the hoary historiography of the imperialism of free trade – Robinson, Gallagher, Platt, and so forth – were repeated in too many of the chapters. But overall this is a collection in which the editor sensibly allowed each

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contributor to speak for him or herself. The cumulative effect by the end of this book vindicates Matthew Brown's declaration in his introduction that the debate over informal empire remains worthwhile. It will be interesting to see over the next few years what historians influenced by these essays end up writing about Latin America.

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Ignacio Klich (ed.), *Árabes y Judíos en América Latina: Historia, representaciones y desafíos* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editora Iberoamericana, 2006), pp. 409, pb.

This book arises from a conference held in Buenos Aires in December 2004 which considered the history of immigration and relations between Arabs and Jews in Latin America during the last century. The conference aimed to de- mythologise this history, to uncover hidden parallels and relations of cooperation between the communities, and to facilitate dialogue and cooperation as ways of combating religious and cultural intolerance of any kind. For the editor and contributors to this volume, anti Semitism has its parallel in 'Islamophobia', particularly after the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States and the consequent identification of 'Islamic terrorism' as a problem in international politics.

The book aims to uncover a hidden history of shared experiences, cooperation and common institutions between Arabs and Jews, much of which has been pushed into the shadows by continuing Arab Israeli conflicts. As many of the authors points out, Zionism had little initial appeal among the Sephardic and Arab-Jewish communities, who saw it as a secular political movement of the Ashkenazim. It was only after 1948 and the creation of Israel that Zionism becomes a key dividing line between Arabs and Jews and in any case that dividing line took time to consolidate.

The authors show that the very terminology of 'Arabs' and 'Jews' is problematic, and obscures considerable heterogeneity within each 'group'. Most of the immigrants referred to as Arab in Latin America come from what are now Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, with smaller contingents from other parts of the old Ottoman empire. Most Arab immigrants in fact are Christian, not Muslim. The Jewish community contains Sephardim from North Africa and the Levant, 'Oriental' Jews from Ottoman realms, and Ashkenazim from Eastern and Central Europe. With the exception of Argentina and Brazil (and to a much lesser extent Cuba and Uruguay) the numbers involved are small. In the Americas, by an overwhelming margin the largest number of immigrants went to the United States.

The various contributions to the volume are driven by a desire to collect and present data that document personal and community histories of migration, mobility, inter community cooperation, as well as public attitudes and state policies towards immigration and towards classes of migrants viewed as undesirable. Many countries saw immigration as a way of improving (whitening) the population, and a public discourse often identified the nation with Catholic and militarist elements. In this context, Jews and Arabs were clearly undesirable and classified as such in law and public policy. The contributors furnish a wealth of historical and biographical material and underscore parallels between the migration experiences of the two communities, including patterns of economic activity, social mobility, institutionalisation and prejudice. Arabic speakers (mostly Christian with smaller numbers of Muslims and Jews) began arriving in the region in the 1890s, along with 'Oriental' and

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