McFarlane presents both sides of the conflict aiming to understand the loyalists as much as those fighting for independence. He provides a clear analysis of what led to defeat and retreat in both Mexico and Peru that had been the centres for loyalism, and the impact that the return of the liberal constitutional regime had on the wars of independence. The book concentrates on the people who fought the wars, but not just on the commanders. It also looks into the motives that led those from different sectors of society to support one side or the other, and how in many cases this was not really a choice but a matter of where circumstances placed particular individuals. Indians, slaves and other members of the popular sectors played a role in the process and appear in the narrative showing that there was not just one kind of response, and that actors had the opportunity to try to make the best of the circumstances they were presented with.

This tour de force concludes with a final section that aims to bring together the main arguments put forward. McFarlane asserts that the wars did not have clearly defined beginnings 'for they did not originate in a desire for independence that was firmly implanted or clearly announced at their outset' (p. 410). They were triggered by demands for autonomy and started as an offshoot of a wider international war that then became a war between Americans: 'essentially civil wars' fought with the 'military resources inherited from the Bourbon regime' (p. 411). Loyalty was one of the main reasons the wars lasted so long and were so complex: it was impossible for Spain to fight in so many different smaller theatres at such a distance. Finally, McFarlane concludes that these civil wars among the elite 'opened fractures along racial and social fault lines' (p. 417) and led to the creation of armies that, even if they did not embody nations, played a crucial part in establishing states. Its focus on war and the level of detail provided in this book make it indispensable to anyone who truly wants to understand how the independence of Spanish America came about.

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Alex Loayza Pérez (ed.), *La independencia peruana como representación: Historiografía, conmemoración y escultura pública* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2016), pp. 397, pb.

A few years before the celebration of the bicentennial of Peruvian independence, this book edited by Alex Loayza Pérez is a welcome and timely addition to the debates that have been taking place and will surely increase in the coming years regarding the events the country faced starting in 1821 with José de San Martín and his liberation army's arrival in Lima up until the battle of Ayacucho in 1824.

As the editor argues in the book's introduction, the objective of the chapters included in the volume is not to see the independence process as a single event, but to analyse the ideas people have had about the independence process, through the lenses of representation, social memory and the politics of history (*Geschichtspolitik*) as the book's central themes of analysis. Its goal then is to focus on the narratives that have shaped the memory of Peruvian independence, its diverse representations and historical accounts, and the reasons why different subjects have been included or excluded from those representations.

In general terms, there are various aspects of the book worth mentioning. The book is divided into three sections, and deals with three main topics: historiography, commemoration and public sculpture. The chapters analyse the problems of representation and the construction of social memory from an interdisciplinary perspective including history, anthropology and art history.

After an introduction that defines the book's theoretical and methodological approach, Alex Loayza opens the volume with 'Del Perú mestizo a la idea crítica, nación e independencia, 1920–1980'. The chapter provides a detailed historiographical analysis about the construction of a hegemonic discourse regarding the idea of a mestizo nationalism and its later criticism by a new generation of historians during the 1970s, a moment that coincided with the celebration of the sesquicentennial of independence and the appearance of social history in Peru. Loayza analyses local historiography as well as that of European and American peruvianists, who since 1970s have opened up new fields of inquiry regarding Peruvian independence. It is an interesting attempt to decentre a history that generally speaking has focused on analysing the narratives and official commemorations originating from the capital. The book includes chapters such as those by Carlota Casalino Sen, Guillemette Martin, Carlos Hurtado Ames and Iván Caro Acevedo, who analyse the construction of a historical figure in Tacna, the commemorations of the centennial of independence in Arequipa and Jauja, and the commemoration in Ayacucho of the centennial of the its eponymous battle.

Although from a different perspective, the idea of decentring the analysis is also present in Pablo Ortemberg's chapter 'Los centenarios de 1921 y 1924, desde Lima hacia el mundo: ciudad capital, experiencias compartidas y política regional'. Rather than focusing on independence celebrations outside Lima, Ortemberg privileges a connected history that situates the celebrations organised in the Peruvian capital within a continental political perspective, comparing those celebrations with others that occurred years before in countries such as Argentina and Chile.

As sometimes happens with edited volumes, not all the chapters deliver what is promised in the introduction of the book. The topics addressed in each chapter work well together presenting a coherent body, respecting the themes proposed initially. However, some do not match the analytical intentions of the book, choosing instead to describe in detail some celebrations of independence. It is also evident that better coordination between the authors could have avoided unnecessary repetition. Most of the chapters address events that occurred between 1921 and 1924 during Leguía's government, and each presents its own general context of the same period, when it would have been more efficient to present only one in the introduction, allowing the authors to go directly to the particular contexts of each chapter.

In the same way, an edited volume like this needs a concluding text that connects the arguments in each chapter in order to emphasise common ideas and to reinforce the purpose of the book as a whole. Throughout, however, it seems clear that these connections are related to the fact that the development of a national consciousness in Peru remains an unresolved question. The idea is repeated throughout the book that national consciousness is a disputed issue: although in the past it reached certain levels of cultural hegemony, it was and still is a source of tension because of regionalism, racial divisions and demands for greater social cohesion. These are relevant topics that merit a conclusion by the editor or an academic specifically invited to reflect on these or other important issues pertaining to topics found in the book.

These observations, however, do not detract from the merit of an opportune volume that dialogues in an interesting way with historiography from the last 20 years and will surely also dialogue with future publications that will come out in the context of the bicentennial of Peruvian independence. It is a book that will be useful not only for specialists in the areas of art history and cultural history, but also for those involved in planning the celebration of 200 years of Peruvian independence.

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Will Fowler, *Independent Mexico: The* Pronunciamiento *in the Age of Santa Anna, 1821–1858* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), pp. xxx + 358, £28.99, pb.

To study the *pronunciamiento*, Will Fowler argues, is to study the history and politics of the first decades of Mexico's independence. Literally translated as 'pronouncement', this was a statement issued by a range of political actors, civilian and military, listing grievances against the state. Although it was backed by the threat of force, Fowler explains, the *pronunciamiento* was not a coup d'état or a revolt because it did not necessarily aim to bring down the government. Rather, the intention was to compel the government to address the concerns outlined in the pronouncement, or else violence might ensue. *Pronunciamientos*, therefore, are best understood as 'forceful negotiations' and, with some notable exceptions, were comparatively peaceful. Fowler traces their evolution, and argues that they flourished in the context of a weak state that was unable to impose its authority on the nation or to defend the recently founded institutions. Over 1,350 *pronunciamientos* were issued in Mexico in the years 1821–58, and they played a key part in every major political change. By writing the history of the *pronunciamiento*, therefore, Fowler notes, he has 'inadvertently [written] a concise history of Independent Mexico' (p. 255). This history is the culmination of Fowler's 16 years of research into the *pronunciamiento*, and the fourth and final volume of a series funded by the UK-based Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The first chapter defines the *pronunciamiento*, establishes its typology, and explains the process by which most *pronunciamientos* played out, before reviewing the historiography. The remaining four chapters are chronological (1820–1; 1821–31; 1832–42; 1843–58) and follow the same structure, which includes a narrative of major political events for the period and an analysis of the main clusters of *pronunciamientos*. Running through the work is the concept of 'mimetic insurrectionism', developed most extensively in Chapter 2. Fowler defines this as the propensity of people in a context of 'acute social injustice, political oppression, and or/economic as well as racial inequality' to copy examples of insurrectionary tactics if these are seen to have worked (p. 40). Fowler argues that the *pronunciamiento* became the dominant way of doing politics in the early decades of independent Mexico because the first examples of its use were strikingly effective, bringing about major political change relatively peacefully. The key example is Agustín de Iturbide's Plan of Iguala (1821), which declared Mexican independence. The plan became the template for subsequent would-be insurrectionists and their *pronunciamientos* primarily because 'it worked' (p. 75).