

The theater of the oppressed,⁴ which uses the dramatic form as an instrument of public political engagement, is also pursuing these objectives and prodding audiences into being its active participants. In the fifth chapter we are confronted with the script of *Undocumented, Unafraid*, theater of the oppressed written by all the coauthors. Based on real stories of migrants, it translates some of our research findings about immigrant workers' rights into an intelligible message for ordinary people. Thus, the research can have a direct positive impact on the migrant community.

Despite the coauthors' slightly different opinions about whether and how ethnography can be decolonized, it is certain that the publication serves as a great example of the effort to do so. With its reflective method towards the positionality, privileges, and transformations they both experienced during the research, it offers a more conscious attitude towards the fieldwork setting from which new possibilities in the field can arise. First the book emphasizes the importance of turning to theorists outside the usual Western canon as a way of challenging the authority of colonial anthropology. Secondly, according to the coauthors, it appeals to researchers to think more consciously about what ethnographic research is, how it is conducted, and what its purposes are.

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(Written in English by the author)

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Jonathan Rosa, *Looking Like a Language, Sounding Like a Race. Raciolinguistic Ideologies and the Learning of Latinidad*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, 286 pp. ISBN 978-01-9063-473-5.

In the last fifteen years or so, we have witnessed a dramatic increase in homicides and acts of violence against people of color in the United States. Although the main targets of this hate are predominantly African Americans, prejudice, hostility and even outright violence is also increasingly evident against Americans of Hispanic origin⁵, who are now one of the largest minorities in the United States and already make up the majority of the local population in many places, especially in the Southwest⁶, which is logically reflected in various disciplines such as social anthropology, sociology, psychology, demography, and linguistics, including linguistic anthropology and sociolinguistics. One such work is the recently published book by the young sociocultural and linguistic anthropologist Jonathan Rosa, showing how ethnic origin ("race"), education, and especially language competence, in particular among people of Latin American descent (Rosa uses the term "Latinx" by which he means a gender nonbinary alternative to Latina, Latino, and Latin@) to refer to US-based persons of Latin American descent) are stigmatized in American everyday life despite various efforts to use inclusive language.

The central thesis of Rosa's book is the strong claim that race and language, at least in the contemporary United States, are key factors in modern governance, by which Rosa means the legitimacy of racial capitalism and the colonial power relations out of which this form of governance evolved (pp. 4, 5, 213). Although Rosa makes several

⁴ The specific dramatic form called Theater of the oppressed (TO) was developed by a drama theorist Augusto Boal in the 1970s as a tool to liberate the oppressed people by themselves through participative theater experience. TO has become popular practice among social and political activist worldwide. See: Augusto BOAL, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, 3rd. ed., London: Pluto press, 2008.

⁵ According to data from American investigative journalist Tonya Mosley published in an article *The 'Forgotten' History of Anti-Latino Violence in the U.S.* for Here & Now on 25 November 2019 and managed by Boston radio station WBUR, there were 485 hate crimes against citizens of Latin American descent in 2018.

⁶ According to U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics made up about 20% of the U.S. population in 2020, i.e. about 65,000,000.

references to, for example, Foucault's concept of governmentality, based on a broad conception of power as a specific style of governance, particularly in the conditions of emerging modern European society, he bases his thesis more on recent theoretical and empirical inspirations reflecting researches primarily in the United States. It is not possible to mention all of them in this review, so I will include at least the ones I consider the most important. Rosa draws on the notion of *racial naturalization* developed by the Indian American linguistic anthropologist Shalini Shankar in her research on Asian Americans. Racial naturalization is concerned with the ways in which these (phenotypically) "non-native" Americans are recast through multicultural advertising into the image of the contemporary American racial landscape, which, while on the one hand acknowledging cultural or linguistic difference that is outwardly publicized, on the other hand demanded less explicitly the duty to be a model citizen, i.e. an American.⁷ Perhaps a stronger inspiration for Jonathan Rosa has been the work of H. Samy Alim, professor of anthropology at Stanford University, on the direct connection between language and race in his research on the coexistence of 'white' and 'other' Americans, for which Alim, along with the African-American English professor Geneva Smitherman (2016), coins the somewhat provocative term *raciolinguistics*, which explores how language is used to construct race, and how ideas about race influence language and its use. The origins of raciolinguistics thus formulated clearly allude to the speeches of the first black American president, Barack Obama. Alim speaks of the "Black-language-speaking" in reference to their speech style, somewhat pejoratively referred to as *Blaccent*, and in particular to the public reactions and metalinguistic commentary that revealed many aspects of the linguistic and racial politics of the contemporary United States. Barack Obama's constant vacillation between discriminatory discourses of race, citizenship, religion, and language led Alim and Smitherman to think more deeply about what it means to articulate when one is (in the US and in this case) black. The central problem of raciolinguistics is thus obvious: What does it mean when

one speaks as a racial subject in contemporary America?

From these inspirations, it is clear what Rosa sees as the necessity to examine the connaturalization of language, race, and modern forms of governance in the contemporary United States when he speaks of their birth or rootedness in the distant colonial past. First, it was the relationship of supremacy of the European "race" over the Native American Indian population, leading to the genocide of some tribes, then later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the creation of a slave system directed against people of African descent, and in the twentieth century and contemporary times against other newcomers whose native language is not English and who are also often distinguished by their skin color. Rosa may be speaking somewhat simplistically of the dualism of European-ness vs. other non-European-ness, or Whiteness vs. Blackness, etc., but that does not change the line of his argument: ethno-racial status is still very much present in the contemporary United States, deeply embedded in white supremacist colonial management schemes that homogenize and differentiate populations in varying ways. On the linguistic, or perhaps more precisely, speech level, the result is often a violent exertion⁸ by many speakers and a drive for linguistic inclusion, as Jonathan Rosa tries to show in his book.

The ethnographic research, based mostly on interviews with students and their teachers, participation in school classes or in Local School Council meetings supplemented by media analysis was conducted between 2007 and 2010 at a newly founded public high school on the Near Northwest Side of Chicago. During the period of the author's fieldwork in the New Northwest High School (NNHS), Chicago Public Schools classified nearly 90% of NNHS's approximately 1,000 students as Mexican or Puerto Rican (and almost 92% overall from any national Latinx subgroup); almost all of the non-Latinx students were classified as African Americans, reflecting the school's proximity to the predominantly African-American West Side of the city. In efforts to conceptualize the connaturalization of linguistic and racial borders, this book deploys what

⁷ Shalini SHANKAR, "Racial Naturalization, Advertising, and Model Consumers for a New Millennium", *Journal of Asian American Studies* 16/2, 2013, pp. 159–160.

⁸ Indeed, Pierre Bourdieu has written about exertion in specific speech situations see Peter AUER, *Jazyková interakce* [Linguistic Interaction], Praha: Lidové Noviny, 2014, p. 230

Nelson Flores and Jonathan Rosa have termed a *raciolinguistic perspective*, drawing, as noted, on the raciolinguistics of Alim and Smitherman⁹ that analyzes the ongoing rearticulation of colonial distinctions between populations and modes of communication that come to be positioned as more or less normatively European. Rosa looks for further inspiration in the works of the Japanese linguistic anthropologist Miyako Inoue, especially in her theorization of the “listening subject” as the masculine subject position that produces the overdetermined category of Japanese women’s language in the context of Japan’s political and economic modernization. Through the adaptation of Inoue’s analysis of Japanese women’s language in hegemonic representations and perceptions rather than the communicative practices of Japanese women themselves, Rosa shows how Latinx linguistic practices are construed from the perspective of hegemonically positioned White perceiving subjects. This is exemplified by the author’s analyses of racialized ideologies of “languagelessness” through which Latinxs are perceived as producing neither English nor Spanish legitimately. Moreover, Rosa also examines “Inverted Spanglish” practices through which Latinxs invoke White Americans’ stereotypes about Latinxs. Thus, relations among ideologies of race and language – raciolinguistic ideologies – are at the center of the analysis. This raciolinguistic perspective combines Inoue’s argument that “noise and language are neither naturally pre-given nor phenomenologically immanent” (2003b: 157), with Barnor Hesse’s “colonial constitution of race thesis,” which holds that “[r]ace is not in the eye of the beholder or on the body of the objectified,” but rather “an inherited western, modern-colonial practice of violence, assemblage, superordination, exploitation, and segregation [...] demarcating the colonial rule of Europe over non-Europe” (2016: viii).¹⁰

The book consists of an extensive introduction (pp. 1–30), followed by two parts with six chapters (each part having three chapters), a conclusion and extensive notes. In Chapter One (pp. 33–70) of the first part called “Looking Like a Language: Latinx Ethnoracial Category-Making”, Rosa explores how interconnected binary gender stereotypes about Latino men’s criminality and Latina women’s promiscuity became central components of the anxieties surrounding race, class, gender, and sexuality that structured NNHS’s project of youth socialization, and describes how institutional efforts toward managing student bodies cohered in an explicitly stated administrative project of transforming students from “gangbangers” and “hoes” into Young Latino Professionals, which is the program and goal of the principal of NNHS dr. Baez (pseudonym). In short, “gangbangers” are members of a gang, who participate in gang activity. This can be anything from graffiti to shooting up a rival gang. “Hoes” are usually young girls offering sexual services (whores). This is how people usually see Latinxs, but Rosa tries to show that they can become young Latino professionals. Gangbanger and ho are conventionally constructed not only as binary gender concepts but also as heteronormative. As an emergent local category, Young Latino Professional did not necessarily stipulate normative gender and sexual identities in this way (p. 43). Rosa argues and points to examples that the simultaneous embracing and stigmatization of Latinx identity is no coincidence. This approach involves a negotiation with respect to the relationship between what Leo Chavez and Arlene Dávila call the “Latino threat narrative”¹¹ and “Latino spin”¹² respectively. These joint discourses allow seemingly opposing characterizations of Latinxs, such as “illegal, tax burden, overly sexual, patriotic, family-oriented, hard-working, and model

⁹ Jonathan ROSA – Nelson FLORES, “Unsettling Race and Language: Toward a Raciolinguistic Perspective”, *Language in Society* 46/5, 2017, pp. 621–647.

¹⁰ Cited according ROSA, *Looking Like a Language*, pp. 6–7. For original texts see Miyako INOUE, “The listening subject of Japanese modernity and his auditory double: Citing, sighting, and siting the modern Japanese woman”, *Cultural Anthropology* 18/2, 2003, pp. 156–193; Barnor HESSE,

“Preface: Counter-Racial Formation Theory”, in: P. Khalil Saucier – Tryon P. Woods (eds.), *Conceptual Aphasia in Black: Displacing Racial Formation*, Lanham – Boulder – New York – London: Lexington Books, 2016, pp. vii–xi.

¹¹ Leo CHAVEZ, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*, Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2008.

¹² Arlene DÁVILA, *Latino Spin: Public Image and the Whitewashing of Race*, New York: NYU Press, 2008.

consumer [...]”¹³ Therefore, on the one hand, Latinx youth are often stereotyped as gangbangers and hoers — this is the *threat narrative* (Chavez); on the other, there is some hope that they could become young professionals and join the rest of America in the largely imaginary middle class — this is the *spin narrative* (Dávila). Rosa argues that NNHS tries to challenge the inverse ideological relationship between class status and marked ethnoraciality. While prevailing ideologies in the United States position upward socioeconomic mobility in opposition to ethnoracial difference, the NNHS’ category of Young Latino Professionals attempts to allow students to escape socioeconomic marginalization without losing their Latinx identities.

In Chapter Two (pp. 71–101), Rosa focuses more on the students themselves, on what they understand to be a primary axis of differentiation within the school: “Mexican” and “Puerto Rican”. Rosa is aware of other distinctions within the various Latino communities in the United States, in the case of Mexico, for example, *norte/sur*, *brazier/paisa*/Mexican American, etc. These are important, he argues, in other parts of the United States, and even in other parts of Chicago, but they have not been prevalent in the Mexican-Puerto Rican relations in the NNHS, which is why in this review, in keeping with the author, I write about Mexicans or Puerto Ricans, not Mexican Americans or Puerto Rican Americans (p. 87). Students construct and experience these categories through diasporic imaginaries that remap the boundaries between Puerto Rican and Mexican identities within Chicago. Rosa demonstrates how the erasure of Mexican-Puerto Rican difference within the school’s project of creating Young Latino Professionals paradoxically (re)produce rigid discourses of distinction between self-identified Puerto Rican and Mexican students. These self-identifying students’ discourses of Mexican/Puerto Rican difference are analyzed in relation to the institutional trajectories and the broader political-economic dynamics that shape the construction and management of ethnoracial identities within NNHS. A number of Rosa’s interviews with students revealed that despite the prevailing belief at the NNHS that Puerto Ricans and Mexicans are separate “races”, when students were asked whether they consider romantic relationships between Puerto Ricans and Mexicans

to be interracial, they almost always rejected this designation. Analysis of the interviews revealed that students understood Mexicanness and Puerto Ricanness not only in terms of governmental categories, but also as based on a long history of face-to-face relationships between the two groups; they were often classmates, friends, playmates, neighbors, and family members.

In the rather complicated third chapter (pp. 102–122) Rosa analyses the ways in which emblems of Latinx identity that are recognizable in everyday life are created. In particular, Rosa focuses on the processes through which *qualia* (culturally mediated perceptions that structure embodiment and experience) associated with objects, practices, and bodies are progressively linked in the formation of contemporary Latinx identity. Rosa’s key claim here is that the construction of perceived differences between Latinx subgroups on the one hand and between Latinos and non-Latinos on the other is crucial to the production of the emblems, embodiments, and experiences that constitute the fact of *Latinidad*. Drawing on the analysis of discourses of Mexican-Puerto Rican difference from the previous chapter, in this section Rosa shows how the construction of, and familiarity with, Mexican and Puerto Rican models of personhood emerge as repertoires of *Latinidad*. NNHS Latino students’ constructions and experiences of *Latinidad* enter into a critical dialogue with broader discourses of the “Latino threat” and the “Latino spin”. In the Chicago NNHS setting, discourses of “Latino threat” correspond to the figures of the “gangbanger” and “ho”, while narratives of “Latino spin” correspond to the figure of the “Young Latino professional”. Rosa’s analysis revealed that although NNHS students creatively seek to challenge the boundaries that make these figures recognizable, they are limited in this effort to escape stigmatizing views because they are still deemed unfit for legitimate political subjectivity. Students alternately reproduce, bend, renew, and reject this stigmatization. Later in this chapter, Rosa demonstrates the ways in which the dichotomies of Mexican-Puerto Rican and gangbanger/young Latino professional have become associated with the *qualia* of “ghettoness” and “lameness”, and how the perception of these qualities constitutes emblems, embodiments, and enactments or representations of *Latinidad*.

Rosa uses Silverstein’s metapragmatic approach to the recognizability of individual Latinx

¹³ DÁVILA, *Latino Spin*, p. 1.

identity emblems, according to which any statement or object that people find culturally meaningful is only meaningful with respect to his metapragmatic model based on the recognizability of the kinds of people involved in the recognizable kind of interaction. These models are metapragmatic because they frame pragmatic or indexical (social, contact) features of identity. That is, these models make available the types of people that may be taking place in a given social context. Without them, we would not be able to identify who people are and what they say to themselves and others (p. 113). In the NNHS context, Rosa argues, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans became metapragmatic models that organized students' identification of themselves and others. While metapragmatic models such as Mexican and Puerto Rican are associated with broad ethno-racial categories, Rosa shows how these models took on specific forms in the NNHS domain. While "Mexican" and "Puerto Rican" have taken shape as metapragmatic models associated with distinct objects, practices, and characteristics, each of these terms has become an indexical measure by which to locate a person's proximity to the categories of gangbanger, ho, and young Latino professional. The distinction between gangbanger/ho and young Latino professional regimented the "ghettoness" and "lameness" of Puerto Rican and Mexican signs. In his tables of metapragmatic stereotypes/personality models (pp. 114–117), Rosa categorizes the constitutive elements of Mexican and Puerto Rican metapragmatic models as food, body, hair, clothing, language, names, personality, sports, hobbies, music, relationship to government/Americanness, socioeconomic characteristics, or geography, but as he notes in passing, this is by no means an exhaustive list. Within NNHS, these categories measured the relative ghettoness and lameness of Puerto Rican and Mexican students, which in turn placed them in relation to the school's socialization project. In fact, the ghetto focus that resulted from students' acceptance of the distinction between gangbangers/hoes and young Latino professionals increased anxiety within the group about the meaning of particular practices and characteristics. Rosa gives a number of specific examples of these practices – for example: the Mexican students liked Puerto Rican food, but the Puerto Rican students expressed concerns about whether their food was too tasty, too fried and served in large portions, etc. Such excesses,

fears, or insecurities, according to Rosa, can lead to ghettoization in an environment such as NNHS (p. 115). One of the Latinx girls perhaps says it best at the end of the chapter when, in her account, she recalls a ninth grade elementary school classroom in which she candidly asked her classmates: "Do I sound like a ghetto? Do I look like a ghetto? I think I sound like a ghetto" (p. 122). These concerns about an already constituted or given racial subjectivity, in which the connaturalization of linguistic and racial categories resonates, become a profound social fact grounded in Rosa's central thesis that populations in different cultural contexts look like language and sound like race.

The second part of the book ("Sounding Like a Race: Latinx Raciolinguistic Enregisterment") opens with chapter four (pp. 125–143) on the ideology of *languagelessness*, which Rosa theorizes as the delegitimization of Latinxs' English and Spanish use within the NNHS. Rosa develops the notion of a racialized ideology of languagelessness (a kind of languageless state) and shows how this raciolinguistic ideology creates an inverted conceptualization of bilingualism, which is generally associated with the ability to speak in two languages (e.g., English and Spanish). Based on his observations and interviews, Rosa claims that the bilingualism we encounter at the NNHS is completely inverted. He argues that being bilingual does not mean using more than one language, but on the contrary, using less than one language in particular. Thus, Rosa examines the various difficulties of Latinx students when they transition into the mainstream English language classrooms. These difficulties emerge from anxieties about educational underachievement stemming from linguistic deficiency. Latinx students are then classified by the notion of "non-nons", which is explicit example of a racialized ideology of languagelessness. Bilingualism, then, at least in the context of Chicago's NNHS, is characterized by what Rosa calls languagelessness, which is meant to express the view that some people are unable to use any language legitimately, and to show how this racialized ideology of languagelessness informs language policymaking and implementation in several interconnected contexts. This language deficiency, languagelessness, or ideology of languagelessness is addressed by, among other things, efforts to transition students into mainstream classrooms with English language instruction. Rosa and other authors in other research show how these

ideas of language underachievement have led to the classification of thousands of Latino students as “non-nons”, a category of “Spanish-speaking school-age children living in the United States who are reported to speak neither English nor Spanish” (p. 135). At the same time, this racialized, or at least simplistic, term is based on a biased assessment of language proficiency, defining Spanish or language competence in very narrow terms that systematically blur students’ skills in both languages. The notion of “non-nons” is thus an explicit example of a racialized ideology of languagelessness.

In chapter five (pp. 144–176), Rosa discusses the process of *raciolinguistic enregisterment* and suggests that this concept creates a set of linguistic practices for students that enables them to manage competing demands. Rosa presents a set of sociolinguistic biographies of Latinx NNHS students who, under institutional and ideological pressure, look for ways to incorporate Spanish verbal and nonverbal elements into the English language without being perceived as having an accent. In this context, Rosa reconsiders Jane Hill’s concept of “Mock Spanish”,¹⁴ which is used to describe a variety of Spanish-inspired phrases common in some monolingual Anglo-American circles. The term “Mock Spanish” first appeared in Jane Hill’s article “Hasta La Vista, Baby: Anglo Spanish in the American Southwest”. Hill argues that the incorporation of pseudo-Spanish terms like “buenos nachos” (for buenas noches), “hasta la bye-bye”, and other humorous uses, to some people, constitute a type of covert racism. However, many monolingual Anglo-Americans feel that this type of language is a natural consequence of multiculturalism. While Hill claims that the use of Mock Spanish by monolingual English-speaking Anglo-Americans indirectly stigmatizes Spanish speakers in the US, Rosa argues that Mock Spanish stigmatizes populations racialized as US Latinxs regardless of their linguistic practices. He further shows how Latinx students at NNHS appropriate Mock Spanish and transform it into *Inverted Spanglish* to enact Latinx identities that are specific to the US context. Inverted Spanglish can thus be understood as a manifestation of the linguistic

dexterity of Latinx students at NNHS, or as a manifestation of their linguistic resistance. With his notion of Inverted Spanglish, Rosa does not present a general model of English-Spanish bilingualism among students at NNHS, but rather talks about what García described as “translanguaging”,¹⁵ which problematizes standard conceptions of bilingualism and monolingualism. Garcia builds from Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia to suggest that a “translingual” approach can denaturalize presumed borders between and within languages and focus instead of the complex heterogeneity inherent in everyday language use. This approach makes it possible to reframe interrelations among varieties of English and Spanish in these students’ language practices. That is, “translanguaging” is a helpful way to understand how self-identified monolinguals and bilinguals engage in linguistic practices that unsettle the boundaries between and within objectified languages. Thus, a translanguaging perspective is central to understanding the nature of Latinx NNHS students’ “multilingual subjectivities”. Thus the NNHS students not only navigate but also transform perceived linguistic boundaries. Thus, ideologies of languagelessness and Inverted Spanglish demonstrate how the administrative projects, ethnoracial contortions, and metapragmatic models described in the first half of this book become linked to language ideologies and linguistic practices (pp. 159, 175–176).

In the sixth and final chapter (pp. 177–208), Rosa explores the ways in which Latinx youth draw on semiotic practices to navigate and respond to experiences of stigmatization and marginalization across contexts, within the NNHS, but also based on an earlier analysis of the dynamics of marginalization of Chicago-area Latinx youth, etc. Rosa investigates in this regard literacy inversions and ambiguities structured by criminalized sign practices and contestations thereof. Furthermore, Rosa also overcomes the established dichotomy of “school kids” vs. “street kids” in this chapter. In analyzing the relationship between categories such as “school kid” and “street kid,” it is crucial to remember that they are not separate. Rosa agrees with Johnson (2008) arguing that “‘street’ does not need to be situated in opposition to ‘school’” and that both street and school “communities, while

¹⁴ For example, Jane HILL, “Hasta La Vista, Baby: Anglo Spanish in the American Southwest”, *Critique of Anthropology* 13/2, pp. 145–176.

¹⁵ Ofelia GARCÍA, *Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective*, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

containing dangerous elements, can also serve as educative spaces” (p. 202). This chapter thus, at least implicitly, overcomes the more generally entrenched dichotomy of “culture” (“schooling”) vs. “nature” (“street” in this case as a symbol of nature, naturalness, unbridledness). However, Rosa could find more similar examples in linguistic contexts (e.g., literacy/illiteracy).

In summary, in his book based on long-term research at the New Northwest High School in Chicago, Rosa primarily points to the complex configurations of identities of local Latinx students who have to complete difficult tasks to meet often conflicting loyalties. Using the example of some students (e.g., Rigo), Rosa shows how often these identities are transient, as an originally high school gang member becomes a night school student and, after he drops school, a prominent artist, and a member of a Mexican folk ensemble. Although these apparent contradictions are structured into a discursive distinction between “school” and the “street”, cases such as Rigo’s show rather that these seemingly separate categories cannot be separated, because they are not permanent, but variable and constantly negotiated. Although the final analysis of the school vs. street dichotomy is rather brief, its importance is evident, as it points to a broader dimension of Latinx identity that is not only based on linguistic and racial differentials in different situations and places, but above all points to its more general socializing potential, which is, of course, also typical of other groups of the contemporary American population, in Chicago’s urban environment, for example, the black residents of the hyperghetto analyzed in a precise way by Loïc Wacquant.¹⁶ This is, after all, perhaps one of the main messages of Rosa’s book, which earned him the 2020 *Prose Award for Excellence in Language & Linguistics* from the *Association of American Publishers*. And as Arlene Dávila, a leading linguistic anthropologist dealing with Spanish and Hispanic-American identity in the United States, notes, Rosa’s raciolinguistic approach provides a welcomed pathway for understanding, and transforming, systems of domination and should serve

as model for all linguistic analyses and, I might add, socialization practices.

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Carles Brasó, *Los médicos errantes. De las Brigadas Internacionales y la revolución china a la guerra fría* [The Wandering Doctors. From the International Brigades and the Chinese Revolution to the Cold War], Barcelona: Crítica, 2022, 415 pp. ISBN 978-84-9199-375-9.

This book aims primarily to preserve the memory of a group of International Brigade doctors and nurses who worked hard to save their dreams in times of war. Their odyssey begins in Europe around the time of the Great War (First World War), continues through the Spanish Civil War, the Sino-Japanese War, the Second World War, and ends in the Soviet purges.

It has been awarded with the 2023 International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) Book Prize in Spanish language.

Through specific events, we contemplate personal landscapes and their political horizon. The author’s discourse weaves through the threads of time, territory and geopolitics. It begins in the early twentieth century, with an emphasis on the 1930s, and continues until the 1970s. Geographically, it originates in Eastern Europe, continues in Spain and France, extends to the Far East, and returns to its starting point. In geopolitics, it commences with the great game of European imperialism, and ends in the bipolar world of the Cold War, exposing the different diplomatic scenarios: non-intervention, the bamboo curtain, and the iron curtain. The book develops themes of interest to specialists in the International Brigades, the Chinese aid organisations, and repression in the countries of the Soviet orbit. It is particularly novel in the biography of its main characters.

Brasó’s passion for history is backed by his academic background: he holds a PhD in Economic History from the *Universitat Pompeu Fabra* and a degree in Sociology and East Asian Studies from the same institution. His knowledge of the Chinese language and culture has made it easier for him

¹⁶ For example, Loïc WACQUANT, *Body & Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*, New York: Oxford University Press; idem, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009, etc.