After the Decolonial

Ethnicity, Gender and Social Justice in Latin America

By David Lehmann

From the reviews:
“David Lehmann convincingly argues that Latin American social movements and societal transformations such as the rise of Protestantism must be viewed through a lens that examines not only race but also class, gender and ethnicity. His polemic, which emphatically rejects the emphasis by decolonial scholars on race and cultural alterity, draws on a broad array of Latin American scholars to construct a case for an intersectional perspective based on close ethnographic examination. Some may agree with Lehmann, others might strongly disagree, but all will find food for thought and debate in this wide-ranging and lucid book.”

Joanne Rappaport, Georgetown University, past President, Latin American Studies Association

About the book:

After the Decolonial examines the sources of Latin American decolonial thought, its reading of precursors like Fanon and Levinas and its historical interpretations. In extended treatments of the anthropology of ethnicity, law and religion and of the region’s modern culture, Lehmann sets out the bases of a more grounded interpretation, drawing inspiration from Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia and Chile, and from a lifelong engagement with issues of development, religion and race.

The decolonial places race at the centre of its interpretation of injustice and, together with the multiple other exclusions dividing Latin American societies, traces it to European colonialism. But it has not fully absorbed the uniquely unsettling nature of Latin American race relations, which perpetuate prejudice and inequality, yet are marked by métissage, pervasive borrowing and mimesis. Moreover, it has not integrated its own disruptive feminist branch, and it has taken little interest in either the interwoven history of indigenous religion and hegemonic Catholicism or the evangelical tsunami which has upended so many assumptions about the region’s culture. The book concludes that in Latin America, where inequality and violence are more severe than anywhere else, and where COVID-19 has revealed the deplorable state of the institutions charged with ensuring the basic requirements of life, the time has come to instate a universalist concept of social justice, encompassing a comprehensive approach to race, gender, class and human rights.

About the author:

David Lehmann is Emeritus Professor of Social Science at the University of Cambridge.

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