

period of extreme inflections and increasing political creativity. The population mobilizes to defend their natural resources and, most importantly, the power of deciding the course of their own lives. As they are violently repressed, a profound disruption ensues. This conflict is then followed by political reforms and successive attempts to domesticate the popular revolt. If the generalized anti-market prerogative is a constant for the period, the popular-communitarian slowly gives way to a “new beat,” set by an electoral-democratic and pro-legality tone.

Gutiérrez Aguilar finds the increasingly national, centralist appeal of Evo Morales’ presidency (2006–present) a disillusioning sequel to the popular political effervescence of the early 2000s. I could not agree more; in fact, perhaps the major shortcoming of the book is the lack of an explanation for why Morales’ popularity came to be. The emancipatory potentials Gutiérrez Aguilar describes are deeply related to what she calls the “horizons of desire,” or what is collectively perceived as desirable and feasible. The construction of these social aspirations is not, however, exclusively an outcome of the spaces for autonomy that have flourished in the gaps of the hole-riddled Bolivian state. They are, on the other hand, inevitably influenced by the political constructs that have continuously excluded collective and individual subjects from, and assimilated them into, the idea of a broader whole which the nation represents.

In this vein, Gutiérrez Aguilar’s book would benefit from a deeper discussion of how the successive citizenship requirements imposed during the nationalist and neoliberal periods also played an important role in shaping these “horizons of desire.” The colonial and capitalist legacies

have not only segregated, but also precariously incorporated, the rural, poor, and indigenous peoples of Bolivia. In so doing, these legacies inseminated their ideals and contributed to defining “feasibility” in their own particular ways. The same holds true for state institutions and their ruling over what is legal and legitimate.

Although the author does mention this topic on several occasions, there is no further reflection on how the allegedly universal ideas of nationhood and liberal democracy also mold local perspectives on politics. These discussions would help her develop a better explanation for Morales’ rise to power and the (temporary) acquiescence of certain social movements. It should also be mentioned that the book is silent on the numerous lowland indigenous populations and their long-lasting struggle for deep transformations of the state-society relationship. They currently represent one of the most significant resistance movements against Morales’ centralist policies, and their activities also point to political alternatives transcending the state. Including these elements would definitely enrich a discussion that is already one of the best analyses of these turbulent years. I hope that more is yet to come and that our ears should be prepared for the new drums of pachakuti.

Film Review

Jogo de Corpo: Capoeira e Ancestralidade/Body Games: Capoeira and Ancestry, 2013. A film by *Richard Pakleppa*, *Matthias Röhrig Assunção* and *Mestre Cobra Mansa*. 87 min. Color. Distributed by Manganga Produções.

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“Imagine. Imagine my ancestors, the slave ship, all that cultural memory, body memory . . . Imagine Africa, Brazil, the sea.” From its opening, spoken against haunting shots of wooden fishing boats on misty waters, empty beaches, and submerged ruins, *Jogo de Corpo: Capoeira e Ancestralidade* promises a journey. Structured around thirteen chapters that move back and forth across the Atlantic, the film searches through memory and place for body traces of the Afro-Brazilian combat game of *capoeira*. We, the viewers, are in adept hands with the co-researchers/directors, our guides on this journey: historian Matthias Röhrig Assunção is author of *Capoeira: The History of an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art* (Routledge, 2005), perhaps the finest English-language history of *capoeira* to date. And our narrator, Mestre Cobra Mansa—one of the first *capoeiristas* I ever saw play in the late 1980s and whose movingly graceful and playful game convinced me to pursue the art—is among the world’s most acclaimed *capoeira* masters.

After the opening shots of Angola’s coast, the camera shifts to urban Rio de Janeiro, following Cobra Mansa as he walks and plays *capoeira* in the streets. Engaging and charismatic with his dreadlock-haloed face, expressive, warm eyes, and soft voice, Cobra Mansa narrates how as a child he scavenged discarded food from the street market so his family could eat. As a youth, perfecting his skills in *capoeira*—this partnered game that combines dance, combat, acrobatics, and music—saved him from a life of crime or death. As a young black man in the 1980s, *capoeira* politicized him to recognize the intense, yet masked, racism in Brazil and introduced him to the idea of Africa. Having long imagined his ancestors—biological and artistic—in An-

gola, this journey to “the real Africa,” he tells us, was a dream come true.

Do *capoeira*’s generative roots really trace back to Angola? This question has long preoccupied *capoeiristas* and researchers. As early as the 16th century, the Portuguese transported enslaved Africans from Benguela and Luanda and other ports in west and central Africa to their colony in South America. Along with the human cargo came linguistic, religious, and expressive practices. Little is known about *capoeira* prior to the nineteenth century. However, the fact that its most famous early twentieth-century masters—Mestres Pastinha and Bimba—claimed to have learned from Africans, possibly Angolans, suggests a connection. In the 1960s, the painter Albano Neves e Sousa travelled through both Brazil and his Angolan homeland, producing a manuscript of line drawings illustrating similarities between *capoeira* and certain Angolan combat dances. The film takes inspiration from Neves e Sousa’s study: each chapter, a different geographic location in Angola or Brazil, is introduced with a title and a Neves e Sousa drawing, as if torn from the artist’s travel sketchbook or from the journal we see Cobra Mansa writing in from time to time.

The journey into *capoeira*’s past is not an easy one. Not long after Neves e Sousa’s travels, Angola plunged into a brutal, twenty-seven-year civil war that devastated the country, particularly the interior rural regions to which the research team travelled. While the war, finally over in 2002, is only briefly mentioned during one somber fireside conversation, its aftermath is ever present in that many local dances have been lost in practice, and almost to memory. Several shots of the research team’s land rover broken down on

unpaved roads through terrain very possibly still riddled with landmines evoke the journey into memory: never a smooth or complete process, but one full of starts, stops, and uncertainties. Repeatedly, Assunção and Cobra Mansa are told by their interviewees that the past is disappearing, that the younger generations are not interested in learning the old dances. The camera documents these older Angolans reaching into their memory to pull out stories and fragments of dance and song. Often their faces, at first blank, transform into smiles and laughter as they remember. One man exclaims “thank you, thank you, thank you,” as he witnesses a capoeira demonstration that reminds him of the combat dance he once practiced. Yet another old man breaks down in tears as he begins to sing as if the memory of what has been lost is too great to bear.

About halfway through the film we reach Mucope, a village in southern Angola and “the holy grail of capoeira,” as the subtitle announces. Here, Neves e Sousa documented *engolo*, a dance that mimicked battling zebras and which he claimed as capoeira’s possible origin, a notion promoted by many capoeiristas. The kicks, spins, sweeps, and feints are certainly reminiscent of capoeira. But then so too are some of the other fighting dances—such as *kambangula* and *ondjumbo*—even if they employ hand slaps and wrestling moves, not used in capoeira. Some of the film’s most pleasurable moments come when Cobra Mansa and Assunção (also an accomplished capoeirista) attempt to learn from or engage with the Angolan dancers. The capoeiristas dodge and respond to attacks with an uncanny adeptness. As Assunção suggests, while perhaps not its “mother,” *engolo* is certainly a “cousin” of capoeira. What is most extraordinary and profound about these dances and their

“cousins” scattered around the African diaspora is a shared ethos: these are aesthetic and strategic games that are at once playful and competitive, athletic and theatrical. At one point, an *engolo* dancer is knocked to the ground and rather than leap back to his feet, he momentarily stretches out with his arms tucked behind his head as if taking a nap, taunting his opponent. This comedic gesture is akin to the theatrics and *malandragem* (cunning) of a good capoeira player. Humor is one of the many tactics that allow a capoeirista or *engolo* dancer to be flexible like “a tree in the wind,” as one dancer tells us. And, he continues, *engolo* must be danced with a “light” not an “angry” heart. This statement reminded me of the saying that capoeira should be played with a “hot foot” but “cool head.”

At times the film drags and may become repetitive for some viewers. The story told here, a return to Africa in search of roots, is a familiar one. Perhaps more reflection on this genre and what new questions this film opens up could have added another layer to the rich documentation. Also, the voices of the film are predominantly male, an approach that is understandable as the dances in Angola that interest the research team are largely performed by men. Even in the last chapter, which focuses on *efiko* (the puberty rite of a young girl), it is the men who perform *engolo* as Betina is adorned in a hut. When asked why only men dance, the male dancers look nonplussed and say well, the women have their own dances. While all the combat games we witness are playful, there is also an aggressively competitive edge. Repeatedly, we hear the saying that “who dies in *engolo* is not wept for,” and one woman chuckles at the memory of her husband beating (up) many opponents. Capoeira was similarly a tough masculine

arena for most of its history, and persists as such in many ways despite its radical re-gendering in recent years.

Female presence is also sparse on the research team. Ethnomusicologist Christine Dettman appears in many scenes, but does not speak. This is a shame as the film's lovely soundtrack that meanders through capoeira *ladainhas* and *corridos*, the beats of various drums, the twangs of the *berimbau* and *urucungo* (the Brazilian and Angolan versions of a musical bow) to the hauntingly beautiful and nostalgic voice of Angolan *semba* artist, Paulo Flores, could have used more explication. Particularly intriguing are the song lyrics—many of which speak of cattle—that accompany the Angolan dances. Often, it is the songs and rhythms—produced by hands, feet, and mouths—that seem to leap most readily to memory.

In all, the film is a wonderful resource for researchers and practitioners of capoeira. I will certainly use it in my capoeira studio/seminar course, as I imagine others will. More broadly, the film is a vital contribution to African Diasporic studies and in documenting the essential role corporal movement and memory play in deepening our understanding of transatlantic connections, past, present and future. At one point in the film, Cobra Mansa gently admonishes a group of young Angolans, undoubtedly intrigued by capoeira, which has become popular now in Angola, to learn their own cultural practices. Capoeira is everywhere today, he says. More endangered are the other practices documented in the film. Cobra Mansa urges the youth to seek out the old masters of engolo, kambangula, *khandeka*, *kakhula*, andondjumbo, and so on, to learn from them before these cousins of capoeira disappear altogether.

Review Essay

Aymara Indian Perspectives on Development in the Andes. Amy Eisenberg. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2013. 280 pp.

State Theory and Andean Politics: New Approaches to the Study of Rule. Christopher Krupa and David Nugent, eds. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. 336 pp.

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The Andean countries in Latin America have undergone a true revolution in administrative rule in the past two decades based on a series of political victories for indigenous and populist parties. These triumphs placed the marginalized indigenous in the heretofore unimagined role of collaborators and even, in some cases, of rulers of the nations along the Andes. As the region entered the twenty-first century with indigenous peoples occupying the power seats of their former oppressors, government policies and processes required revision and rearticulation to adapt to new administrative demographics. The two books reviewed here exemplify how new priorities in Andean politics and international development affect the construction of national belonging and citizenship rights. The first volume—edited by Christopher Krupa and David Nugent—is a collection of essays on new adaptations in constructing and perceiving state rule by anthropologists and historians in six different Andean countries. This volume also provides innovative reflections on how societies construct and challenge spatial and theoretical definitions of national administration.