Based on this work, some critics have accused Asturias of subscribing to a racist agenda aimed at cleansing Guatemala of both indigenous blood and indigenous culture. Seen in the light of the genocidal campaigns carried out in the highlands in the 1980s, this is a serious charge. In a lengthy introduction, the distinguished Guatemalan historian Julio César Pinto Soria ably defends Asturias from his detractors. Acknowledging the author's immaturity and the scientific weaknesses of the work itself, Pinto reconstructs the intellectual context in which it was produced. Asturias's professors and classmates were heavily influenced by positivism and the ideal of a science of society, but in scope and method, sociology remained poorly defined and little developed. Asturias made occasional mention of field observations, but there is little evidence of systematic research, while the literature referred to is scant and superficial even for the time. Perhaps the strongest influence is that of French social psychologist and popular science writer Gustave Le Bon. As it happened, Miguel Angel Asturias quickly moved beyond his modest academic exercise. Shortly after graduation, he left Guatemala for Europe, where he encountered new ideas and better-stocked libraries. In books such as *Leyendas de Guatemala* (1930) and the many that followed, Asturias upheld the cultural traditions of Guatemala's indigenous peoples as core elements of national identity and values.

In this new edition, editor Pinto usefully reproduces the brief introduction Asturias provided for the 1971 Paris version. In it, the Nobel laureate dismissed with few words what he called his youthful enthusiasm for programs of immigration and assimilation. But, as Pinto insists, Asturias in no way repudiated his larger argument that social injustice lay at the root of the Indian problem. Asturias had in mind principally the agrarian issue, but he also called attention to serious inequities in education and health. In the nearly five decades that had passed since he defended his thesis, Asturias remarked sadly, nothing much had changed for the Guatemalan Indian. Today, long after Asturias's own reassessment, one could say much the same. Quite apart from the author's importance as a major figure of world literature, this is probably reason enough to introduce this little book to Guatemalan readers after almost 90 years of obscurity.

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The Rise of Popular Modernism in Brazil. By Fernando Luiz Lara. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008. Pp. xvi, 149. Maps. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $69.95 cloth.

It is always very interesting to see how many people in architectural circles can talk fluently about Brazilian architecture. Conversations usually focus on the work of a very small group of modernist architects who were prolific in the middle years of the twentieth century. Indeed, to many it would seem ludicrous to attempt to discuss Brazilian architecture without dropping names such as Oscar Niemeyer, Lucio Costa, Eduardo Affonso Reidy, Roberto Burle Marx, João Batista Vilanova Artigas, and a few others of the same generation. However, Fernando Luiz Lara argues in this book that there are other architectures produced by the common people (and less famous architects) whose importance

in the development of Brazilian modernism has been ignored. I welcome this proposition with excitement.

Though in a slightly disorderly historical way—the discussion jumps back and forth between the 1950s and the 1960s—Lara gives an abbreviated account of the development of mainstream modernism in Brazil, examining in particular the way in which the formal repertoire of Brazilian modern architecture spread throughout the country. Such an expansion was not only geographical but also social and political: images of modern architecture were appropriated by the middle classes as well as (it is suggested) by less privileged sectors of the society, the working class. Thus, Lara demonstrates that in becoming the preferred style for housing among the middle class in most major Brazilian cities architects lost control over the dissemination of modernist architectural ideas. This caused great anxiety among architects, who proceeded to withdraw validity from these spontaneous architectures. Consequently, "popular modernist architecture" has seldom been examined academically.

In the first two sections of the book, Lara describes a research project carried out in two neighborhoods of Belo Horizonte. It is an interesting and enlightening account that unveils numerous issues about the history of the city. It explains the practical ways in which members of the middle class appropriated the modern architectural repertoire and so illustrates the transition from traditional (colonial and French republican) styles to modernism. In the process, Lara discusses the emergence of architectural ambiguities, houses whose planning was traditional even though they looked modern outside—a characteristic that can also be found in the modern houses of the social elites designed by architects. This unusual formal analysis of popular housing is, in my opinion, the most successful aspect of the book. It opens doors onto a wide range of issues that require urgent scholarly attention, namely the ways in which people have contributed to the development of cities in Brazil and other countries in Latin America. It is thus encouraging to know that there are architects continuing the work that Lara started ten years ago.

Lara subscribes to Jürgen Habermas's idea that modernity is an incomplete project and therefore argues that popular architectures are part of its continuous transformation and development. He makes this proposition in two disconcertingly separate parts of the book (sections 3 and 5). In the latter section Lara also introduces the notion of postmodernity as an alternative way to approach the proliferation of elements taken from modernist paradigmatic buildings across the country. These discussions provide a fertile ground theoretically to study Brazilian modernism but it is somewhat odd that they are separated. Though it can be argued in the context of Lara's own discussion that fragmentation is not necessarily a problem, the brevity of the book (which is one of its strengths) exacerbates the effects of its fragmentation, especially when the author peppers his narrative with theoretical excursuses in which he examines the concept of hybridity in both postcolonial theory (via Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said) and postmodernism (via Néstor García Canclini). On the other hand, these theoretical discussions are not only useful, they are also necessary because they help to advance Latin American architectural studies. In that sense, Lara's book makes a contribution to the field. It will surely

have an impact on architectural studies in Brazil, as well as on the way in which Brazilian modernism is viewed worldwide. It continues important debates about architectural identity and expands debate about tradition, self-construction and the popularization of modern architecture. The fact that such varied debates are presented in a slightly disorderly fashion does not diminish the scholarly value of the book, but makes one wonder whether it could have been written more linearly.

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Letras del Reino de Chile. By Cedomil Goic. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2006. Pp. 332. Notes. Bibliography. $39.60 paper.

In this volume Cedomil Goic has selected 15 articles he wrote between 1970 and 2005, all focused on literary, historical, or other documents produced about Chile between 1520 and 1820. Articles 1 and 2 refer to Pedro de Valdivia's epistolary style (Valdivia was governor of Chile between 1541 and 1553); articles 3 through 9 concentrate on different aspects of Alonso de Ercilla and his epic *La Araucana*; articles 10 through 13 deal with different aspects of Francisco Núñez de Pineda y Bascuñán; article 14 is a bibliography on Núñez de Pineda y Bascuñán; and article 15 briefly refers to Chilean wills and testaments of the sixteenth and seventeen century. The volume ends with a general bibliography.

The Introduction guides the reader by providing valuable information about the political, social, historical, ethnic and cultural aspects of Chile in this era. The book, however, lacks a solid structure. Goic could have produced a richer volume, and the articles, while interesting by themselves, are too few and the selection too uneven to do the author or the subject matter justice. He does, nonetheless, a remarkable job of addressing Pedro de Valdivia's rhetorical style of writing letters and analyzes two of them in great detail, but by concentrating on only two of Valdivia's letters, Goic leaves the reader wanting to know more about this important governor.

As for Ercilla, there are seven articles dealing with different subjects, written, as the author indicates, over a period of more than three decades. This explains not only the lack of a unifying theme, but the reason there are significant gaps about the impact Ercilla had on Spain's Golden Age literature. The only reference in this area is to *Arauco domado*, by Pedro de Oña, a panegyric epic to honor the memory of García Hurtado de Mendoza, governor of Chile between 1557 and 1561. There is no mention, for instance, of a series of "romances" based on *La Araucana* and published in 1589, 1591 and 1593, when Ercilla was still alive, nor is there information about Ercilla's direct influence on three panegyric plays—*Algunas hazañas de las muchas de Don García Hurtado de Mendoza, marqués de Cañete*, a collaboration of nine authors led by Luis de Belmonte Bermúdez (1622); *Arauco domado*, by Lope de Vega (1625), *El gobernador prudente*, by Gaspar de Avila (1653)—or indirect influence on *La belígera española*, by Ricardo de Turia (1616); *Los españoles en Chile*, by Francisco González de Bustos (1665); and the auto sacramental *La Araucana*, attributed to Lope de Vega (early seventeen century).