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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Tamara J. Walker. *Exquisite Slaves: Race, Clothing, and Status in Colonial Lima.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. 240 pp. $99.99, cloth, ISBN 978-1-107-08403-2.

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Published on H-LatAm (October, 2018)

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Few fields have experienced an unprecedented growth and evolution akin to that of race in colonial Latin America in the last few decades. Studies of slavery in the Andes, in particular, have moved away from the traditional socioeconomic and legal status inquiries into the institution. Instead, scholarship has come to focus on Afro-descendant women's and men's legal and cultural negotiation over their freedom, position in society, and assertion of their human condition. Thanks to such foundational studies and further conceptualizations and problematizations of slavery in colonial Peru, scholars have shifted to a more refined terrain incorporating the domains of intimacy, the body, and the visual to discern the more subtle nature of slave-master relationships and to further problematize the meaning of freedom and bondage in the early modern colonial scene.

Tamara J. Walker's *Exquisite Slaves: Race, Clothing, and Status in Colonial Lima* contributes a novel approach to the subject matter, reflecting on the role of the visual and the representational in colonial slavery in Peru. Walker gives centrality to clothing and dress in the exclusion and domination linked to race in colonial Lima. The central argument brings together diverse strands of sources to propose that clothing is an encompassing category that allows one to envision the scope and limits of "slavery, racial domination, and socioeconomic exclusion in Lima" (p. 19). Most important, the study treats slaves as social agents, exploring their subjectivity by highlighting their sensibilities for clothing, fashion, social distinction, and a desire to take ownership of the public representation of the self. Walker highlights the role of clothing control as part of the colonial elites' effort to assert their economic, social, and racial predominance. The author also acknowledges the ambiguous function of elegant dress in facilitating the bondage of subjects who otherwise defied and expressed social norms through negotiation.

The reader learns that the limits of what slaves could and could not wear were first set by normative attempts, but the persistence of the slaveholders' public performance of status, featuring displays of their slaves' dress practices (the "aesthetic of mastery" [p. 21]), rendered sumptuary laws ineffective (chapter 1). On their part, slaves used clothing to express their human condition and defied bondage by "outfitting themselves in finery" (p. 16), and, more privately, by providing their loved ones clothing that enhanced their sense of spousal duty, gender sensibility, and humanity. Slaves also acted to improve the social well-being of their family and friends through their own networks. As a result, they were able to

deconstruct the imposed limits and meaning of slavery (chapter 2).

Walker takes the reader further into the world of slaves' dressing practices of public display, showing how profusely the inclination to dress elegantly defeated the normative efforts of the state to set limits to slaves' ability to control their self-representation through clothing. In fact, clothing as a register of ***calidad***, or social standing, and race was deceiving. Slaves and free women and men of color clad in finery defied socially and culturally agreed-upon conventions of racial identity, not only blurring the lines separating freedom from bondage but also diffusing the differences that commonly defined racial identity and privilege. Such de facto acts of racial deletion or "deception" came to be perceived as threats to the established social and racial order by Spanish elites (chapter 3).

The contrast between how the visual constructs colonial realities of race and gender and the official rhetoric thereof constitutes the core of chapter 4. The chapter draws on the twenty ***casta***, or caste, paintings that the Viceroy Manuel de Amat y Junyent commissioned in 1770 from Cristobal Lozano and contemporaneous sumptuary laws the Bourbon state put in place to control alterations to the sanctioned racial hierarchies in Lima. Walker argues that Lozano's paintings aimed at maintaining racial hierarchies and attempted a "somewhat realistic view" of racial order and Spaniards' superior access to finery (p. 127). The paintings supplemented the royal state's efforts at racial control through sumptuary laws. However, the discordance between the pictorial and legal discourses of fixed racial structures on the one hand and the realities of available luxurious items for slaves in colonial Lima, on the other, puts into question the Spanish discourses of gender dominance and the racial standards of public display of the self.

Moving toward the end of the eighteenth century, chapter 5 approaches the conflicting images of slavery and more modern discourses against it. Here, Walker critically engages the anti-slave discourses of the oldest newspapers of Latin America, ***El Mercurio Peruano*** and ***El Diario de Lima***. The author highlights how the papers' rhetoric reversed the binary of oppression, directing the blame for "racial degeneration'" on the slaves and free people of color who allegedly inflicted an irreversible loss of good customs upon the Spanish.

The concluding chapter 6 takes one to the post-independence era in Lima, where new publications appeared that for the first time focused specifically on slaves, redefining their place in a society that apparently endorsed freedom, citizenship, and a national spirit of liberty. Humanizing the identity and social position of the former slave, the watercolors of Francisco Fierro, an Afro-Peruvian artist, served as the visual canvas to reflect on the new ways in which dress and other social factors evoked a sense of belonging for slaves who sought freedom and social mobility by fighting on the patriots' side. In spite of the emerging rhetoric, Afro-Peruvian descendants faced further discrimination and limits to their economic, political, and social rights under the new liberal republic.

Exquisite Slaves is a fresh and sophisticated approach to the genesis of race and a significant addition to the understanding of slavery in the late colonial environment of viceregal Lima. It restores subjectivity and social agency to enslaved and freed women and men by showing how, through the use of clothing, they created an idiom to express their human sensibility while defying legal imperatives that sought to keep them at the fringes of society. In line with long-standing feminist scholarship, Walker places the body of slave women and men at the center of a discussion that problematizes the power relations inherent in slavery.

An alternative methodology for the studies of race and ethnicity in colonial Latin America may be suggested for consideration as one examines

the analytical scope of ***Exquisite Slaves***. In assessing the responses to state efforts to regulate clothing for subordinate groups in Latin America, the inclusion of a wider spectrum of responses to such attempts could be possible through comparative analysis that incorporated the responses of indigenous subjects to the sumptuary laws analyzed by Walker. There is revealing evidence in the archival record of resistance to the 1723 and 1725 legal restrictions on clothing by the members of the native Andean elites in Peru for reasons that defy easy analysis. Elite indigenous responses betray their internalization of colonial assumptions on race as some of them vigorously rejected being singled out on an equal footing with slaves. On the other hand, groups of Andean caciques and other native subjects in late colonial Lima also paraded their dress in the manner of Spaniards and used the courts of justice to fight for their right to bear weapons and ride horses. What does this tell us about common social and cultural strategies across racial and ethnic lines, and how differently or similarly slaves and Amerindians strategized their public representation of the self to reposition themselves socially and economically in colonial society? What tensions between them emerge as one compares their approaches to clothing and responses to state control? Addressing these questions would widen the conclusions of studies on slavery and the body, which in no way undermine the quality of Walker's study.

These suggestions aside, Walker's elegantly written and sophisticatedly structured book is a required read for state-of-the-art scholarship on race and slavery in Peru, useful not only for historians of Latin America but also for scholars working at the intersection of feminism, gender, race, and slavery in the Americas. They will find in ***Exquisite Slaves*** a refined and well-investigated contribution that promises to be of good use in undergraduate and graduate classrooms alike.

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Citation: Alcira Dueñas. Review of Walker, Tamara J. *Exquisite Slaves: Race, Clothing, and Status in Colonial Lima.* H-LatAm, H-Net Reviews. October, 2018.

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