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From *Braceros* to *Pineros*

Labour, Migration, and Changing Geographic and Social Landscapes in the United States

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REVIEW ESSAY / NOTE CRITIQUE

From *Braceros* to *Pineros*: Labour, Migration, and Changing Geographic and Social Landscapes in the United States

Aidé Acosta

Don Mitchell, *They Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle Over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California* (Athens: University of Georgia Press 2012)

Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Charlotte: University of North Carolina 2011)

Brinda Sarathy, *Pineros: Latino Labour and the Changing Face of Forestry in the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 2012)

IN *WHY CYBRACEROS?* (1997), filmmaker Alex Rivera creates a short satire of labour importation by mocking the marketing film distributed by the California Grower's Council, *Why Braceros?* (1959), which promoted to a mainstream audience the rationale for a guestworker program. Rivera references the arguments made for a necessary labouring body and mocks the reality of the importation program that demanded a cheap and docile labour force. *Why Cybraceros?* revamps the program to extract labour without employing actual bodies, and subsequently eliminates the problems that accompany the employment of real workers. *Why Cybraceros?* instead offers an alternative labour importation program that extracts Mexican labour for American farms without the bodies of the workers. This short film provides the premise for Rivera's later film, *Sleep Dealer* (2008), a sci-fi movie that futuristically captures the desire of industries to extract the labour of Mexican bodies without the workers, without their lives. The three books reviewed in this essay – *They*

Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle Over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California (2012) by Don Mitchell; *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (2011) by Deborah Cohen; and *Pineros: Latino Labour and the Changing Face of Forestry in the Pacific Northwest* (2012) by Brinda Sarathy – all address the struggles over labour that are referenced satirically in Rivera’s films. Namely, the desire to maintain a cheap and exploitable labour force that will sustain the various U.S. industries, without the accountability to the labouring bodies that potentially pose a threat to the capitalist endeavours of industries.

These three texts are timely given the current debates taking place in the U.S. that place Latina/o migrants as perpetual foreigners and as a threat to mainstream America. As immigration continues to be debated in the White House, and in the everyday lives of all Americans – citizens and noncitizens alike – migrants are scapegoated for the economic problems of the U.S., surveilled and hunted by the state, and subjected to the deportation regime that continues to construct a racialized, exploitable, and disposable group of people. Under Obama’s administration, more than 1,000,000 undocumented immigrants (primarily Latina/o) have been deported, with approximately 400,000 deported during 2012, the stated annual goal by the Department of Homeland Security. Don Mitchell and Deborah Cohen’s historical account of the Bracero Program along with Brinda Sarathy’s contemporary account of Latino labourers in the forestry industry of the Pacific Northwest provide a lens to consider the ways in which labourers are objectified and commoditized with the aim of economic gains and development on behalf of industries and governments alike, as well as to highlight the unintended consequences of labouring bodies that have the power to alter geographic and social landscapes. In what follows, I will review the three books separately and will provide concluding springboard questions that these three texts raise with regard to migration and labour as these processes intersect with the “fatal coupling,” as Don Mitchell puts it, with class, race, gender, family, and citizenship. (229)

In *They Saved the Crops: Labor, Landscape, and the Struggle Over Industrial Farming in Bracero-Era California*, Don Mitchell takes on a multilayer approach to exhaustively examine California’s landscape *vis-à-vis* the growth of industrial farming at the expense of Mexican migrant bodies during the bracero era. The book considers the historical geographical logic of the bracero program and examines how and why the program was struggled over, and how it unfolded, in California. By examining the program as intertwined with the industrial agricultural growth of California, Mitchell argues that the bracero era was fundamental in the development of the California “agri-business landscape,” as well as in the specificity of the structure of the ‘guest worker’ program and its operation “within the overarching practices of labor exploitation in capitalism.” (2) Thus, the program’s evolution is entrenched in a labour struggle where growers seek to extract the labour of workers with the sole aim of production and capital accumulation, at the expense of the lives

and overall well-being of workers; and workers struggle to create a dignified life as they toil the California agricultural landscapes. Mitchell thoroughly analyzes this labour struggle by considering the multiple actors that defined this era as the bracero story unfolded: growers, workers, Mexican and U.S. bureaucrats, local, state and federal officials, and law enforcement; as well as labour organizers and political activists.

The bracero program was a bi-national labour importation agreement between the United States and Mexico from 1942 to 1964. According to Mitchell, by its conclusion, 4.7 million short-term contracts for Mexican men, known as braceros (*brazos* is the word for arms in Spanish), had been issued. The program was created through legislative action and bi-national negotiations by the United States and Mexico, and shaped by the everyday actions of all actors involved with different, and at times inconsistent, stakes in the program. Nonetheless, the program illustrates, according to Mitchell, a struggle over the shape of capitalist agriculture. For workers, this entailed ensuring they would be selected as braceros, as well as figuring out how to make sufficient money to survive the off seasons and to also economically sustain families back home in Mexico. Growers needed to secure a reliable and cheap labour force for the short harvest seasons. Meanwhile, a whole system was developed to organize this extremely poor and mobile labour force, from being selected in Mexico to being appointed in the California agricultural fields. Covering the multiple perspectives, Mitchell provides a historical geography of the program by examining and providing archival evidence, including records of California's bureaucratic agencies, governmental administrations, commissions, and papers of the program's administrators and union activists, specially Ernesto Galarza, as well as other political activists, including Paul Taylor. This bracero archive is complemented with reports of the program and analysis made during this era, and draws on published and available bracero oral histories, including the Bracero History Archive (<http://braceroarchive.org/>) along with histories of farmers and politicians, as well as news accounts that provide a window into the public perceptions of the time with regard to the bracero program and the question of immigration more broadly. In weaving multiple accounts, Mitchell's aim is to construct a narrative that is attuned to the "real and *felt* needs and interests of the players" situated in the political, economic, and juridical structures of the program. (3)

The book provides fourteen chapters as the substantive text that captures these multiple actors. As a secondary narrative strategy, Mitchell provides "interchapters" as theoretical explanatory arguments. These interchapters provide a set of arguments that shed light on the California agricultural landscape, as well as on the dialectical theory of production, to answer the book's primary question: did the agricultural landscape change over the course of the bracero era, and if so, how, why, and to what end? The structure of the book, on the one hand, provides a deep historical geographic account of the program, and, on the other, offers a historical theoretical argument about the pro-

gram's reality. While this reality varied amongst the program's many actors, the bracero program nonetheless established a developed industrial agricultural system in California dependent on a highly exploitive and dehumanized labour process. Mexican men, as braceros (imported workers) – an emergency and supplementary labour force during the World War II era – became the dominant labour force in agricultural fields and shaped a landscape that established California as a leading agricultural system in the world.

Chapter One, "The Agribusiness Landscape in the 'War Emergency': The Origins of the Bracero Program and the Struggle to Control It," examines the transformation of the California agribusiness through the process of ensuring an adequate stable labour force. Growers constructed a fabricated, yet successful, narrative of labour shortages and emergencies to save American farm industries as way to have the importation program supported for more than two decades. The interchapter, "Morphology: Things on the Land" grounds Mitchell's approach in this historical geographical analysis. Building on the "morphology" approach that considers the material basis of a landscape as a result of economic and social activity, he provides a lens in which to consider the bracero era as a system that also formed the character of the California agricultural basis. Integrated in this analysis is a Marxist reading of the program that considers the production of the landscape as the foundation of the capitalist production process. Chapter Two, "The Struggle for a Rational Farming Landscape: Worker Housing and Grower Power," examines the ways in which the California agricultural landscape was shaped to produce the circulation of capital. In establishing labour camps, supported by local, state, and federal entities, workers were brought to the site of labour and kept though the season, and subsequently became a stable labour force with limited rights as citizens, workers, and humans; they became the ideal vessel for the production of agricultural commodities.

The interchapter, "Reproduction: Housing Labor Power," examines the development of labour power by further considering the Marxist argument of labouring bodies as obstacles to capitalism since labour power (the ability to do work) "resides in the body of the laborer." (70) In this commodification of labour power the ultimate ideal worker is the one that can be replaced with new fresh workers, ready to sell their own labour power (as captured in *Why Cybraceros?*). Chapter Three, "The Dream of Labor Power: Fluid Labor and the Solid Landscape," examines the processes of creating a labour oversupply, a reserve of workers that ensured a high degree of flexibility and available to replace dissident workers or disabled bodies, such as those with labour related injuries. Braceros materialized into the ideal labour setting, with the ideal worker that would be in close proximity in the labour camps, and available as hired *brazos* to replenish workers. The bracero program imported a relatively disempowered migrant worker to meet the needs for cheap, flexible farm labour. Capturing the labour power entailed that a system would be in place,

as Mitchell argues in the interchapter “Scale: Infrastructure of Landscape and Labor Market”; the bracero program was a “radical production of scale” in reference to the size and extent of the process that expanded the farm labor market. (98)

Chapter Four, “Organizing the Landscape: Labor Camps, International Agreements, and the NFLU,” examines the attempts to organize against unjust labour conditions, a struggle that in the height of the bracero program, the growers had the upper hand. While part of the agreement’s stipulation was that braceros would not be used in labour disputes, in practice they became bait in the struggles over labour practices. Building on Paul Farmer’s discussion of “structural violence” in the interchapter, “Violence: Overt and Structural,” as violence that is structured by forces that conspire to constrain the agency of individuals, the program propagated discriminatory and unfair labour practices that constrained and infringed on the rights of braceros, and subsequently the braceros’ agency. At times this violence overtly manifested in the braceros’ bodies through labour injuries, as well as in the realities of exploitive stoop labour. Chapter Five, “The Persistent Landscape: Perpetuating Crisis in California,” illustrates the various ways in which growers presented a labour crisis, and subsequently utilized braceros as way to deflect union organizing. The interchapter, “Determination: Labor’s Geography” pays attention to workers’ determined struggles to make landscapes within which they live and work to consider the ways in which workers’ agency is limited by power. Here, Mitchell examines the ways in which individuals make their own histories and geographies, but under conditions that are dictated by power structures.

In Chapters Six, “Imperial Farming, Imperialist Landscapes,” and Seven, “Labor Process and Laboring Life,” Mitchell brings attention the impact of Public Law 78 that extended the Bracero agreement and the transformative effects on the labour landscape, and which further ensured the disempowerment of braceros. In the context of union organizing, not only were braceros pitted against organizers, but they were the most unprotected of all labour sectors. As a noncitizen racialized labour force, as Mitchell further discusses in the interchapter, “Wetback: Surplus Labor,” and in Chapter Eight, “Operation Wetback: Preserving the Status Quo,” the status and place of Mexican workers was disposable and deportable due to the “fatal coupling” of race, citizenship, and class. Operation Wetback (1954), which deported undocumented Mexicans, was designated as a military style operation to appease the growing concern of the “wetback” (that is, “illegal” Mexican) problem, especially as it affected domestic workers (similar to today’s debates). This strategy reinstated the deportability of undocumented workers, and thus immigration enforcement was used to mold the program in the growers’ interest, as well as to serve as a spectacle of securing the border. As Nicholas de Genova argues, “illegality” is lived through a palpable sense of deportability that impinges on the overall well-being of migrants, affecting documented and undocu-

mented populations.¹ The legal production of “illegality” with strategies such as “Operation Wetback,” provided a system for sustaining the vulnerability and tractability of Mexicans, and was a form of structural violence.

Chapters Nine, “RFLOAC: The Imbrication of Grower Control,” and Ten, “Power in the Peach Bowl: Of Domination, Prevailing Wages, and the (Never-Ending) Question of Housing,” further illustrate the ways in which the state is utilized in the interest of agribusiness as well as in the domination of workers. Thus, the state becomes “capital’s foremen,” or a fundamental technique of control, as argued in the interchapter, “State: Capital’s Foremen.” In Chapter Eleven, “Dead Labor-Literally: (Another) Crisis in the Bracero Program,” Mitchell further extends the idea of “dead labor,” which for Marx entails labour power “congealed” in a commodity, to consider the material consequences of the bracero program, including literal deaths of braceros. (310) Chapters Twelve, “Organizing Resistance: Swinging the Heart of the Bracero Program,” and Thirteen, “The Demise of the Bracero Program: Closing the Gates of Cheap Labor?” examine the changes that eventually led to the conclusion of the program, including a growing scrutiny of the labour importation program by local activists, citizen organizations, and the labour movement, the latter experiencing renewal through the election of the Brown administration in California. The final chapter, “The Ever-New, Ever-Same: Labor Militancy, Rationalization, and the Post-bracero Landscape,” comes full circle in examining how little actually changed over the course of the bracero program. Indeed, the various struggles illustrate the ways in which the bracero program helped develop a particular form of industrial capitalist farming, and create an “ever-new, ever same” landscape.

The final interchapter, “Landscape: Power Materialized,” along with Mitchell’s Conclusion, return to the question of power within California’s agricultural landscape and argues that landscape is always *power materialized*. The other interchapters, “Domination, Of Labor, by Capital,” “Dead Labor: The Past Materialized, the Present Shaped,” “Property: Contract Farming, Contract Labor,” and “Prospect: Persistent Landscapes and Sculpted Futures,” together with the various chapters and interchapters discussed, present a “morphological view” that permits the reader to visualize the bracero program as a whole system that influenced California’s landscapes by maintaining and further producing a labour system based on a temporary and exploitable labour force: “a force for destabilization of working people, the bracero program was also a force for the stabilization of the profitable landscape.” (422) While growers along with their various alliances attempted to create workers as “vessels of labor power,” as mere commodities in the system of capitalist production, workers were nonetheless breathing and living humans that sought to make a

1. Nicholas De Genova, “Migrant ‘Illegality’ and Deportability in Everyday Life,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002), 419–47.

living space and place for themselves. In Deborah Cohen's *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico*, the process of the bracero program in creating a transnational labour subject, and the question of whether the exploitable program provided opportunities for workers, receives further extended treatment.

Cohen begins *Braceros* with an epigraph that quotes agricultural worker Juan Loza's interpretation of the term bracero: "it is a word of distinction, for me it is a word of great pride." This sentiment sets one of the primary aims of the book: the documentation of workers' various investments in the bracero program, including the reconfiguration of Mexican transnational subjects and their own interpretation and memories of the program. Recollections of the bi-national program on behalf of ex-braceros often invoke a narrative of opportunity, progress, pride, and self-refashioning that in part is shaped by public expectations of the program coupled with socio-cultural expectations of masculinity. In examining the various stakeholders in the program, including U.S. and Mexican governments as well as California agribusiness, Cohen reveals the particular reconfiguration of citizenship, migration, and masculinity in the construction of a transnational subject "as a particular kind of political and social person with ties to, claims on, or self-understanding beyond the nation." (5)

Through a multi-method approach that includes ethnographic fieldwork and primary and secondary historical sources, both in the U.S. and Mexico, Cohen interviews ex-braceros, as well as analyzes government documents, newspapers, songs, rituals, testimonies, and the papers of labour activists such as Ernesto Galarza, to provide an intersectional picture of the various ways in which the bracero program was envisioned, contested, and negotiated. She pays close attention to the lasting legacies of agricultural work in the bodies and recollections of ex-braceros. The geographical focus of the book is the migration that took place between the state of Durango in northern Mexico and the California Imperial Valley. These two sites, while the most prominent with regard to the number of braceros that left Mexico and laboured the fields of the Imperial Valley, are important to consider beyond the sheer numbers. Durango was imagined in Mexico as the region most ready for modernization given that the state's population was perceived to be less indigenous; as well, it housed some development projects that closely reflected the growing agribusiness in California. At the same time, argues Cohen, the agricultural practices and labour regimes in the Imperial Valley helped make California the nation's prominent agricultural state. The book is divided into three sections: Part I, "Producing Transnational Subjects," examines the transnational connections and ideological underpinnings of all principal actors: the U.S. and Mexico governments, U.S. growers, and braceros; Part II, "Bracero Agency and Emergent Subjectivities," addresses braceros' own subjectivity and agency so as to discuss the emergence of a particular transnational subjectivity; and Part III,

"The Convergence of Elite Alliances," considers the impact of the braceros' emergent subjectivities by looking at the demands and transformations that affected the wider terrain of the program.

In Chapter One, "Agriculture, State Expectations, and the Configuration of Citizenship," Cohen thoroughly asks why so many braceros were willing to depart from their families and to subject themselves to the scrutiny of the selection process so as to perform stoop labour in the agricultural fields of the U.S. For these men, the program not only promised economic gains, but also entailed a promising vision of belonging as modern national subjects within the Mexican nation-state. The program, with a modernist frame, "presented the Mexican state with the possibility of economic progress, better international positioning, and respect from its northern neighbor." (35) Braceros would become "national ambassadors" and future modern citizens of Mexico. The men recruited as braceros were primarily from the rural regions of Mexico, and marginal within the nation-state. Their participation in the program converted them into recognized citizens of the nation with the expectation that in the labour trajectory, they would gain innovative agricultural skills that would transform the unproductive Mexican lands into profitable agricultural production sites. This was an ideological underpinning that had existed since the early 20th century, when Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio argued that repatriated Mexicans during the Great Depression in the U.S. would return to Mexico with technological skills that would advance Mexican agricultural production. Thus, agricultural development and the promise of the modern, along with the economic incentives the program provided, was at the heart of the Mexican government's stake in the bracero program.

In contrast to this modern citizenship ideology, Chapter Two, "Narrating Class and Nation: Agribusiness and the Construction of Grower Narratives," studies the California growers' narratives so as to illustrate the ways in which braceros were racialized within a social Darwinist and eugenics logic about Mexican men as innate agricultural labourers. Mexicans, and nonwhite migrants more broadly, were constructed as primitive and close to the ground, and subsequently as stoop labourers by nature, due to presumed physical attributes. This logic meant that the work and ethical skills gained through agricultural labour would prepare those "biologically proficient" with the skills required for their individual uplift. (51) Thus, through this narrative, growers presented themselves as benevolent saviours interested in the social improvement of labourers. At the same time, growers portrayed themselves in two conflicting and interrelated images. They promoted themselves, first, through the nostalgic image of the Jefferson era "yeoman farmer," who worked hard and woke up at the break of dawn to milk cows and tend his farm; and, second, as modern business owners who used machines and relied on science, technology, and latest research. These two contrasting images functioned to create, on the one hand, a connection with the hard-working, rural American audience, and, on the other, a connection with an increasing urban and

modern audience. These narratives would be instrumental in gaining access to government support for the bracero program that would give access to a trove of labourers, and which gave rise to the California agricultural industry on the backs (and hands and arms) of braceros.

The methods of modernizing braceros, argues Cohen, were constructed both by the racial organization that constructed Mexicans as inherent farmworkers and by the harsh demands of fieldwork. This chapter, as well, illustrates the ways in which the powerful images of growers as modern businessmen and simultaneously as small farmers created an image of democratic tradition within agribusiness, in contrast to domestic farmworkers who were seen as lazy and collectivist minded, and thus un-American. This powerful image provided the impetus for the governmental and mainstream support for the bracero program, and simultaneously hindered the labour struggle in California.

Chapter Three, "Manhood, the Lure of Migration, and Contestations of the Modern," addresses the various goals and expectations of braceros. By also analyzing letters that were sent to the Mexican government by bracero aspirants, Cohen examines how these men presented themselves within a particular set of masculine values to make an argument of being suitable agents, and therefore worthy for selection as braceros. In this way, the program raised expectations for claiming manhood, showing it to be intertwined with rights and privileges associated with a particular manhood. Descriptions of self and as the ideal man in letters were foregrounded with notions of health and conditioning to labour, and as "head of households," that illustrate the ways in which individuals themselves made claims to the type of logic that the bracero program entailed.

Chapter Four, "Rites of Movement, Technologies of Power: Making Migrants Modern from Home to the Border," more specifically addresses the elaborate selection procedures in Mexico and at the U.S.-Mexico border. Cohen details the bodily inspections to which bracero aspirants were subjected prior to being privileged entry into the U.S. Braceros were given small pox vaccinations; their hands were examined for callouses to show the bodily signs of their ability to work; they were given physical exams including x-rays to check for tuberculosis; and they were screened for epilepsy, craziness, and other illnesses that would result in the rejection of braceros from the U.S. The men's bodies were inspected and invaded while naked in the public viewing of other braceros and inspectors; this was followed by sprayings of DDT (a harmful insecticide). While Cohen expected to hear the horrors of this process in the interviews she conducted, instead the braceros' recollections referenced this moment as part of the selection process they had to fulfill and often recalled with humour the ways in which braceros found technologies to bypass these inspections. Beyond the surface of the bodily inspections of these men are the technologies of power encroached on the bodies of braceros. These practices reflect what anthropologist Alejandro Lugo (2008) calls "border inspections" that illus-

trate the pervasive surveillance patterns that dehumanize the working class and inspect and monitor what goes on in the name of the nation.²

Chapter Five, “With Hunched Back and on Bended Knee: Race, Work, and the Modern North of the Border,” examines the (re)configuration of men’s worlds in living spaces, bars, and fields, as well as their own attempts to recuperate their manhood. Here, Cohen argues that the living conditions of braceros in sex-segregated barracks and their engagement or expectations in domestic tasks (such as meal preparations and laundry) called into question their own claims to the status of proper patriarchs. At the same time, the homosocial spaces of the barracks created an environment of isolation and limited mobility that hindered their prescribed masculinity. Braceros recuperated this masculinity by positioning themselves as workers as way to gain respect not just for their labour, but also for themselves. At the same time, their engagements in spaces of socialization and with women to meet their own desires was also an attempt to rescue their manhood rights and privileges. While this argument is quite intriguing, in what ways does this posturing also construct heteronormative expectations? Did all men desire women? Is it possible that these homosocial spaces altered desires? Or was it only possible to exacerbate a desired exalted masculinity?

Chapter Six, “Strikes Against Solidarity: Containing Domestic Farmworkers’ Agency,” departs from examining braceros’ agency as men in dealing with drudgery, monotony, and isolation and considers the ways in which braceros were constructed as subjects and pawns in the context of union organizing. Once again, this instance counters the presumed modernization of the bracero program with the constructions of braceros as foreigners and backward, not just by growers and society at large, but also by labour unions in the context of union organizing. The growers pitted braceros and domestic workers against each other. At the same time, the unions did not protect braceros, but instead utilized nativist arguments about domestic jobs and the foreignness of braceros within their organizing efforts. In the end, braceros were the most vulnerable sector in the labour disputes and the threat of deportability hindered their ability to join organizing efforts even if desired.

Chapter Seven, “Border of Belonging, Border of Foreignness: Patriarchy, the Modern, and Making Transnational Mexicanness,” considers the crossing back of the border and the need of braceros to reinvent themselves as “(proto) patriarchs” and modern agentive citizens. (174) While the bracero program contradicted the reconstruction of the modern Mexican citizen, given the gendered and racialized construction of Mexican men through labour practices and living conditions, the men nonetheless reinvented themselves under the modernization logic. While most who returned did not develop the Mexican agricultural industries, they did return with commodities and the ability for

2. Alejandro Lugo, *Fragmented Lives, Assembled Parts: Culture, Capitalism, and Conquest at the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin 2008), 149.

upward mobility by starting their own small business, or with mechanization for their small agricultural lands.

The final chapter, "Tipping the Negotiation Hand: State-to-State Struggle and the Impact of Migrant Agency," concludes with the opening question about the bracero program. Was the program simply an exploitive labour importation program, or did it provide opportunity? Placing the program in a dichotomous lens, argues Cohen, does not allow for a complex picture, particularly in terms of braceros' lives and desires. In bracero narratives, as she illustrates, recollections of modernity and opportunity are central, since yes, in effect the program provided uplift for some ex-braceros. Yet, at the same time, many braceros remained in a cycle of migration within and across the U.S.-Mexico border. "Although life got better," says Felipe Castañeda, "the opportunity came at a cost." (201) Full incorporation was unattainable in both national spaces, and thus, instead, transnational subjects were produced, "a social position that demanded a movement between both nations and through which they increasingly anchored their survival and national claims." (221) The promise of the modern as assured by the bracero program was sustained through a revolving migratory door.

As Cohen argues, and as Mitchell also illustrates, the U.S. and Mexican economies remain predicated on labour migration, a process built on the knowledge of earlier periods, specifically the bracero era. Brinda Sarathy, by contrast, examines contemporary Latina/o migration to the Pacific Northwest. Sarathy's investigations reveal many similarities with the bracero program, particularly in the ways in which migrants are courted by U.S. industries. As well, migrants continue to be objects of derision and nationalist fears; they are also subjected to laws and practices targeting Latino bodies.

Sarathy's book, *Pineros: Latino Labour and the Changing Face of Forestry in the Pacific Northwest*, mirrors the discussions engaged by Cohen and Mitchell by continuing the research that examines the impact of labour migration on U.S. industries. It also engages with the human aspects of migration. Sarathy looks at contemporary migration trends by paying attention to Latinos in the Pacific Northwest and the transformations of forestry work in Oregon, and particularly the process by which the federal government became the primary employer of Latinos in the region. As Sarathy argues, the presence of Latinos in the forestry industry, and particularly in national forest lands, counters the ways in which the Pacific Northwest is commonly imagined as natural, with verdant rainforests, surging salmon, and spotted owls.

Chapter One, "Invisible Workers," examines how constructions of the region as a natural space in the national imagination also produces the imagined "white space," with "the logger" (Paul Bunyan) as the prominent image, and with the white ardent environmentalist as a secondary character. Latinos, as nonwhite immigrants, are imagined as an anomaly. They are present in an unlikely setting that is imagined as natural and white. While their labour is perceived as new, Sarathy examines how Latinos have been involved for well

over a century in Pacific forestry work, and yet have remained invisible from forestry scholarship. This work addresses questions of the arrival, settlement, and continued exploitation of immigrant forest workers by asking: How did Latinos come to manage forest lands? How do federal agencies perpetuate systems of labour exploitation? What are the working conditions that Latinos face? How are the perspectives and concerns voiced by immigrant workers represented in debates and policy considerations about forest management? Taken together, these questions address the implications of the continued structures of inequalities with regard to labour practices as they manifest regarding Latino labourers.

In this discussion, Sarathy addresses the regional racial labour regimes of the Pacific Northwest by examining the changing racial composition of manual labour in forestry work, which changed “from a predominantly native-born and white labour force to a largely undocumented Latino population”; Sarathy also more broadly examines power dynamics among ethnic groups. (11) These shifting demographics, Sarathy argues, mirror the intersections of immigration, land management, and labour practices. To this end, Sarathy considers the segmented labor force as one of the primary strands in analyzing these changes and references the internal segmentation within the forest management industry that establishes distinctions of (il)legality. The exploitation of migrant workers in contrast to white workers, such as in wage differentials and unequal labour conditions, is part and parcel of a racialized labour system that is also intertwined with fragmented immigration policies.

In Chapter Two, “Cutting and Planting,” Sarathy discusses the history of reforestation in Oregon and the shifts to large scale logging operations, which eventually phased out small scale co-operative labour. This chapter also addresses the rise of a co-operative reforestation workforce during the 1970s – primarily run by white males – to consider how the emergence of Latino labour is intertwined with the decline of co-operatives during the 1980s, and aligned with the rise of industrial logging that requires a cheap and exploitable labour force. These transformations were in part due to changing labour laws that made co-operatives unable to compete with contractors, as well as to economic and employment opportunities that were afforded to co-operative members. This period was a turning point in the recruitment of immigrant labourers, as Latinos became the predominant labour force in the forestry industry. *Pineros* are the Latino workers that have formed the backbone of the forest management labour force on federal land in the Pacific Northwest. The use of migrant workers is linked to the presence of agricultural migrant workers established in Oregon that emerged after the Bracero Program.

Chapter Three, “From Pears to Pines,” examines the various institutional policy changes, social processes, and networks that gave rise to the Latino dominance in the forestry labour force during the 1980s. These shifts taking place in the Pacific Northwest are representative of larger national trends that

have changed the geographies of Mexican migration.³ Recently, scholars have begun documenting ways in which changes in migration patterns, as they relate to policy and social processes, have also changed the regional social fabric in urban and rural spaces across the U.S. Sarathy begins documenting this process by looking at how as the labour force changes, so do the communities of the Rogue Valley where recent Latino migrants are settling and making themselves at home. The Rogue Valley region in Oregon has emerged as a “new destination” for Latino migrants. At the same time, this chapter examines how the federal government, specifically the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, became the single largest employer of undocumented workers primarily through subcontracting, which was facilitated after the passing of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. As workers for the federal government, these labourers perform manual intensive activities and face unsafe working conditions. Moreover, as the work in federal lands has shifted into an eco-system approach that “enhances, protects, and maintains natural ecosystem functions and biological diversity,” Latinos have become the primary labour force for this intensive manual labour. (74)

In Chapter Four, “The Marginality of Forest Workers,” Sarathy argues that pineros are among the most economically and socially marginal groups of forest workers. Moreover, despite the predominance of Latino forest workers, little attention has been played to these key actors, thus maintaining the social invisibility and marginality of these workers. In comparing labour practices amongst loggers, former tree planters, and pineros, Sarathy finds an unequal wage system and labour inequalities existing between white and Latino workers. This system is maintained by a racialized process that places migrant labour as exploitable, particularly as it intersects with citizenship and immigration. Despite their constructed marginality and invisibility within the media, as environmentalists, land managers, and natural resource policy makers, Latinos are visibly present in the Rogue Valley, and as they settle are marking their space through cultural practices in their everyday lives. They are thus contributing to the “region’s economy and sense of place.” (99)

In Chapter Five, “A Tale of Two Valleys,” Sarathy examines the continued struggle over labour rights, particularly in the neoliberal era that has limited the possibility for new social justice organizations to emerge and has furthered limited the sources of existing organizations. In comparing the Willamette Valley, with its established social justice oriented organizations that emerged within the specific context of the labour movements of the 1960s led by the United Farm Workers (UFW), with the Rogue Valley, a region with a recent history of Latino settlement, Sarathy explains the limited immigrant activism

3. Jorge Durand, Douglas S. Massey, and Chiara Capoferro, “The New Geography of Mexican Immigration,” in Victor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León, eds. *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States* (New York 2006), 1–20.

in the region. The possibilities of mobilization are shaped by the local political culture, Sarathy argues, but also by the dynamics of social power. Nonetheless, workers have historically improved their working and living conditions through labour organizing. As such, recent immigrants have the capacity of improving their labour conditions and marginal positioning through organizing, as was manifested in the 2006 immigrant rights' marches, as well as in more subtle forms of resistance in their quotidian contexts. Sarathy concludes by providing policy recommendations to better the labour and living circumstances of pineros, and immigrants more broadly.

These three texts by Don Mitchell, Deborah Cohen, and Brinda Sarathy bring to light important questions regarding migration and labour equity as they intersect with the dynamics of race, class, gender, and citizenship. Both Mitchell and Cohen examine the complicity of the U.S. and Mexican governments with regard to worker and human rights violations in the context of the bracero program. Braceros entered through governmental agreements. Thus, who was and is responsible for their rights? Who oversees labour violations?

Similarly, Sarathy examines the complicity of the U.S. federal government in labour exploitation and inequalities with regard to pineros working in forestry on federal lands. Given this governmental complicity, whom should workers turn to to challenge exploitive circumstances? All three texts also continue the debate about labour migration and whether this process provides alternative opportunities. Is labour migration always a destructive process? Under the current neoliberal logic that prioritizes the free market at the expense of social well-being, is there a humanist possibility with regard to migration that takes into account the real lives of workers, and not just the extraction of their labour? Finally, as migrants settle and make themselves a home in new geographies of the U.S., is it possible that they alter American landscapes, or do they remain "ever-new, ever-same"?