

pages. The writing style is simple enough to understand, though it is assumed that the reader knows well the basics of early human history in order to follow the content. Each of the seven chapters covers a significant step in the development of the human being. The book does not skip any major historic period, beginning with evolutionary biology and ending with the settlement of homo sapiens, the species from which the modern human directly descended. While all chapter titles concretely follow a "bottom-up" structure in historical order, the content mainly focuses on research (and research methods) of notable human evolution researchers, from evolutionary biologists to primatologists. Tattersall discusses all significant discoveries, including the Heidelberg man, and provides a nine-page summary of the discovery and research on *homo neanderthalensis*. Readers find themselves exposed to results of scientific research of the past and the present, and, if they haven't been familiar with them so far, learn about anthropological methods such as the potassium/argon (K/Ar) technique or the more recent mtDNA technology.

It does not come as a surprise that the author's conclusion is an anthropologist's viewpoint. According to Tattersall, the development of human history has been influenced mainly by external factors that in turn led people to "write" history the way we learn it in classrooms.

This book is well written and structured, though it seems difficult to use "as is" for a classroom book assignment. It is appropriate for an introductory history or anthropology course at the university level. However, the research-rich content will require group discussions led by the teacher. In general, one could say that a strength of the book is the delivery of good teaching material resources. They are useful even at the high school level, such as the chronological overview table or the maps displaying human evolution through migration. A "weakness" of this book is its strong orientation toward academic research of this complex topic. Though it contributes without doubt to provide a better understanding of academic research in this field, this book is not easy to read, nor is it easy to use for a publication series ambitious to offer a comprehensive and readable overview of world history.

Independent Scholar

Elizabeth Do Lam

**Paul J. Dosal. *Cuba Libre: A Brief History of Cuba*. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2006. Pp. 152. Paper, \$14.95; ISBN 978-0-882-95246-8.**

At a time when many scholars are producing works of big history, Paul J. Dosal and the editors of the Global History series at Harlan Davidson have chosen to produce a work of very small history and have done so with great success. With much recent historiography, particularly in world history, focusing on international developments, multinational occurrences, and issues of global consequence, Professor Dosal's 152 pages of text serve as a reminder of the utility of national histories in undergraduate

courses. This book's usefulness is due in large measure to Dosal's skillful integration of the local and the global. Despite its brevity and focused content, *Cuba Libre: A Brief History of Cuba* addresses issues of global significance in microcosm. Primary among such issues are the nature and impact of relationships between the big (meaning stronger) and the small (meaning weaker) nations of the world and the evolution of cultures and national identity, in this case *Cubanidad*, in that context.

Dosal's thorough yet concise history of Cuba from the arrival of the Spanish to nearly the present day persuasively makes the case that the freedom and independence generations of Cubans fought to achieve perpetually evaded them. International events, including colonization, the Atlantic slave trade, neocolonialism, and the Cold War, conspired to keep the island nation continuously dependent upon other, more powerful nations. Each of these global issues addressed in detail about Cuba provides excellent opportunities for classroom discussion and comparison of Cuba's situation to that of other former colonies and underdeveloped nations.

Dosal's juxtaposition of this unfortunate, dependent status for Cuba with the evolving, thriving richness of a uniquely Cuban culture is similarly useful for class discussions. The unique convergence of diverse peoples in Cuba, indigenous, African, European, and North American, that gave rise to the island's dependent status also fostered the development of a truly unique hybrid culture exemplified by syncretic religious traditions like Candomble and the vibrant musical tradition of son. Culturally Cuba achieved a level of independence that it failed to reach politically or economically. Dosal's treatment of *Cubanidad* opens the door for detailed discussions of cultural theory as applied to Cuba, Latin America, and elsewhere.

However, an element of Cuban history about which much more could be said is Cuban internationalism post 1959. Cuban policy as guided by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara (until his death in Bolivia in 1967) succeeded in providing a voice for the developing world during the Cold War. Castro's promotion of national liberation and national sovereignty proved important not only in Cuba, but in much of Latin America as well. Cuban action and ideology also had a significant impact on leftists throughout the region and around the world, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. Such a discussion would solidify the link between Castro in the twentieth century and Jose Marti in the nineteenth century, an important link for undergraduates who are likely more familiar with Castro than Marti to make. Further, a detailed discussion of the legacy of Cuban internationalism would once again allow Dosal to use Cuba as the microcosm to explain global events, in this case, the increasingly complex relationships between the superpowers and developing nations during the late Cold War.

In conclusion, while histories of Cuba are numerous and varied, this text is a welcome and useful addition to that literature. Its thoroughness, tone, and readability make it a good candidate for classroom use in courses ranging from introductory world history surveys to more advanced Latin American history and international studies classes.