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## Casavantes Bradford, A. *The Revolution is for the Children: The Politics of Childhood in Havana and Miami, 1959-1962*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

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**Casavantes Bradford, A. *The Revolution is for the Children: The Politics of Childhood in Havana and Miami, 1959-1962*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014.**

Fidel Castro's revolution took place in Cuba as a counteraction against the administration of Fulgencio Batista, which was suspected of intense corruption and dubious economic policies. Batista's government showed signs of corruption which impeded to achieve stable economy. At least, this was the pretext of Castro's revolution. Through this process, which ranged from 1953 to 1959, the island witnessed three major forced migrations to the United States. Although most are reminded of the Mariel crisis in 1980, the problem started much time earlier. Castro's government once established evinced a cruel dichotomy for many Cubans. Though revolution brought benefits to classes which were systematically debarred from wealth distribution in former administrations, the new system forced the migration of many other citizens who were supporters of Castrism. At some extent, the capitalist Cuban community hosted in Miami accused the Communist administration not only of violating human rights, but also of damaging the rights of children. This image, originally disseminated by the media, presented Marxism as one of the main threats to the Americas. At the same time, it portrayed a good image of America as a benefactor and protector government. Of course, on the other side of the Florida Straits, the discourse of children was politically manipulated in both sides of the ocean. In the case of Castro, he made from the children malnutrition or lack of education his flag towards a better government. Following his ideology, if Cuban children lived in pauperism and degradable conditions, it was because capitalism produced an unjust distribution of wealth. The "archetype of children" is a term often used to symbolize the articulation of beliefs, stereotypes, conceptual traits, and discourses which are oriented to "childhood" as a source of irrationality. In one case, as Cubans do, children should be protected, while in American hands, it corresponds to "the lack of rationality necessary to be an autonomous adult".

This is the context where Professor Anita Casavantes Bradford discusses the treatment of children in Havana and Miami from 1959-1962. In her book *The Revolution is for the Children*, she explores not only the ideological use politicians made around the allegory of childhood, but how Castrism used children to remain in power. This book focuses on the allegory of children as a symbolic nation-building in Latin America. American ethnocentrism, Bradford adheres, alluded to Cuba as a nation of children who needs not only care but also a firm government by US ends. Instead, Castro's government appealed to children for humanitarian reasons, explaining the revolution should be at disposal of more vulnerable agents, which means children.

In the introductory chapter, Casavantes Bradford theorizes about the archetype of the child as a "nation-maker" not only in Cuba but in other nations as well. The starting point for this discussion is described below by author:

Children have played a constitutive role in the ideological labor through which different actors have pursued a range of modern nation-making projects, starting in the historical myths and metanarratives through which nations have been given concrete expression, bestowing legitimacy to leaders or hastening their delegitimization, and reinforcing or contributing to destruction of institutions within which the range of political belief and possibilities have been contained and national trajectories determined. (p. 9)

Based on the idea that castroism was not a spontaneous act, but a counter-response embedded in the sociological context of Cuba, this book reminds us brilliantly of how the political discourse is intended to exacerbate the figure of more vulnerable agents, in this case children to gain further legitimacy to society's eyes. In this vein, chapter one refers to the preliminary works of well-known Cuban poet Jose Marti envisaging an "essentialized" view of Cuba in order to expand further ideological support to its quest for independence from Spain. Decades later, this image of a vulnerable and immature Cuba served the interests of the elite to support the United States invasion. With this as backdrop, it not only shored up the relationship of subordination of a White-Empire (America) and a racialized island (Cuba) but also accompanied the discourse of exiles from 1953 up to date. To some extent, in the mind of expatriates, revolution failed to achieve a mature democracy that leads Cubans to adhere to authoritarian governments. At the same time, Castro's administration portrayed a heroic image of children as the pillars of independence and liberty from the "Yankee" invaders. In other terms, parental relationships as well as child-rearing were used and manipulated to explain the difficult position of America and Cuba in their respective diplomacies.

Additionally, the second and third chapters refer to allegories created for Castro to discipline those detractors of revolution. Once he took office ousting Batista, "the archetype of children" was used to gain further legitimacy. Not only health care but also education was extended to almost all ages. Declared one of the priorities of the revolution, "childcare" was a buzzword which connoted diverse meanings. The revolution struggled against an infantilized image of Cuba as an immature nation unable to make its own decisions without intervention of the United States. Further, Batista's regime was accused of violating the human rights of children and even of offering children in witchcraft rituals. The allegory of childhood paves the ways for the advent of a new autocratic government that finally suspended elections. The ideals of Marti accompanied with a child-oriented discourse gave Castro further legitimacy to impose policies that otherwise would be rejected. The Cuban revolution not only inaugurated a new climate in the Island, but also pressed thousand of dissidents to exile in US. Once established there, these new comers adopted the view of US respecting to Cuba as a "nation of children" who should be firmly governed by other powers.

Though initially on good terms, Cuba bolstered a fluid dialogue with their great northern neighbour, but some forced migrants started to settle in Miami once communists arrived in power. Last but not least, the fifth and sixth sections describe how the radical turn of Cuba's government to Communism ushered to thousands of exiles to vindicate counter-revolutionary policies from the United States. What is more than important to debate is that paradoxically, these manifestations against Castro focus on the archetype of children, too. Cuban childhood, from one on another side, reveals a powerful discursive effect that serves to demonize the adversaries. This seems to be the main argument of this fascinating book, where Casavantes Bradford expounds on a smart thesis that illuminates the contours of politics. A text of this calibre presents a valid analysis to assist anthropologists, social scientists and historians concerned with cultural studies of the relationship between Cuba and the United States.

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