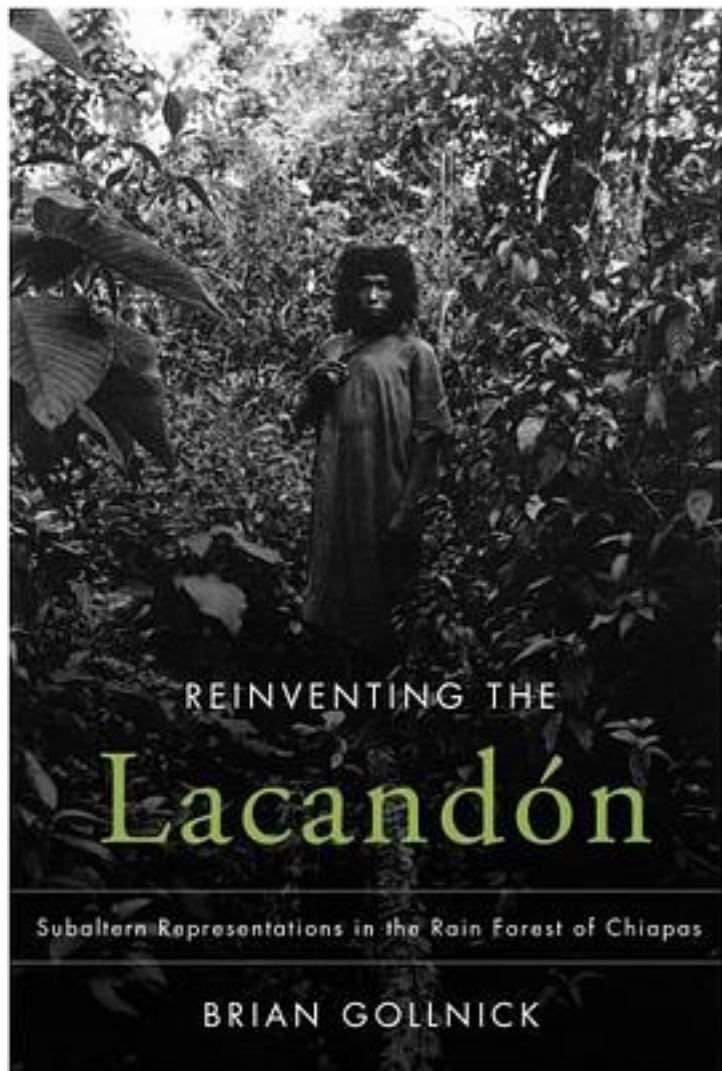


# Reinventing the Lacandon



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Before massive deforestation began in the 1960s, the LacandA3n jungle, which lies on the border of Mexico and Guatemala, was part of the largest tropical rain forest north of the Amazon. The destruction of the LacandA3n occurred with little attention from the international press until January 1, 1994, when a group of armed Maya rebels led by a charismatic spokesperson who called himself Subcomandante Marcos emerged from jungle communities and briefly occupied several towns in the Mexican state of Chiapas. These rebels, known as the Zapatista National Liberation Army, became front-page news around the globe, and they used their notoriety to issue rhetorically powerful communiquA(c)s that denounced political corruption, the Mexican government's treatment of indigenous peoples, and the negative impact of globalization. As Brian Gollnick reveals, the Zapatista communiquA(c)s had deeper roots in the Mayan rain forest than Westerners realized and he points out that the very idea of the jungle is also deeply rooted, though in different ways, in the Western imagination. Gollnick draws on theoretical innovations offered by subaltern studies to discover a oral traces left by indigenous inhabitants in dominant cultural productions. He explores both how the jungle region and its inhabitants have been represented in literary writings from the time of the Spanish conquest to the present and how the indigenous people have represented themselves in such works, including post-colonial and anti-colonial narratives, poetry, video, and photography. His goal is to show how popular and elite cultures have interacted in creating depictions of life in the rain forest and to offer new critical vocabularies for analyzing forms of cross-cultural expression.

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