*Courage Tastes of Blood* is a non-fiction collection of oral histories gathered by historian Florencia Mallon. The text focuses on a very small group indigenous to Chile known as the Mapuche. The book covers nearly a century of Mapuche history spanning from the time periods 1906 to 2001. During this time the Mapuche faced exploitation, manipulation, and torture all by the hands of the Chilean state. Though it is a well written book that provides the reader with a vibrant and heartbreaking story of land disputes between the Chilean state and the Mapuche people, since Florencia Mallon collected oral histories she considered herself very close with some of the Mapuche people. Therefore, she uses language in her writing that is exceedingly partial to the Mapuche and she says very little from the perspective of the Chilean state. Mallon may have some surprisingly strong biases that favor the Mapuche, but *Courage Tastes of Blood* is still a phenomenally eye opening book that discusses the effects that a lack of land can have on a community, the strategies that the Mapuche used in an effort to overcome these obstacles, and the effect that the Cold War had on the political climate of Chile during Allende’s presidency.

Florencia Mallon went to Chile, specifically the Mapuche community of Nicolas Ailio, to speak with the inhabitants of the land and compare their personal stories of heartache over land disputes with censuses and other historical documents that she obtained from various archives. Because of her involvement in the community itself, she holds biases in favor of the Mapuche people. The reader can see these biases by analyzing her word choice in the book. For example, on page 4 she states in regards to the Mapuche people, that the Chilean state is attempting to, “discriminate against them and prevent them from progressing.” Though the Mapuche people may have had a much harder time acclimating to the new way of life that was caused by the battles over land and they may have been inadvertently discriminated against, an objective historian should not use such wording. Another blatant example of her biases appears when she is talking about her use of the words don and dona. Don and dona are Spanish words of respect reserved for those who are truly outstanding and wise leaders of the community. Mallon uses these terms of respect when referring to certain people who she has come to know. When talking about her usage of these terms on page 24 she states, “there is no objective consistency to my use of “don” and “dona,” but rather an emotional consistency that rests on friendship and respect.” A historian cannot tell an objective story when she considers herself to have formed friendships within the community she is studying.

Mallon does acknowledge her biases on page 20 when she tells the reader of her support for the community. Mallon does not claim to be an objective historian; however, it is a very important trait to have when one is recording the history of a given area. While reading the book the reader only receives one perspective on the topic of Chilean land disputes with indigenous peoples and he or she sees the Chilean state only how Mallon depicts it: motivated by money and the interest of private businesses. Radical historians cannot paint the full picture of the time period or group of people that they are researching because their biases restrict them from seeing the subject from another perspective. The historian cannot be influenced by friendship and he or she should not use emotional consistency when conducting research. *Courage Tastes of Blood* is an excellent book that is very entertaining to read, but it lacks greatly in regards to perspective from those who are not directly involved in the Mapuche community.

*Courage Tastes of Blood* documents land disputes of the Mapuche. The Chilean state had agreed to set aside a given amount of land to the Mapuche by creating the Ley de Radicacion; however, before the Mapuche were even settled, plots of this government granted land were being auctioned off because the state had defined the plots as state property. Big businesses and industries not only purchased the land that was set aside for indigenous peoples, but after they had developed the land that they initially bought they began to encroach even further upon the territory of the Mapuche. This led to significantly miniscule plots of land reserved for the Mapuche and other indigenous peoples. On page 62 Mallon provides the reader with very shocking statistics in regards to land reserved for the Mapuche, she states, “approximately 42% of Mapuche families controlled fewer than 5 hectares… the census of 1963 recorded an average of 2.3 hectares per family in Ailio.” The lack of land designated to indigenous peoples was the underlying cause of the sweeping wave of poverty that came to Chile, specifically to those who lived in the Nicolas Ailio community.

Since the designated land was so limited, it was overworked and therefore after a certain number of years was barren. People on the outside of the community saw what was happening as a business opportunity and the Mapuche were greatly taken advantage of. On page 74 Don Robustiano explained to Mallon the extreme exploitation that he witnessed when he was working as a teenager. Teenagers did not receive an adult wage until they were able to carry a large sack of potatoes or wheat; however, the adult wage was still exceedingly miniscule. An adult male who was able to carry a large sack of potatoes or wheat received seven kilos of wheat for two days of work. These pathetically low wages stemmed from the lack of arable land. There was an excess of Mapuche farmers, but there was not nearly enough land for all of the farmers to be in work. This injustice in wages received by the Mapuche drove the community even deeper into poverty.

The land scarcity also led to Mapuche acclimation into urban culture. The members of the Mapuche community who could not find jobs in agriculture migrated to the cities to become day workers. The Mapuche, especially the ones living in Nicolas Ailio, lost some of their native culture by working in factories during the day. On page 64 Don Antonio, a highly respected member of the community, admitted that he did not marry within the Mapuche because he had to migrate to work in Santiago every day. His case is not rare among members of the Mapuche during the 1900s because of the job scarcity created by limited lands.

The Mapuche used various techniques to address the dispute over land that caused so much turmoil in their society, but few of these efforts proved successful. When the Ley de Radicacion was established, the Mapuche went about acquiring the land that they were entitled to through the legal process. The Chilean state was more interested in the desires of private businesses than they were in the needs of the Mapuche because the businesses boosted the economy. However, When Allende became president of Chile there was a shift in dynamics. Allende was a socialist who believed that the agrarian system needed reforms so he began expropriating land from big businesses and nationalizing. Through this process the Mapuche gained some of the 45 hectares that were lost decades before. When Mapuche people spoke about Allende’s presidency on page 113 of the text they remembered fondly a, “period of prosperity during which the government helped out and it was possible to work productively.”

Allende’s presidency was a time of wealth and success for the Mapuche, but unfortunately this success was short-lived. Allende was a self-proclaimed socialist and he came to power in the middle of the Cold War. The Cold War made many countries, including the United States, weary of socialism because it was only a small step away from communism. The United States had a great deal of capital invested in Chile and when Allende began nationalizing big industries they pulled out all of their funding for the country. In fact, under Nixon’s presidency the United States spent eight million dollars in an effort to destabilize the Chilean economy. The United States stopped funding the Chilean state, but they doubled their funding of the military in hopes that the military would rise up. The United States desperately wanted to contain communism and saw Allende as a threat to this goal. Not only were other countries afraid of Allende and his power, but the members of the Chilean middle class feared that he would nationalize their small and medium-sized businesses. The political climate in Chile at the time was not suitable for a socialist president and in 1973 Allende could feel an impending coup so he took his own life. Though there was a collective sigh of relief from the middle class and the United States, the Mapuche suffered.

Many Mapuche were deemed as terrorists for supporting Allende and his agrarian reform. Soldiers came into the community threatening women and children, asking for the whereabouts of some of Allende’s most avid supporters. Men in the community turned on each other in an effort to find someone to blame and to make sense of the repression. On page 159 Don Heriberto recalls how the entire community turned against him out of fear for their own lives. He speaks of Hugo Ailio who was involved in the agrarian reform movement, he states, “as a kid he was weak… and once pressured he would give away everything he knew… he affected all of us, he sent us all up the river.” Hugo Ailio was not the only traitor among Mapuche. Everyone was frightened and looking for answers, so they looked to the new government for answers and they bought into the fear and terror that the militant government was forcing upon them.

The Mapuche people have always faced hardships in regards to land ownership; however, it was not until after Allende’s presidency that the government not only took their land, but resorted to torture and intimidation. In the first half of the 20th century the Mapuche tried to utilize legal means of obtaining the land that was rightfully theirs, but these attempts did not come to fruition because the government and large industries historically manipulated and exploited the Mapuche. The Mapuche could not properly read the documents that the Chilean state would write up in regards to their land rights and they were exploited by factory owners and large land owners who would pay them miniscule wages. Overall, even though the Mapuche were tortured and deemed as terrorists after Allende’s presidency, the Chilean state did not treat them very well before this incident either. It was only during the socialist rule of Allende that the Mapuche were given humane treatment by the Chilean state.