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# Columbian Encounters: Beyond 1992

James Axtell

**A**MERICA has profited economically more than educationally from its major historical anniversaries. Typical was 1976 when popular and scholastic understanding of America's revolutionary heritage and distinctive political origins was advanced much less than were the profits of corporate hucksters who cashed in on what Jesse Lemisch aptly called "Bicentennial Schlock."<sup>1</sup> Despite the considerable scholarship spawned by the Bicentennial, one of every three high school juniors in the late 1980s could not place the Declaration of Independence in its correct half-century, did not know that it signaled the colonists' break from England, and did not recognize its best-known passage about "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Even one in four college seniors could not distinguish the ideas of Karl Marx from those of the U. S. Constitution or explain the purpose of the *Federalist Papers*.<sup>2</sup> Patriotism sells; it doesn't always educate.

The Quincentenary of Columbus's voyage of discovery has a much better chance of realizing its educational potential. Certainly, the challenge exists. In the 1988 National Assessment of Educational Progress, 56 percent of fourth graders could name Columbus's ships, but only 36 percent understood why he sailed to the Americas. Nearly a third of seventeen-year-olds thought that Columbus reached the New World after 1750. Only 60 percent knew that the American southwest was explored and settled by Spain, the same number who knew that the eastern seaboard was settled mainly by England.<sup>3</sup>

The Columbian Quincentenary is likely to make a deeper public and pedagogical impact for five reasons. First, we are choosing to commemorate rather than celebrate the event, with a greater degree of serious reflection on its much more mixed results. Second, the event we com-

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<sup>1</sup> Lemisch, "Bicentennial Schlock," *New Republic*. CLXXV (Nov. 6, 1976), 21-23.

<sup>2</sup> Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr., *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know? A Report on the First National Assessment of History and Literature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 75, 99; *A Survey of College Seniors: Knowledge of History and Literature*, conducted for the National Endowment for the Humanities (Princeton, N. J.: The Gallup Organization, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth J. Cooper, "Test Suggests Students Lack Grasp of Civics," *Washington Post*, Apr. 3, 1990, A5; Ravitch and Finn, *What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know?* 265.

memorate is less the single sea voyage than the five-centuries-long “encounter” of populations, institutions, and ideas from all of the world’s continents that followed. Third, since the event belongs to the world and not exclusively to the United States, patriotism and hucksterism are much less likely to steal the show. Fourth, unlike the American Revolution, which for much of this century has been intensively studied by scholars and widely taught in schools and colleges, the concept of the Columbian Encounter is quite new and provides myriad opportunities for scholars, teachers, and educational institutions. And finally, thanks largely to the planning, economic sponsorship, and scholarly oversight of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the community of serious history makers and interpreters has been able to take advantage of those opportunities and thereby to dominate the proceedings.

As the theme of the Quincentenary, Encounter has much to recommend it. Encounters are mutual, reciprocal—two-way rather than one-way streets. Encounters are generically capacious: there are encounters of people but also of ideas, institutions, habits, values, plants, animals, and micro-organisms. Encounters are temporally and spatially fluid: they can occur at any time in any place, before or after 1492, around the globe. And, although natives, critics, and activists may not approve the idea, encounters are morally neutral: the term does not prejudice the nature of the contact or its outcome. In sum, *encounter* is a spacious description that jettisons normative baggage to make room for disinterestedness and parity. It is a salutary word for our conflicted postmodern commemoration of a conflicted protomodern event.

So great are the historical and interpretive projects of the Quincentenary, in Latin America and much of Europe as well as the United States, that it is a challenge just to keep track of them, much less to take full stock of their contributions to our understanding of the Encounter. Fortunately, beginning in the fall of 1984, three newsletters have publicized the great variety of serious undertakings aimed at 1992.<sup>4</sup> Supplemented by regular announcements of Quincentenary-related grants by NEH, these publications comprise a reasonably complete record of the rich educational dividends we can expect from the Columbian anniversary, for they de-

<sup>4</sup> First off the press was 1992: *A Columbus Newsletter*, edited by Foster Provost for the John Carter Brown Library. 1992 specializes in scholarly news: conferences, learned society meetings, reviews of foreign and domestic books about Columbus. Then came the more comprehensive quarterly *Encuentro*, published in English by the Latin American Institute at the University of New Mexico until the winter of 1988, when a glossier, less-focused magazine called *Encounter* took its place with new support from the Spain '92 Foundation. *Encuentro* was quickly joined by an even more inclusive Spanish-English newsletter sponsored by the Organization of American States and Ohio State University, *Quincentennial of the Discovery of America: Encounter of Two Worlds (Quinto Centenario del Descubrimiento de America: Encuentro de Dos Mundos)*, which has appeared up to six times a year. Appropriately, it covers many activities in Latin America—some scholarly, most official—that the other newsletters underreport.

scribe literally hundreds of projects, the majority of them capable of making lasting contributions to scholarship.

What have we learned from all this productivity? How can we most fruitfully incorporate the new history of Encounter into our teaching and scholarship, both academic and public? What, in other words, remains to be done beyond 1992, after the replicas of the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa María* have sailed home?

The most striking difference between the fourth and fifth Columbian centenaries is that native Americans a century ago were relegated to footnotes while today they not only dominate the text but have begun to rewrite it. The Columbian Expositions in Chicago and Madrid in 1892–1893 were brash celebrations of Euro-American cultural superiority and “progress,” in which the Indians were visible only as glass-cased souvenirs of “primitive life” or as well-scrubbed models of Western education and “civilization.”<sup>5</sup> Today, nearly every Quincentenary planning group, conference panel, museum design staff, and film advisory board includes native American members. The reason is less affirmative action or political correctness than a marked change of focus from the benefits of Columbus’s discovery to its costs, particularly for the victims of European colonialism. As earlier historiographical trends shifted our viewpoint from Seville, Paris, and London to Santo Domingo, Quebec, and Jamestown, the Indians who surrounded those capitals have also moved toward the center of our attention, just as they occupied the schemes, dreams, and fears of European colonists for much of the colonial period. Not surprisingly, some of the best scholarship generated by the Quincentenary is devoted to the Indian side of the Encounter.

Because native scholars are still too few, and fewer still specialize in the earliest stages of contact, published native perspectives on the Columbian Encounter have not been numerous. Native activists and organizers have been heard more than native scholars. Indian organizations have made it clear that either they wish to mourn the Quincentenary as the anniversary of a holocaust and the descent of the Dark Ages upon America or they wish to celebrate it in their own ways as “500 years of Native People’s resistance to colonization.” Or they want nothing to do with it because they anticipate another self-congratulatory media circus like those in 1892 and 1976.<sup>6</sup>

The only sustained scholarly discussions of the “discovery” from an Indian perspective have appeared in *Seeds of Change*, the catalogue accom-

<sup>5</sup> Raymond D. Fogelson, “The Red Man in the White City,” in David Hurst Thomas, ed., *Columbian Consequences*, vol. 3: *The Spanish Borderlands in Pan-American Perspective* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), chap. 4; Ricardo Gonzalez Leandri, “Crónica de un desencuentro,” *92 America*, Revista del Quinto Centenario, No. 6 (Oct.-Dec. 1990), 85–88; *Report of the United States Commission to the Columbian Historical Exposition at Madrid, 1892–93* (Washington, D. C., 1895).

<sup>6</sup> “500 Years: Preliminary Results of a Quincentenary Survey,” *Northeast Indian Quarterly*, VII (Fall 1990), 21–22.

panying a major Smithsonian exhibition, and in a special issue of *Northeast Indian Quarterly* entitled "View from the Shore: American Indian Perspectives on the Quincentenary."<sup>7</sup> In the former, George Horse Capture, a Gros Ventre museologist and historian, gives an eloquent personal reading of post-Columbian America, looking backward and forward from the daring Indian occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969. In the latter, John Mohawk, a Seneca professor of Native American Studies at the State University of New York-Buffalo, skillfully debunks some of the mythology surrounding Columbus's voyages of "discovery" by placing them in their pre-American context, and Jose Barreiro, the journal's editor, contributes a long and thoughtful "Note on Tainos: Whither Progress?" Shorter pieces sample native views of the mutual discovery, the 500-year Encounter, and the Quincentenary itself.

Early Quincentenary issues of *Northeast Indian Quarterly* were devoted to "Indian Roots of American Democracy" and "Indian Corn of the Americas: Gift to the World."<sup>8</sup> These subjects are typical of the "contributions" approach that has been a dominant theme of native American studies since their inception in the late 1960s, a phase that all minority studies seem to go through on their way to cultural assurance and self-definition.<sup>9</sup> By concentrating on the (usually material) benefits that native cultures have given to the dominant Euro-American cultures, minority students marginalize their own group by making it conform to the dominant culture and its standards of importance, rather than asserting the integrity and value of their cultures and histories. The addition of non-material contributions has broadened the discussion, without really transcending the limitations of the genre. Thus far consideration of Indian contributions to American democracy has been limited to an alleged Iroquois influence on the Founding Fathers, though in *Indian Givers* and *Native Roots* anthropologist Jack Weatherford seeks to describe, in the words of his subtitles, *How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World* and *How the Indians Enriched America*.<sup>10</sup>

Although native scholars are not participating in the Quincentenary in large numbers, their colleagues and a number of museums and publishers are seeing that the Indian story is memorably told in words, maps, and images. Archaeologists Michael Coe, Dean Snow, and Elizabeth Benson have encompassed the whole hemisphere in their *Atlas of Ancient America*,

<sup>7</sup> George P. Horse Capture, "An American Indian Perspective," in Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis, eds., *Seeds of Change: A Quincentennial Commemoration* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 186-207; *NEIQ*, VII (Fall 1990), 37-46.

<sup>8</sup> *NEIQ*, IV (Winter 1987), V (Spring 1988)-VI (Spring/Summer 1989).

<sup>9</sup> Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., "Native Americans and United States History," in William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr., eds., *The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture* (Washington, D. C.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1973), 37-52.

<sup>10</sup> *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World* (New York: Crown, 1988); *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America* (New York: Crown, 1991).

which contains fifty-six maps and 329 illustrations.<sup>11</sup> The substantial scholarly text takes the reader from the Bering Strait to Tierra del Fuego, through all aspects of culture from housing to religion, and ends with the living cultures of today. Philip Kopper's popularization, *The Smithsonian Book of North American Indians Before the Coming of the Europeans*, adds an interesting section on scholars of native life and how they investigate the past to a visually striking if traditional survey of American culture areas.<sup>12</sup> *America in 1492*, edited by Alvin Josephy, treats in a readable way the latest scholarship on the native cultures of all the Americas on the eve of colonization, augmented by more than 200 illustrations.<sup>13</sup> Introductory scenes that focus on representative individuals give geographically and culturally diverse chapters a common human thread.

*America 1492: Portrait of a Continent 500 Years Ago*, by Spanish historian Manuel Lucena Salmoral, is a densely illustrated coffee-table-sized depiction of America's various Indian cultures on the eve of European colonization.<sup>14</sup> Its text and illustrations cleverly describe native religions, arts, and everyday customs, such as sexuality, child care, and coming of age; it is particularly good on the lives of women, as depicted in effigy pottery. In a smaller format, Brian M. Fagan's *Kingdoms of Gold. Kingdoms of Jade: The Americas Before Columbus* is more historical and less personalized in describing the evolution primarily of the urban civilizations of South and Central America.<sup>15</sup>

Two major exhibitions that resulted in important books focus on America north of the forty-eighth parallel. More than most museum catalogues, both highlight their scholarship as much as their objects and illustrations. *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples* opened at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary during the 1988 Winter Olympics. Unhappily, the appearance of this extraordinary assemblage of native artifacts—665 lent by ninety institutions in twenty countries—met with protests stemming from an ongoing land grievance of the Lubicon Lake Cree in northern Alberta.<sup>16</sup> It is ironic that one of the show's main goals was to stress "the continuity and resilience of native culture in spite of overwhelming European influence, oppression, and suppression."<sup>17</sup> But the protests could not tarnish the visual and interpretive integrity of the exhibition and catalogue.

The second exhibition, *Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska*, encountered no protests when it was mounted by the National Museum of Natural History during the heyday of *glasnost*. To produce a

<sup>11</sup> (New York: Facts on File, 1986).

<sup>12</sup> (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Books, 1986).

<sup>13</sup> (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991). The Newberry Library also sponsored an exhibition, lecture series, and teachers' workshops in conjunction with the publication of the book.

<sup>14</sup> (New York: Facts on File, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> "Museums and Politics: *The Spirit Sings* and the Lubicon Boycott," *Muse* (Autumn 1988), 12–16.

<sup>17</sup> (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart for the Glenbow Museum, 1987), 7.

companion volume, William Fitzhugh and Aron Crowell assembled twenty-eight Russian and American scholars to write essays on the history and cultures of the international circumpolar region.<sup>18</sup> These essays, well but modestly illustrated with maps, objects, drawings, and photographs, form a substantial book of 350 triple-columned pages. The broad similarities between the native peoples of the North Pacific revealed by this book should stimulate thinking about the Asian origins of the original Americans perhaps thirty thousand years before Columbus discovered his long-sought "Asians" in America.

Another set of books will appeal to those who like their history straight, without much visual adornment. A Cambridge University Press trilogy will survey all of the Americas and focus on the evolving histories of the natives in relation to their Euro-American invaders and neighbors. Bruce Trigger and Wilcomb Washburn are editing the North American volume of *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, the first attempt to encompass the complex ethnohistory of the hemisphere.<sup>19</sup> That such a broad synthesis can now be made signals the maturity of both ethnohistory and the history of Indian-white relations and augurs well for the continued centrality of the Indians in the history of the Encounter.

In a more accessible medium, Robin Maw's Media Resource Associates is producing a ten-hour series of television documentaries on "Indian America: A History." This series is distinguished by its unusual coast-to-coast locations and its imaginative use of native speakers as on-screen authorities and narrators of their own history. The Newberry Library also has plans to produce a four-hour series, "Tales from the Center of the Universe," in which four native authors from different regions will describe the beliefs and tell the stories of their respective people. Another visual presentation seeks to recreate history in three dimensions. A 400-acre site in Columbus, Ohio, is being transformed into Three Rivers Reserve, a circa 1792 Indian settlement that will be peopled by native interpreters. The portrayal of native life in the east on the eve of the nineteenth century will be salutary for Americans misled by loose Quincenary talk of Columbian "genocide" into thinking that only the post-Independence west had—and has—Indian inhabitants.

A prominent feature of the Ohio reserve will be its ample fields of corn, beans, and squash. Two of the more unusual projects of the Quincenary revolve around the productive processes and exportable products of native agriculture. In October 1991 the National Museum of Natural History opened a major exhibition called "Seeds of Change: A Quincennial Commemoration" and published a lavish and intellectually challenging catalogue with the same title.<sup>20</sup> The theme of exhibition and book is the transformation of the globe by flora, fauna, and microbes exchanged

<sup>18</sup> (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

<sup>19</sup> (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). The Mesoamerican volume is being edited by R.E.W. Adams and Murdo J. MacLeod; Frank Salomon and Stuart B. Schwartz are supervising the South American volume.

<sup>20</sup> Viola and Margolis, eds., *Seeds of Change*.

between continents after 1492, particularly sugar, maize, the potato, the horse, and epidemic diseases. Instead of the products of native agriculture, *Indian Agriculture in the Americas*, a projected three-volume study edited by William Denevan, concentrates on its technology.<sup>21</sup> Denevan notes that, without draft animals or wheeled vehicles, native farmers before 1492 had developed techniques far in advance of those used by contemporary farmers in the Old World and obtained crop yields not equaled until the present century.<sup>22</sup>

What brought the peoples of two hitherto isolated worlds together was imperialism. Europeans left their own countries to invade, conquer, and resettle the Indians' lands. Understandably, the invaders felt compelled to justify their actions abroad, often before they launched their fleets. The compound of ancient and humanist philosophy, church doctrine, "international" law, and colonial precedent used to carve out new empires in the Americas is the subject of two thorough and largely overlapping books, *The Law of Nations and the New World* by L. C. Green and Olive P. Dickason and *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest* by Robert A. Williams, Jr. These books are a useful reminder that while the colonization of America was in part an armed invasion, those with might also wanted right on their side in the eyes of (European) world opinion. Both drive home the conclusion that "a will to empire proceeds most effectively under a rule of law."<sup>23</sup>

As we think of the law as a blind lady holding the impartial scales of justice, so we consider cartography the scientific representation of geographical space. The late J. Brian Harley tried to cure us of naïveté by demonstrating that maps were and still are "active instruments of power," particularly in the hands of those with power who aspire to more. In a traveling exhibition and catalogue called *Maps and the Columbian Encounter*, Harley persuasively argued that for European imperialists maps were, like laws, essential because the invaders knew that "to catalogue the world is to appropriate it." "The map was an instrument with which European power and values could be reproduced along the most distant shore." Facing the Ptolemaic grid, abstract coordinates, and print, the Indians were at a severe disadvantage. It was too easy for European mapmakers to leave native names (and therefore claims) off the maps or to rename them, thereby reifying the myth of the empty frontier, the *vacuum domicilium* so dear to the New England Puritans.<sup>24</sup> Harley made a bold productive

<sup>21</sup> (Forthcoming).

<sup>22</sup> For other Quincentenary projects in Indian history supported by the NEH see Malcolm Richardson, "1992 Opportunities for Indian History," *History News*, XLV, No. 3 (May-June 1990), 10-11.

<sup>23</sup> (Edmonton, Can.: University of Alberta Press, 1989); (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 325. See also Patricia Seed, "Taking Possession and Reading Texts: Establishing the Authority of Overseas Empires," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., XLIX (April 1992).

<sup>24</sup> Harley, *Maps and the Columbian Encounter: An Interpretive Guide to the Travelling Exhibition* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Golda Meir Library, University of Wis-



contribution to Quincentenary scholarship. His scrutiny of the English mapping of New England was arguably the high point of the 1988 interdisciplinary conference on "The Land of Norumbega: Maine in the Age of Exploration and Settlement," for which Susan Danforth mounted an excellent exhibition of maps, books, prints, and instruments.<sup>25</sup>

The *Atlas of Columbus and the Great Discoveries* by Kenneth Nebenzahl is a more conventional aesthetic and positivist tracing of the explorers' attempts to chart the newfound lands; it ignores altogether the native Americans, who supplied many of the details on early maps.<sup>26</sup> A new project at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which sponsored Harley's exhibition, will fill that large lacuna by treating native maps and mapping in North America in an ambitious exhibition and catalogue. The effort to describe the geographical encounter of natives and newcomers has already begun in a major way with the production of *The Exploration of North America: A Comprehensive History*, edited in three volumes by John Allen.<sup>27</sup> Virtually all of the essays in this work emphasize the indispensable role of native guides, interpreters, and impromptu mapmakers in helping the Euro-American explorers of every century find their way around the continent, ultimately to the Indians' own loss.

Literary scholars as well as cartographers and legal historians have analyzed the European thrust for empire. In *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, a short but substantial book of lectures, Stephen Greenblatt perceptively dissects the European use of kidnapped natives, acculturated go-betweens, and a rich discourse of wonder to take possession of the Americas. Representations of wonder, "the central figure in the initial European response to the New World," Greenblatt argues, were used primarily to "supplement legally flawed territorial claims." Only a few Europeans such as Montaigne, who met his Indians in Europe, recognized themselves in the Other and reclaimed the power of wonder "for decency as well as domination."<sup>28</sup>

Judging by the titles of conferences and books, the most popular encounters took place between cultures, a term seldom employed with ethnological precision but useful as a kind of historical *omnium gatherum*. One good result is that the best Encounter conferences have been multidisciplinary, with wide representation from North and Latin American historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers, students of literature and language, and other scientists and social scientists of historical bent. Perhaps the earliest conference of this nature occurred at Ohio State University in October 1986, under the rubric "Early European Encounters

consin, 1990), xii, 56; Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," *Cartographica*, XXVI (Summer 1989), 1-20.

<sup>25</sup> The catalogue of the same title was published in Portland by the Maine Humanities Council in 1988.

<sup>26</sup> (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1990).

<sup>27</sup> (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, forthcoming).

<sup>28</sup> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 14, ix, 25.

with the Americas: Reciprocal Influences of Cultures in Contact." A smaller and equally stimulating conference, "Rethinking the Encounter: New Perspectives on Conquest and Colonization, 1450-1550," was sponsored by the Institute of Early Contact Period Studies (a Quincentenary foundation) at the University of Florida two years later. Neither conference published its heterogeneous proceedings, but thenceforward the organizers of nearly every conference incorporated publication plans in their budgets and took care to achieve balance of coverage and uniformity of quality to justify the expense and risk of publication.<sup>29</sup>

The most ambitious conference to date occurred in three parts—two in Trujillo, Spain, and the third in Albany, New York—and involved sixty scholars, mostly Latin American experts. Sponsored by a Spanish foundation and the State University of New York-Albany between 1988 and 1990, "In Word and Deed: Interethnic Encounters and Cultural Developments in the New World" will result in three English volumes of revised proceedings. The first volume, *Interethnic Images: Discourse and Practice in the New World*, will appear this year.<sup>30</sup>

At least four other Encounter conferences will publish—or have already published—their proceedings. William B. Taylor and Franklin Pease Y have edited the results of a 1989 Smithsonian-University of Maryland conference on *Violence and Resistance in the Americas: The Legacy of Conquest*, which focuses primarily on Latin America.<sup>31</sup> The Center for Early Modern History at the University of Minnesota will publish the papers from its innovative, international conference on "Implicit Ethnographies: Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Wake of Columbus," which took place in October 1990. And on the weekend before Columbus Day 1992, two ambitious symposia will generate hefty books of proceedings. Vanderbilt University will host a discussion of "Transatlantic Encounters: The Discovery of the Old World and the New"; Loyola University of Chicago will set church scholars and ethnohistorians upon the topic "Agents of Change: Jesuits and Encounters of Two Worlds."<sup>32</sup>

The geographical and generic flexibility of the encounter theme is apparent not only in individual papers at conferences but also in the regional and topical focus of several conferences, exhibitions, and books. All these venues show the benefits of applying the larger questions of cultural contact generated by the Spanish experience in the Caribbean and southern America to other parts of the continent. In July 1992 the

<sup>29</sup> Bruce G. Trigger has published his thought-provoking paper from the Florida conference, "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: Romantic versus Rationalistic Interpretations," *Journal of American History*, LXXVII (1991), 1195-1215.

<sup>30</sup> Edited by Gary H. Gossen and J. Jorge Klor de Alva (Albany, N. Y., and Austin, Tex.: Institute of Mesoamerican Studies and University of Texas Press, 1992).

<sup>31</sup> (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, forthcoming).

<sup>32</sup> An exception to the rule is the National Museum of American History's April 1989 symposium, "After Columbus: Encounters in North America," whose papers were, however useful, apparently too eclectic to publish.

National Museum of American History will open a show and publish a substantial companion volume called *American Encounters*, an invocation of the polyglot and intersecting lifeways of the Indian, Spanish, African, and Anglo Americans in the upper Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico.<sup>33</sup> Farther afield, *Russian America: The Forgotten Frontier*, the catalogue of a traveling exhibition sponsored by the Washington State Historical Society and the Anchorage [Alaska] Museum of History and Art, serves to counter the southern and eastern biases of the Quincentenary. Consisting of over 600 artifacts, documents, and artworks from American, Finnish, and Soviet repositories, the exhibition and its black-and-white guide demonstrate that "Russian America offers a variation on the colonial pattern familiar elsewhere in North America."<sup>34</sup> Like their American rivals in the sea otter trade, employees of the early Russian companies initially exploited the native populations and natural resources. But particularly after 1818, when the imperial navy assumed management of the Russian-American Company, the few hundred Russians who inhabited the North Pacific began to encourage native languages and customs, support widespread education and employment of natives and *métis* in responsible positions, and conserve marine resources. At the same time, the Orthodox church produced devout native adherents and dedicated missionaries, including several of native parentage—a legacy that persists in modern Alaska.

Scholarly discoveries have come thick and fast during the Quincentenary. None have been more satisfying, both visually and intellectually, than those made by Jacqueline Peterson Swagerty, the organizer of "Sacred Encounters: Jesuit Missionaries and the Indians of the Rocky Mountains West," scheduled to open in St. Louis in 1993. The exhibition is based on the discovery at Washington State University of a remarkable collection of watercolors and pencil and ink drawings by missionary-artist Nicolas Point that rival the works of Carl Bodmer and George Catlin in ethnographic detail and artistic significance; a new collection of early maps of the trans-Mississippi West drawn by Father Pierre Jean De Smet, fur traders, and Indians, found in the Jesuit Missouri Province Archives; and a rare assemblage of liturgical and ethnographic objects discovered in a trunk in a Belgian chateau near De Smet's birthplace. The hundreds of Point drawings in particular vividly depict the spiritual odyssey of the Flathead Indians who recruited the Jesuits in St. Louis, helped them establish the St. Mary Mission in 1841, and syncretized Christianity with their own religion to cope with the changes in their no-longer-isolated

<sup>33</sup> (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, forthcoming).

<sup>34</sup> Barbara Sweetland Smith and Redmond J. Barnett, eds. (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1990), 9. A more sumptuous but less historical catalogue, *Soft Gold: The Fur Trade & Cultural Exchange on the Northwest Coast of America* by Thomas Vaughan and Bill Holm (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1982, 1990), accompanied a joint Oregon Historical Society-Peabody Museum (Harvard) exhibition in 1982 and was revised in 1990 to contribute to the Quincentenary.

world. The accompanying catalogue will feature curators' and invited experts' essays, with lavish, full-color illustrations. The show will use Roman chants, European band music (which the Jesuits introduced to America), and the sacred smells of incense, sage, and tobacco to evoke the religious life of the mission from both native and missionary perspectives.

The publication of substantial catalogues will ensure that the educational impact of Encounter exhibitions does not end with the closing of their tours. But one museum will see that the post-Columbian story of seventeenth-century Virginia has a much longer run. In 1990 Jamestown Settlement (formerly Jamestown Festival Park), a state facility, opened a 30,000-square-foot museum built explicitly around the Encounter theme. The first gallery introduces visitors to England on the eve of colonization and to the European arts and goals of discovery in the newfound lands. In the second gallery they meet Powhatan Indian culture as it had evolved over hundreds of years in the distinctive ecological niche of the tidewater. In the third gallery they see how the conjunction of these cultures and peoples, joined reluctantly by African slaves after 1619, created the rural world of great and small planters, representative institutions, two catastrophic Indian uprisings, civil war, and the social tensions of economic and racial divisions. Authentic reconstructions of early Jamestown and its fort, a Powhatan village, and the three ships of 1607, including a new *Susan Constant*, lend credence to the museum's historical message.

One happy result of the Quincentenary is renewed attention to the global extent of cultural encounters and to the value of studying them comparatively. Such comparisons are capable of generating not only social-scientific typologies but, perhaps more broadly useful, newly angled questions to ask of our own familiar subjects. We invariably gain by comparing Europe's American encounters with each other and with colonial encounters in other parts of the world.

Several books exist to put us in a comparative mode. Anthropologist Brian Fagan provides a set of detailed case studies in *Clash of Cultures*, which ranges from Aztecs and Hurons in North America to Tahitians and Maoris in the Pacific.<sup>35</sup> Urs Bitterli studies the cultural history of contact in *Cultures in Conflict: Encounters Between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492-1800*.<sup>36</sup> Using a typology of *fleeting contacts*, *major collisions*, and *long-term relationships*, he devotes chapters to the Portuguese in Africa and Asia, the Spanish in Hispaniola, the French in Canada, the English in Pennsylvania, Europeans in China, and English and French in the South Seas. His details are occasionally unreliable and his generalizations sometimes suspect, but Bitterli's effort to bring major post-Columbian encounters into comparative focus, like Fagan's, is imaginative and salutary.

The benefits of having a single intelligence compare multiple encounters are partially realized in William W. Fitzhugh's introduction to and

<sup>35</sup> (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1984).

<sup>36</sup> Ritchie Robertson, trans. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989).

four-part commentary on *Cultures in Contact: The Impact of European Contacts on Native American Cultural Institutions, A.D. 1000-1800*, a collection of papers originally presented to the Anthropological Society of Washington by historians and archaeologists.<sup>37</sup> The unifying topic was the effects of European contact, not only on material culture and technology but on the institutions that organized native societies. The papers dealt with four regions: Greenland and the Eastern Arctic, New England and New York, the Chesapeake, and Florida and Hispaniola. In the Arctic, fairly uniform natural resources, geographical features, and native life-ways, when combined with sporadic European contacts of a mostly economic nature, produced similar effects on the native cultures. But in the other regions, the diversity of native cultures, geographies, and European goals, methods, and societies made for a variety of institutional effects, within as well as between regions. These kinds of case studies remind us that comparative history is as likely to find salient differences of process and outcome as it is striking similarities and that we must work equally hard to explain both. Cultural contacts were and are extremely complex, and we should avoid easy or ideologically tempting monocausal explanations such as disease, imperialism, racism, or sexism.

All encounters had a beginning, a flashpoint of contact where the histories, goals, and feelings of the parties intersected to form a new entity, which in turn refashioned their image of their individual pasts. The study of truly first contacts is only beginning. My American Historical Association (AHA) booklet, *Imagining the Other: First Contacts in North America*, looks at the process from both sides of several encounters, from Guanahani in 1492 to the Lower Mississippi in the early eighteenth century.<sup>38</sup> I emphasize the expectations that each side had of the other, how they defined each other in cosmological or ethnological terms, and how power relationships maintained or altered their initial perceptions. Bruce Trigger argues from somewhat different premises that, after a short period of contact, Indians shifted from an idiosyncratic, relativist, romantic, religious view of the newcomers to an objective, naturalistic, pragmatic view based on "the *rational* component inherent in the mental processes of every human being." Trigger's strong argument for the possibility of "an objective understanding of human behavior" shaped mainly by "calculations of individual self-interest that are uniform from one culture to another" is weakened by his failure to define key terms such as "rationality," "self-interest," and "practical reason."<sup>39</sup> Yet his bold outline of interpretive choices, however dichotomized he makes them, should prove useful in Encounter studies.

Theories of behavior would not loom so large if we had better access to

<sup>37</sup> (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985).

<sup>38</sup> *Essays on the Columbian Encounter* (Washington, D. C.: American Historical Association, 1991). See also my *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), chaps. 8, 9.

<sup>39</sup> Trigger, "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact," 1210 (emphasis added), 1197, 1195.

the thoughts and feelings, even the facial expressions, of the natives at first contact. We do have a few oral traditions, some personal testimony mediated by European informants, a few reliable drawings and paintings, and a handful of archaeological evidence that speaks to initial Indian responses. These we have to cobble together and fill in the remaining gaps with philosophical assumptions. We would give a great deal for sustained and full diaries by European participant-observers, photographs, and film footage of any initial encounter in the Americas.

Happily, we have the next best thing: a book and film that describe in fascinating detail the mutual discovery of white men and the hitherto isolated Highland peoples of Papua New Guinea, whose cultures bear a striking resemblance to those of many groups of American Indians. *First Contact*, the book and the film by Australian filmmakers Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson, tells the story of a pair of diary-keeping, camera-carrying, Australian gold prospectors who stumbled on the Stone Age Highlanders in the early 1930s.<sup>40</sup> The raw evidence of their mutual encounter and their mutual responses to it was preserved by one prospector's unusual diaries, still and moving pictures, and the vivid memories of interviewed tribespeople, who had regarded the intruders as reincarnated ancestors or ghosts. After making allowance for cultural blind spots on both sides, we cannot come any closer to the emotional reality of America's first encounters than by re-experiencing those of the Papua New Guinea Highlands.

Understandably, the American encounters that claim the most attention during the Quincentenary are those between the Spanish and the natives of the Caribbean. (For lack of evidence and durable effect, we give short shrift to the Norse encounters with the Skraelings in Newfoundland around A. D. 1000.) As Michael Gannon has suggested, some of the most exciting and fruitful scholarship is coming from a union of history and archaeology, often in the same person.<sup>41</sup> American archaeologists digging in the Caribbean—most of them currently or formerly affiliated with the Florida Museum of Natural History and the University of Florida—are also immersed in the Spanish historical record, printed and manuscript. Their findings substantiate the terrible loss of native life caused by the Spanish incursion, but they also establish for the first time a basis for assessing the social meanings of those losses and the changing conditions of Spanish colonial life in the half century after Columbus's first voyage.

*The People Who Discovered Columbus: An Introduction to the Prehistory of the Bahamas* by William F. Keegan is a demanding scientific analysis of the geography, ecology, and human lifeways of the twenty-five islands of the

<sup>40</sup> (New York: Viking Penguin, 1987). Edward L. Schieffelin and Robert Crittenden's *Like People You See in a Dream: First Contact in Six Papuan Societies* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991) is a similar reconstruction of a 1935 expedition's first encounter.

<sup>41</sup> Gannon, "The New Alliance of History and Archaeology in the Eastern Spanish Borderlands," *WMQ*. 3d Ser., XLIX (April 1992).

Bahama archipelago, where an estimated 80,000 Lucayans lived.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, the book's daunting tables, graphs, and technical terminology will prevent it from reaching a large audience. It needs a popularization, because it establishes with unmistakable authority the sociocultural baseline of Lucayan life that was so thoroughly destroyed within a short generation—so quickly that Columbus was the only European to record firsthand observations of it. In 1509 King Ferdinand ordered the wholesale deportation of Lucayan slaves to meet Hispaniola's severe shortage of native labor. Amerigo Vespucci forcibly stole 232 natives when he left for Spain in 1500. Between 1502 and 1520, when the Lucayans were finally exterminated, an estimated 400 caravel loads were needed to remove some 40,000 people from the islands.

More accessible because it relies primarily on written documents is Samuel M. Wilson's brief narrative ethnohistory, *Hispaniola: Caribbean Chiefdoms in the Age of Columbus*.<sup>43</sup> Wilson describes how the perhaps one million Taínos of the island were divided into *cacicazgos* or chiefdoms of dozens of villages, ruled by hereditary *caciques* who directed the manioc-based economy of their people and played a central role in mediating between their subjects' physical and spiritual worlds. When the Spanish invaded, some *caciques* allied themselves with the newcomers in order to expand or consolidate their bases of power: others saw the handwriting on the wall more clearly and launched armed uprisings against the usurpers. In the end, neither tactic was successful, and native culture was obliterated by the combined effects of disease, oppression, and starvation. By 1540, the Taínos were nearly extinct.

For lack of anything sounder, Wilson provisionally accepts R. A. Zambardino's estimate of one million Hispaniolans in 1492, while noting the critiques and cautions of Carl Ortwin Sauer and David Henige.<sup>44</sup> Only an archaeological survey of native sites in Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic) will endow population estimates, which range from 60,000 to 14.5 million, with credibility. As John Daniels shows, estimates of Indian populations in the Americas have been steadily on the rise, especially (and not coincidentally) since the 1960s and the deadly and unpopular Vietnam War.<sup>45</sup> The escalating body count of the war, together with a historiographical shift toward social and quantitative history that

<sup>42</sup> (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1992). Keegan has also edited *Earliest Hispanic/Native American Interactions in the Caribbean* (New York: Garland, 1992), number 13 of a 27-volume set of article reprints, *Spanish Borderlands Sourcebooks*, ed. David Hurst Thomas.

<sup>43</sup> (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990).

<sup>44</sup> Henige, "On the Contact Population of Hispaniola: History as Higher Mathematics," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, LVIII (1978), 217-237; Zambardino, "Critique of David Henige's 'On the Contact Population of Hispaniola: History as Higher Mathematics,'" *ibid.*, 700-708; "David Henige's Reply," *ibid.*, 709-712; Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 198-204.

<sup>45</sup> Daniels, "The Indian Population of North America in 1492," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XLIX (April 1992).

focused on the inarticulate victims of the past, fueled the inflation of native losses to implausible heights. It was as though we could not bring ourselves to condemn the moral enormities of the past without an accompaniment of numerical enormities.

The Quincentenary trend toward condemnation of the evils of Columbian, Spanish, European, and Western imperialism, racism, and genocide will do nothing to dampen our moral enthusiasm for huge native numbers. We have yet to outgrow our fondness for the hectoring bishop of Chiapas, Las Casas, and the "Black Legend" of exceptional Spanish cruelty that his writings helped create. But it is time we did so; until we do, we will not be able to get the whole complex story straight or to render fair and impartial judgment upon all of the participants, "winners" as well as "losers," Spaniards as well as Taínos. To do any less is to abnegate our most important duties as historians, amateur or professional.<sup>46</sup>

The lives of ordinary Spanish settlers in the Caribbean are also being reconstructed by historians and archaeologists. The first Spanish settlement was La Navidad on the northern coast of Haiti, where the *Santa Maria* broke up on Christmas Eve, 1492. With timbers from the ship the Spanish built a fortified enclosure, complete with moat, palisade, and probably a watchtower, in the heart of the nearest Taíno town. The local *cacique*, Guacanagari, not only helped the sailors salvage their goods but stored the goods in his own house and then gave the house to them as the centerpiece of their fort. When Columbus sailed back to Spain, he left behind thirty-nine men, who were directed to collect gold in the region. When he returned the following year, the men were dead, the fort had burned to the ground, and its supplies were scattered far and wide.

Since 1983 a University of Florida team under the direction of Kathleen A. Deagan has been excavating a large native/Spanish site in northern Haiti called En Bas Saline, which was located by Dr. William Hodges, a medical missionary and avocational archaeologist. In addition to vast amounts of native material, excavations to date have uncovered the burned remains of a substantial wooden and clay daub structure, eighteen European artifacts dating to the Columbian era, and, in a well nearby, the teeth of a European pig and a rat bone. Isotopic analysis of the teeth concluded that the pig was raised near Seville in Spain. Both animals probably disembarked while La Navidad was being unintentionally founded by Columbus.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Axtell, "Moral Reflections on the Columbian Legacy," *Beyond 1492: Encounters in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>47</sup> Deagan, "The Search for La Navidad, Columbus's 1492 Settlement," in Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath, eds., *First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1989), 41-54; Deagan, "Initial Encounters: Arawak Responses to European Contact at the En Bas Saline Site, Haiti," in Donald T. Gerace, comp., *Columbus and His World: Proceedings / First San Salvador Conference, held October 30-November 3, 1986, at the College Center of the Finger Lakes, Bahamian Field Station, San Salvador Island, Bahamas* (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.: The Station, 1987), 341-359.



Less than a mile from En Bas Saline are the ruins of Puerto Real, a Spanish town on the edge of cattle country occupied from 1503 to 1578. Four hundred years after the town's population was relocated to quash its hide smuggling with Spain's enemies, University of Florida archaeologists began to dig there, making it the most extensively excavated site of initial European occupation in the Caribbean. The town was laid out in a grid pattern, which Spanish law eventually mandated for all colonial towns. The central plaza was surrounded by a cathedral, festooned with large limestone gargoyles, and other public buildings, some fortified. Of the fifty-seven masonry structures detected by survey, only the foundations of the cathedral, a cemetery, three domestic buildings, and, downwind from most of the town, a beef-and-hide-processing workshop have been thoroughly exposed and studied.<sup>48</sup>

In this bovine utopia, beef and pork (from fast-breeding imported pigs rather than local species) were the faunal staples of the colonists' diet, accounting for 95 percent of the fleshy intake.<sup>49</sup> Pond turtles and fish were the major dietary adaptations of the Catholic settlers, whose church calendar officially prescribed 166 meatless days. By contrast, the faunal diet of the natives at neighboring En Bas Saline was 68 percent fish and only 20 percent mammal. Fragments of Taíno-style ceramic griddles suggest that early in the town's history native women baked cassava bread made from manioc. Large amounts of crude, unglazed "colono-ware," often made in Hispanic shapes but from local materials and with non-Hispanic decorations, also confirm a major hypothesis about Spanish acculturation in the Americas—namely, that "Spanish domestic adaptive strategy was consistently based on the incorporation of unmodified Indian cultural elements in kitchen activities, probably through Indian mates. This resulted in a genuinely new, multicultural expression that ultimately crystallized as New World *criollo* culture and stands in sharp contrast to Anglo-American culture."<sup>50</sup> When the native population was exterminated, particularly after the islandwide smallpox epidemic of 1518–1519, African slaves replaced local Taíno and enslaved Lucayan women from the Bahamas in the kitchens, a transition reflected in the colono-wares.

A second, increasingly confirmed hypothesis about the "Spanish colonial pattern" is that, although first Indian and later African cultural ele-

<sup>48</sup> Deagan, "The Archaeology of the Spanish Contact Period in the Caribbean," *Journal of World Prehistory*, II (1988), 211–216; Charles R. Ewen, "The Rise and Fall of Puerto Real," in Thomas, ed., *Columbian Consequences*, vol. 2: *Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands East* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 261–268; Ewen and Maurice W. Williams, "Puerto Real: Archaeology of an Early Spanish Town," in Milanich and Milbrath, eds., *First Encounters*, 66–76; Deagan, ed., *Puerto Real: The Archaeology of a Sixteenth-Century Spanish Town in Hispaniola* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

<sup>49</sup> Ewen, *From Spaniard to Creole: The Archaeology of Cultural Formation at Puerto Real, Haiti* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 4.

<sup>50</sup> Deagan, "Accommodation and Resistance: The Process and Impact of Spanish Colonization in the Southeast," in Thomas, ed., *Columbian Consequences*, II, 309.

ments were readily incorporated in socially nonvisible, infrastructural areas such as diet and food preparation, which were the province of women, visible symbols of social identification such as architecture, tableware, and personal adornment remained characteristically Spanish because they were dominated by men. The presence of rectangular Iberian-style buildings (Taíno *bohios* were circular), metal lacing tips and buckles for Spanish-style clothing, ornate brass and enamel book clasps, traditional *majolica* vessels with owner's stamps, and delicate glass goblets lend strong support to this useful observation, which had its origins in Deagan's extensive study of Spanish St. Augustine.<sup>51</sup>

The Spanish were not the only Europeans to leave their cultural mark on the Caribbean. In *Caribbean Encounters: The Meeting of European and Island Carib Cultures, 1492-1763*, Philip Boucher describes English and French contacts and conflicts with the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles, believed by Columbus and all but the most recent scholarship to be fierce cannibals.<sup>52</sup> Boucher puts the lie to this belief and explains why the Caribs sided with the French in the colonial wars beginning in 1666. Through missionaries and *coureurs des îles*—fishermen, hunters, trappers, and traders—who spoke the Carib language and appreciated Carib war tactics, the French wove a strong web of contact with the natives, which the English could never duplicate. And when English freebooters and vigilantes provoked the Caribs into conflict, the more centralized French colonial administration kept its colonists in line and conflicts to a minimum. The sad irony is that the land hunger of both French and English led to the brutal removal of the Caribs from most of the islands by the eighteenth century, just as European *philosophes* were beginning to romanticize them.

Another important growth industry of the Quincentenary is the study of the Spanish borderlands, once made famous by Herbert Bolton and his legions of graduate students and now enjoying a renaissance, particularly in the understudied southeast.<sup>53</sup> What is emerging from the new scholarship is the crucial importance of the sixteenth century in North American history for both colonists and natives. That formative century was filled with Spanish activity—coastal explorations, *entradas*, mission foundations, failed and enduring colonies, town building, defensive wars with European competitors, and a long series of cultural engagements with native peoples, sometimes as sovereign allies or enemies, more often as tributaries and subjects. In the process, native societies were radically reshaped by warfare, enslavement, resettlement, disease, Christian proselytizing, material novelties, intermarriage, and a host of other acculturative forces.

<sup>51</sup> Ewen, *From Spaniard to Creole*, 46, 73, 79, 82-83; Deagan, *Spanish St. Augustine: The Archaeology of a Colonial Creole Community* (New York: Academic Press, 1983). See also Deagan, *Artifacts of the Spanish Colonies of Florida and the Caribbean, 1500-1800*, vol. 1: *Ceramics, Glassware, and Beads* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987).

<sup>52</sup> (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>53</sup> David J. Weber, *Myth and the History of the Hispanic Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), chaps. 3, 4.

The French and English colonizers who followed later in the century found their tasks lightened or burdened by the conditions—geopolitical, demographic, and emotional—created by previous Spanish-Indian encounters. If the Spanish had magically disappeared from North America in 1599, that legacy alone would make the history of the borderlands a major key to the history of colonial America.

So much scholarship has been produced since the publication of John Francis Bannon's ethnocentric and (for the date) curiously old-fashioned *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (1970) that a new synthesis has been needed. David J. Weber has produced a brilliant one in *The Spanish Frontier in North America, 1513-1821*, which makes the Indians as central to the plot as the Spanish.<sup>54</sup> For the eastern borderlands Paul E. Hoffman has written a detailed, archivally based synthesis entitled *A New Andalucía and a Way to the Orient: The American Southeast during the Sixteenth Century*. He emphasizes the motivational role of Lucas Vázquez de Ayllón's tale of Chicora, a promised land of abundance and wealth somewhere in the present-day southeast, and Giovanni da Verrazano's tale of an eastern isthmus leading to the Pacific. "All the explorations and the attempts at colonization by the Spanish, French, and English" in the sixteenth century, he argues, "were linked by the belief of their leaders and promoters in these two legends from the 1520s as they had been altered over the decades." Hoffman also explains in often painful detail "how men's hopes and wishes for North America were contradicted by the difficult reality of the coastal zone of the southeast."<sup>55</sup>

For the general reader, Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath have edited a sumptuously illustrated set of thirteen essays on *First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570*, partly to accompany a traveling exhibition prepared by the Florida Museum of Natural History.<sup>56</sup> Nine essays are devoted to greater La Florida: Hernando de Soto's *entrada* in 1539-1543, the Tristán de Luna expedition of 1559-1561, the founding of St. Augustine by Pedro Menéndez in 1565, and the effects of these and other incursions upon the natives. Ten essays were written by historical archaeologists, who not only broaden but often rewrite the histories of encounter from subterranean evidence.

Hernando de Soto's wandering route through the southeast is a case in point. In 1939 the U. S. De Soto Expedition Commission, chaired by John R. Swanton, published its final report on the route taken by the Spaniards from Tampa Bay through the southern interior to the Mississippi.<sup>57</sup> Once Swanton's line of march left Florida, however, it proved to be almost all wrong. The commission lacked three crucial types of evidence that have

<sup>54</sup> (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>55</sup> (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), x, xi.

<sup>56</sup> (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1989).

<sup>57</sup> Swanton, *Final Report of the United States De Soto Expedition Commission*, 76th Cong., 1st sess., House Doc. 71, (Washington, D. C., 1939). In 1985 the Smithsonian Institution Press issued a reprint with an update of de Soto studies by Jeffrey Brain.

matured only in the last few decades: historical geography (the landscape has been substantially altered by human use since the sixteenth century), documentation from other sixteenth-century Spanish expeditions that revisited native towns on de Soto's route, and archaeology of native sites just before and after contact.

By combining these sources with contemporary accounts of the expedition and modern topographical maps, Charles Hudson and a number of colleagues have totally reconstructed de Soto's route, piece by piece. Hudson and Milanich have collaborated on a readable and ingenious narrative of *Hernando De Soto and the Indians of Florida*, and Hudson, Chester B. DePratter, and Marvin T. Smith have summarized their reconstruction of the whole route in *First Encounters*.<sup>58</sup> In addition to giving us historical accuracy, their reconstruction enables us to assess the *entrada's* full impact on the native southeast because de Soto and his comrades were the first Europeans to encounter the impressive Indian chiefdoms in the interior and virtually the last to see them at the apex of their development and power. In the following decades, the social disorder and depopulation unleashed by imported disease and the military ruthlessness of the *entrada* sent these hierarchical chiefdoms into decline and eventual collapse.<sup>59</sup>

As an offshoot of his de Soto research, Hudson has also written the ethnohistory of *The Juan Pardo Expeditions: Exploration of the Carolinas and Tennessee, 1566-1568*, with Hoffman's editions and translations of four known and three new primary documents.<sup>60</sup> These narratives have value as windows on Spanish-Indian relations; they are also important because Pardo visited at least five of the towns visited by de Soto. For archaeologists the documents are useful for the detailed lists of trade goods that the Spaniards gave to the townspeople along their route. These goods help archaeologists date the occupation of native sites in order to measure cultural change accurately. Two useful collections of scholarly essays by historians and archaeologists also put the sixteenth century on the historiographical map. *The Forgotten Centuries: Europeans and Indians in the American South, 1513-1704*, edited by Hudson and Carmen McClendon, is the result of an NEH Summer Institute for College Teachers held at the University of Georgia in 1989.<sup>61</sup> More ambitious in scope and content are three volumes edited by David Hurst Thomas under the general title *Columbian Consequences*. Volume one is devoted to interdisciplinary perspectives on the Spanish borderlands west, from Baja Cali-

<sup>58</sup> (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, forthcoming); "Hernando de Soto's Expedition through the Southern United States," in Milanich and Milbrath, eds., *First Encounters*, chap. 6; see also *ibid.*, chaps. 7, 8, 10, for related aspects of the *entrada*, such as the damage inflicted by Spanish swords and the diagnostic value of the trade goods left along the route.

<sup>59</sup> Marvin T. Smith, *Archaeology of Aboriginal Culture Change in the Interior Southeast: Depopulation during the Early Historic Period* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1987); Robert L. Blakely, ed., *The King Site: Continuity and Contact in Sixteenth-Century Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988).

<sup>60</sup> (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

<sup>61</sup> (Athens: University of Georgia Press, forthcoming).

fornia to East Texas. Two Indian scholars discuss the survival strategies employed by their ancestors in coping with the European invaders. In the second volume, forty-five scholars dissect the southeastern borderlands in three sections: the de Soto *entrada*, the impact of Spanish colonization in the southeast and the Caribbean, and the Spanish missions of La Florida. Volume three places the borderlands in pan-American perspective, assesses recent breakthroughs in the demography of contact, and takes a sobering look at previous Columbian observances. All three volumes make a bow to the general reader by heading each section with a substantial overview designed to make the succeeding specialized chapters accessible.<sup>62</sup>

Discoveries of new documents and improved translations of known ones are also extending our understanding of the borderlands. James E. Kelley, Jr., one of the editor-translators of Columbus's *diario*, retranslated Herrera's unique narrative of *Juan Ponce de Leon's Discovery of Florida* to inform Douglas Peck's re-creation of the voyage in June 1990. The new text is augmented by critical essays by David Henige, Oliver Dunn, Donald McGuirk, and Peck himself.<sup>63</sup> The University of Alabama Press will soon publish new translations of three of the four known accounts of the de Soto *entrada* and a fragment of a fifth recently found in Seville by Eugene Lyons, along with an excellent older translation of the fourth.<sup>64</sup> Finally, Ignacio Avellaneda has patiently assembled and collated the known facts about 257 of the 300-plus survivors of the de Soto *entrada* who sailed to New Spain in 1543. Partly from a recently discovered list of 700 volunteers who left Spain with de Soto in 1538, Avellaneda concludes that the typical *conquistador* with de Soto was

a male Spaniard born either in Extremadura or Castilla, 24 years old at the beginning of the expedition, and literate or at least knew how to sign his name. He was most likely a commoner by birth and, in a few cases, an hidalgo. Not being a military leader or an administrator, his chances of survival were reduced to roughly fifty percent. From Florida he went to the port of Pánuco in New Spain, and most likely he arrived in the great city of Tenochtitlan which was subsequently renamed Mexico City. He remained in Mexico or proceeded to Peru, married a daughter of a known conqueror and settled down.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Thomas, ed., *Columbian Consequences*, vol. 1: *Archaeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands West* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989). Thomas has also published museum reports on and a popular summary of his own discovery and excavation of the Spanish mission of Santa Catalina de Gualé on St. Catherines Island off the Georgia coast. The summary and a film produced by the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities are both entitled *St. Catherines: An Island in Time* (Atlanta, Ga., 1988).

<sup>63</sup> (forthcoming).

<sup>64</sup> Lawrence A. Clayton and Vernon J. Knight, eds., *The De Soto Chronicles: The Expedition of Hernando de Soto to the United States, 1539-1543*, 2 vols. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, forthcoming).

<sup>65</sup> *Los Sobrevivientes de la Florida: The Survivors of The De Soto Expedition*, ed.

We can expect many more documentary discoveries after 1992 because of two major efforts to collect and make accessible in the United States copies of relevant records in Spanish archives. With multiple sponsors in Spain and the United States, the Institute of Early Contact Period Studies has undertaken a massive job of copying on laser disk the complete archives of noble Spanish families that had a role in the colonization of the Americas. The first archive copied was that of the condes of Revillagigedo, the family that founded Florida in 1565 and provided the most important viceroys of Mexico. Next in line are the papers of the duques of Infantado, among which Martin de Navarrete discovered Las Casas's abridged copy of Columbus's *diario* in 1715 and Eugene Lyon recently found a previously unknown Columbus (Colón) genealogy. To make archival collections such as these more accessible to scholars, the Library of Congress, the AHA, and the NEH sponsored a conference of librarians, archivists, scholarly users, and technical experts to plan a survey of reproduced documents from Spanish and Latin American archives already in United States libraries. That survey is now underway at the Library of Congress.

The multiplication of texts and documents, official and unofficial, raises two general questions about the colonial history of the Americas: whose history is it, and how is it to be written? Historians could well profit during the Quincentenary and beyond from the work of literary scholars who study "colonial discourse." The new study of colonial discourse is perhaps only ten or fifteen years old, but its intellectual roots lie in the anticolonial, *négritude* writers of the 1930s and 1940s and its crystallization in Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (1978).<sup>66</sup> With more recent borrowings from Continental post-structuralism, students of colonial discourse hold that the dichotomies between Europe/Third World and self/other, like civilized/savage before them, are not ontologically given by nature but historically constituted by the colonizing West. "Minorities" are the creations of power politics; they are cultural, not simply numerical, inferiors. Colonial powers define the world according to their best interests, not lights; their canonical judgments of literature, humanity, and civilization are grounded in dominance, not in superior morality or knowledge. Colonial writing, therefore, is an instrument of the colonizing process, not objective, disinterested reportage. In such circumstances, the history of the colonization and conquest of the Americas remains a hegemonic monologue, incomplete, self-serving, and suspect.<sup>67</sup>

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Bruce S. Chappell, Research Publications of the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, No. 2 (Gainesville: University of Florida Libraries, 1990), 74.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978). Peter Hulme, "Subversive Archipelagos: Colonial Discourse and the Break-up of Continental Theory," *Dispositio*, XIV, Nos. 36-38 (1989), 1-23.

<sup>67</sup> Hulme, "Subversive Archipelagos"; Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," *Critical Inquiry*, XV (1989), 205-225; Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review*, IX (1987), 27-58; Beatriz Pastor, "Silence and Writing: The History of the Con-

To remedy these deficiencies, students of colonial discourse would advise all of us who use colonial texts and documents to make several changes in our assumptions and procedures. First, we should realize that "the native—colonized or indomitable—stands always at the heart of colonial writings, even when not explicitly mentioned," for it was the native's land, life, and labor that were at issue.<sup>68</sup> Second, to rewrite the history of the Americas, "to find the buried roots of its culture," we must retrace the lost steps, listen to other voices that could have related the history of a truly new world, not of the specious discovery of the invaders' own dreams, desires, and errors. For Hispanic America particularly, where the conquest was so total and sudden, we must strive to resurrect the submerged sound of resistance: "the lying captives, the false guides and informants, the tireless weavers of fables, myths, and lies."<sup>69</sup>

To recapture America's reality, we need to conceive of colonial literary culture "not as a series of monuments but as a web of negotiations taking place in a living society." The notion of canonical literature should give way to that of discourse, polyvocal and interactive.<sup>70</sup> As Aimé Césaire put it, "no race has a monopoly on beauty, on intelligence, on strength / and there is room for everyone at the convocation of conquest."<sup>71</sup> We must also pay close attention to the "locus of enunciation" from which observers—and we ourselves as historians—understand and articulate the colonial situation, for no one born of a particular culture and time has a completely innocent eye.<sup>72</sup> Finally, in opening our ears to the voice of the Other, we should suspend traditional literary categories and genres and aesthetic criteria to admit native forms of discourse that do not necessarily fit Western paradigms.<sup>73</sup> Most natives were speakers, not writers, and oral

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quest," in René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini, eds., *1492–1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing. Hispanic Issues*, IV (1989), 121–163; Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd, "Introduction: Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse," *Cultural Critique*, VI (Spring 1987), 5–12.

<sup>68</sup> Rolena Adorno, "New Perspectives in Colonial Spanish American Literary Studies," *Journal of the Southwest*, XXXII (1990), 173–191, quotation on 181.

<sup>69</sup> Pastor, "Silence and Writing," 147.

<sup>70</sup> Adorno, "New Perspectives," 173.

<sup>71</sup> Aimé Césaire, *The Collected Poetry*, trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 77.

<sup>72</sup> Walter D. Mignolo, "Afterword," to "Colonial Discourse," ed. Adorno and Mignolo, *Dispositio*, XIV, Nos. 36–38 (1989), 335; Said, "Representing the Colonized," 211–214.

<sup>73</sup> Adorno, "New Perspectives," 184; Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), xiii, 9–10. The practice of students of colonial discourse is even more impressive than their preaching. On their recovery of native voices see, for example, Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), Adorno, ed., *From Oral to Written Expression: Native Andean Chronicles of the Early Colonial Period*, Foreign and Comparative Studies/Latin American Series No. 4, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University (Syracuse, N. Y., 1982), Frank Salomon and George L. Urioste, *The Huarochiri Manuscript: A Testament of Ancient and Colonial Andean Religion* (Austin: University of Texas

discourse has rules and measures different from those of literacy. Several native cultures had sophisticated nonalphabetic writing systems, while others employed simpler pictographs to the same end. Failing to understand the natives in their own terms, the colonists simultaneously lost part of their own identity in "the irreducible challenge of the Other."<sup>74</sup> After five centuries, we should not continue to run the same risk.

No whirlwind tour of Quincentenary scholarship would be complete without reference to work on the impact of the Americas upon Europe and the rest of the world—the closing of the Columbian circle. With few exceptions, the best work on the influence of the New World predates the Quincentenary. In 1970 J. H. Elliott published his brilliant Wiles Lectures at Queen's University, Belfast, on the "uncertain impact" of Hispanic America on Europe before 1650. "In material terms," he argued, the Old World "had gained much from America; in spiritual and intellectual terms it had gained less. . . . Europeans had discovered something about the world around them, and a good deal more about themselves. Ironically, the impact of this discovery was blunted by the very extent and completeness of their successes overseas" because they "ministered to the vanity of Europe," which was "unlikely to show itself unduly receptive to new impressions and experiences." Only another, dissident Europe would continue to turn to America as a source of inspiration and hope. "For if America nurtured Europe's ambitions, it also kept its dreams alive."<sup>75</sup>

In 1975, as if to expand Elliott's measured conclusion, Germán Arciniegás's panoramic *America in Europe: A History of the New World in Reverse* appeared in Spanish. Translated in 1986 for the English-speaking Quincentenary audience, it makes the unabashed claim that "with America, the modern world begins. Scientific progress begins, philosophy thrives. By means of America, Europe acquires a new dimension and emerges from its shadows."<sup>76</sup> Similarly, the same year, William Brandon argued that "the New World insidiously engraved upon the Old World—especially via seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France—changes as profound in some respects as those suffered by the New" and that "garbled influences from the New World are in fact ascendant in certain noteworthy areas of social thought in our present world."<sup>77</sup>

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Press, 1991), and Bruce Mannheim, *The Language of the Inka since the European Invasion* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991). See also a review essay by Seed, "Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse," *Latin American Research Review*, XXVI (1991), 181–200.

<sup>74</sup> Pastor, "Silence and Writing," 153.

<sup>75</sup> J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New. 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 103–104.

<sup>76</sup> Trans. Gabriela Arciniegas and R. Victoria Arana (San Diego, Calif.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 2.

<sup>77</sup> *New Worlds for Old: Reports from the New World and Their Effect on the Development of Social Thought in Europe. 1500–1800* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1986), ix, 3–4.



The most comprehensive treatment of the question is still *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, edited by the late Fredi Chiappelli and published in 1976 in two volumes.<sup>78</sup> This work presents fifty-five papers from an important conference at the University of California, Los Angeles, covering perceptions, governance of the new lands, international politics, the arts, books, language, geography, movements of people, and science and trade. Its collective contribution will not soon be superseded. Our understanding of the intellectual consequences of discovery was greatly enhanced by a five-day conference on "America in European Consciousness, 1493-1750," at the John Carter Brown Library (JCBL) in June 1991. Geoffrey V. Scammell's claim that the "experiences of empire, in which the Americas loomed so large, intensified or exacerbated a number of ominous traits long present in European civilization, most notably absolutism, racism, and intolerance," serves as a useful check on Arciniegas's and Brandon's assertions of America's unique force for good in the world. David Cressy also pricks the New World bubble by arguing that "English appreciation of America in the colonial period ranged from ignorance to indifference, from misapprehension to benign (and not so benign) neglect. . . . Generations of colonial development did little to enhance understanding or appreciation of America in the minds of the majority of Englishmen."<sup>79</sup>

That the divination of America's impact on Europe was far from finished became obvious with the publication of *European Americana: A Chronological Guide to Works Printed in Europe Relating to the Americas, 1493-1776* by the JCBL.<sup>80</sup> If they do nothing else, the guide's 32,000 entries will stand as a challenge to scholars who like their research neat and narrow and their generalizations high and wide. Dennis Channing Landis, editor of the collection, provides an inviting glimpse of it in *The Literature of the Encounter: A Selection of Books from European Americana*, the catalogue of an exhibition mounted for the JCBL conference in 1991. The printed and pictorial contents of sixty-one titles receive substantial and first-class treatment.<sup>81</sup>

It comes as a pleasant surprise that the quality as well as the quantity of Quincentenary scholarship is very high. With few exceptions, scholars, publishers, and museums have resisted the temptation to capitalize on the bullish Columbian market with junk. Colleges and universities have done almost as well. The task now is to ensure that the benefits accrued during the five-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing continue to pay educational and cultural dividends long after the event. What should we

<sup>78</sup> (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976).

<sup>79</sup> Scammell, "The Other Side of the Coin: The Discovery of the Americas and the Spread of Intolerance, Absolutism, and Racism in Early Modern Europe"; Cressy, "The Limits of English Enthusiasm for America."

<sup>80</sup> 6 vols. (New York and New Canaan, Conn.: Readex Books, 1980-1992), ed. John Alden and Dennis Channing Landis.

<sup>81</sup> (Providence, R. I.: John Carter Brown Library, 1991), ed. Landis.

do beyond 1992 to maintain and augment our Quincentenary gains? My survey of the Columbian Encounter field suggests the following prescriptions:

(1) We should focus on Columbus as a man of extraordinary vision, perseverance, skill, and luck but a man nonetheless—flawed and imperfect like all men. Rather than caricaturing him as an oversized hero or villain, we should see him in full perspective, pre- and post-1492, and measure him primarily against the men, ideas, and mores of his own time.

(2) We should pay more attention to Europe on the eve of colonization as the locus of experience, goals, and methods for the American incursions.

(3) We should pay much more attention to precontact America: its complexity, variety, demography, and deep reservoirs of human experience. We should make greater efforts to really hear native voices from the past and in the present, not only for Clio's sake but to advance our own necessary and liberating education in otherness.<sup>82</sup>

(4) In our writing and teaching of colonial history, we should rescue the sixteenth century from undeserved neglect. Without it, we have no hope of making sense of its more familiar sequel.<sup>83</sup>

(5) We must learn to do justice to Hispanic America, first by ridding ourselves of the Black Legend and then by pursuing its history beyond the short conquest phase into the less sanguinary settlement period of city building, imperial bureaucracy, sugar plantations, cattle ranches, and widespread acculturation.<sup>84</sup> We should also do a better job of integrating the Spanish borderlands with the histories of North America and the United States.

(6) By the same token, we should incorporate the history of the Caribbean, where Europe often fought its intercolonial wars before landing on North American soil, because the sugar islands were so valuable to the mother countries.<sup>85</sup>

(7) We should continue to pay attention to the role of disease and biological imperialism in the conquest and depopulation of the Americas. But we should refine our estimates of mortality to accord with the best available evidence and with common sense.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper and Row, 1984); Luis Villoro, *Sabagún or the Limits of the Discovery of the Other*, 1992 Lecture Series, Working Papers No. 2, Dept. of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Maryland, College Park, 1989.

<sup>83</sup> Joseph Judge, "Exploring Our Forgotten Century," *National Geographic*, CLXXIII (1988), 330–363; Axtell, review of David B. Quinn et al., eds., *New American World*, in *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXXVII (1980), 497–499.

<sup>84</sup> Axtell, "Europeans, Indians, and the Age of Discovery in American History Textbooks," *American Historical Review*, XCII (1987), 625–626, 630.

<sup>85</sup> Jack P. Greene, "Society and Economy in the British Caribbean during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *AHR*, LXXIX (1974), 1499–1517; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), chap. 7.

<sup>86</sup> Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972); Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (Cambridge: Cam-

(8) While well-publicized historical anniversaries invariably provide occasions for them, we should curb the temptation to make premature or, worse, predetermined moral judgments on the past. There will be time enough after we have done our homework thoroughly.<sup>87</sup>

(9) Whenever possible, we should resort to the insights and viewpoints of other disciplines, such as anthropology, archaeology, ethnohistory, cartography, historical geography, and colonial discourse. Even the historical fiction of Latin American novelists such as Abel Posse, Alejo Carpentier, and Antonio Benítez-Rojo stretches the imaginative limits of our understanding of the Spanish and Indian heritages of that first, vast, other America.<sup>88</sup>

(10) On a similar tack, we should employ whenever possible a comparative perspective on the American Encounter—comparing French, Spanish, English, Dutch, Portuguese, Swedish, and Russian efforts with each other and American efforts with colonial efforts in other parts of the world—in order to separate the unique from the typical.

(11) The well-modulated public and scholarly success of the Quincenary should inspire us to design future historical anniversaries as opportunities less for celebration than for cerebration. We must also be very careful about who is included in, and who feels excluded from, “We the People.” Ethnic, gender, and racial sensitivities are likely to grow; parity of treatment and attention—and, perhaps as important, the appearance of parity—must be extended to all citizens, past and present. We can start by rethinking our historical vocabulary: *Old and New World*, *discoverer*, *discoverer*, *Indian*, *Amerindian*, *American*, *American*, *Latin American*, and the *West* are factually, morally, or culturally problematic.

(12) Finally, we should all study to become better citizens of the “global village” we now inhabit, the foundations of which Columbus laid in 1492. If we do not learn to protect, respect, and sustain its people and to conserve and renew its resources, it will be much poorer when the Columbian sexcentenary occurs. Perhaps some of the lessons we draw from our study of the first Encounter will prevent such a fate.

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bridge University Press, 1986), chap. 9; Henry F. Dobyns, *Their Number Become Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983); Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); Ann F. Ramenofsky, *Vectors of Death: The Archaeology of European Contact* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); Daniel T. Reff, *Disease, Depopulation, and Culture Change in Northwestern New Spain, 1518–1764* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1991); Douglas H. Ubelaker and John W. Verano, eds., *Disease and Demography in the Americas: Changing Patterns Before and After 1492* (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, forthcoming).

<sup>87</sup> Axtell, “Moral Reflections on the Columbian Legacy,” in *Beyond 1492*, chap. 10.

<sup>88</sup> Posse, *The Dogs of Paradise*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden (New York: Atheneum, 1989); Carpentier, *The Harp and the Shadow*, trans. Thomas Christensen and Carol C. Christensen (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1990); Benítez-Rojo, *Sea of Lentils*, trans. James Maraniss (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990).