

will bear limited interest for scholars. Though this is the first English translation of them, the documents have been published before in Spanish. Their greatest interest lies in the larger context of the legal suits over Columbus' rights, which continued well into the sixteenth century. This volume will interest a larger public, however; one that can appreciate the art of bookmaking and be sensitive to its historical circumstances. The existence in the Americas of such a public is itself a tribute to the events and personalities this fine volume commemorates.

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### National Period

*Brute New World: The Rediscovery of Latin America in the Early Nineteenth Century.* By DESMOND GREGORY. London: British Academic Press, 1992. Plates. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xi, 226 pp. Cloth. \$59.50.

With a keen eye for detail both revealing and amusing, Desmond Gregory has read the first accounts of British travelers to Latin America (except for Central America and the Caribbean) during that region's opening to the English-speaking world between 1810 and 1830. His method has been to group these travel books—often impressively bound and illustrated with etchings—according to the countries they describe and then to take the reader on a lively and entertaining ramble through them. If that sounds like fun, it is. Readers totally unfamiliar with nineteenth-century travel books on Latin America (like almost all our undergraduate students) will come away with a vivid impression of these outlanders' diverse activities and strikingly chauvinistic attitudes. What such readers will learn about Latin America itself, however, is a bit more questionable, and most professors will find *Brute New World* (despite its rather nouveau-sounding title) to be, well, interpretively antediluvian. But then this is a study of businessmen, travelers, and diplomats, not truly a study of Latin America.

What Gregory, who has written four previous volumes on the British presence overseas, does best is tell stories and deploy anecdotal information. Rarely, though, does he provide a fresh interpretation of his subject. The British who ventured to Latin America were generally disappointed and repulsed by their experiences. They found Latin Americans slovenly, lazy, and priest-ridden. Such a rich land, so wasted on its inhabitants! Official emissaries scoffed at the public and political life of these "so-called Republics." The market that British traders so eagerly sought (and so poorly understood) turned out to be much smaller than they expected, and irate British merchants fumed perpetually at corrupt and inept customs officials. Mercenaries in the service of patriot armies and immigrants hoping to found agricultural colonies almost invariably left in frustration. British capital invested in mining ventures—invested in anything, really—was very often lost.

This is a story we have heard somewhere before. Gregory does tell it with zest and authentic sympathy for "the poor and primitive people" (p. 116) who had to

suffer the disdainful incomprehension of outsiders, and he explains Latin American poverty through reference to centuries of colonial misrule and vast geographic barriers impeding economic development. The author criticizes British ignorance of markets and cites the very real inadequacy of commercial infrastructure, such as port facilities and financial institutions. On the other hand, his interpretation has not been influenced by the notion of economic dependency, nor is it impelled by any particular interest in such analytical categories as class, gender, or race—matters the travelers themselves hardly neglected. This suggests the real weakness of the book. Without an analytical compass of some sort, intellectual travelers do tend to wander; and the chapters of *Brute New World* likewise lack a meaningful itinerary. Instead, readers are at the mercy of the guide's idiosyncratic enthusiasms (for meticulous descriptions of the colorful uniforms worn by British mercenaries, for example)—which really will not do when the tour is sponsored by an academic press.

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*Democratic Culture and Governance: Latin America on the Threshold of the Third Millennium.* Edited by LUIS ALBALA-BERTRAND. Gaithersburg: UNESCO/Hispanérica, 1992. Graphs. Tables. Notes. Bibliography. 159 pp. Paper. \$12.00.

*Social Democracy in Latin America: Prospects for Change.* Edited by MENNO VELLINGA. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993. Notes. Index. x, 327 pp. Cloth. \$39.95.

*Democratic Culture and Governance* is a collection of essays by prominent Latin American social scientists whom UNESCO brought together to discuss issues of democracy at a conference held in Montevideo in 1990. The organization of this conference in Latin America was a recognition of the region's significance in the debate about the theory and practice of democratization and democratic governance. The contributors include Manuel A. Garretón, François Bourricaud, Torcuato Di Tella, Norbert Lechner, Michel Maffesoli, Helio Jaguaribe, Mario Dos Santos, Osvaldo Sunkel, Ariel Davrieux, Enrique Leff, Dante Caputo, Jorge Sabato, Raúl Bernal-Meza, and Luis Albala-Bertrand.

The articles by these prominent Latin Americanists address three main topics: transition processes; economic conditions and the dilemmas of democratic governance; and democratization in the context of international restructuring. The collection conveys a sense of some of the most troubling issues affecting democracy in Latin America, and particularly how prominent social scientists view these problems. The articles, however, lack depth. They are short pieces that look more like conference commentaries than carefully thought out scholarly articles. In this sense, the book is useful as a documentation of the relevant issues discussed at the Montevideo conference, but not as a long-lasting academic contribution to the understanding of democratization processes in Latin America.

*Social Democracy in Latin America* should be welcomed by students of both