

based on the latest scholarship; but others, especially the chapter on Mexico, have not incorporated the major works and themes of urban history. The book also could have benefited from a tighter editorial hand. Not all essays include citations; some, but not most, have topographical maps; and country maps do not always identify all the major cities discussed in the national overviews.

Despite the varying quality of the essays, however, this volume can be useful to the nonspecialist; particularly, as the editor claims, the general reader seeking limited information about one country or city. Specialists in Latin American urban history may find this volume valuable because it pulls together demographic data that heretofore were scattered. Those expecting a deeper understanding of the Latin American urban experience, however, will likely be disappointed by the one-dimensional definition of urbanization presented in this handbook.

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Latin American Identity and Constructions of Difference. By AMARYLL CHANADY. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. Notes. Index. xlvi, 254 pp. Cloth, \$44.95. Paper, \$18.95.

Identidad y pluralismo cultural en América Latina. By GUILLERMO BONFIL BATALLA. Río Piedras: EDUPR, 1993. Index. 209 pp. Paper.

The problems of difference and identity have long been central to Latin Americanists. These two works proceed from the recognition that a major part of the Latin American people is composed of a number of hybrid, heterogeneous postcolonial societies; they examine a diversity of ways to face the problems posed by the quest for identity.

The work edited by Amaryll Chanady contains 11 essays by 10 educators from the disciplines of philosophy, ethnography, and literature. In her valuable introduction, Chanady sets forth the major theme, presenting a people in large part Indian, black, and halfbreed: "the colonized Other" (p. xxv). They express themselves by rejecting the colonial cultural dominance of the "external Other"; that is, the Western world (p. xxx). In other words, as contributor Alberto Moreiras points out, "identity has always been political" (p. 210), and political too is the tone of this book.

The problem is how to attain identity independently from external values, a problem aggravated by the geographical, racial, and social divisions of the Latin American continent. Still, the contributors here point to positive patterns that may eventually lead to a unifying identity. One writer states that the Latin Americans of today continue to nationalize universal symbols as they have since the Columbus invasion. For a literary example, a book revered by Latin Americans is now receiving an entirely different interpretation: taking up the discussions set forth by José Enrique Rodó in *Ariel* (1900), writers now side with the semibarbarous

Calibán, who was forced to forget his past; Próspero has thus become a metaphor for the colonialist “external Other.”

In a very general sense, Chanady's collection can be summarized by the last few lines of Enrique Dussel's ethnographic essay, which states that the adverse cultural force to be fought is “the sacrificial ‘myth’ of the provident ‘hand of God’ that regulates Adam Smith's harmony of market forces” (p. 120). This, however, is a book that calls for debate, not action.

Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (who died in 1991) was a Mexican anthropologist who courageously defended Indian identity in the face of domineering Western and mestizo values. His book follows a systematic exposition: a depiction of the Indian, the Indians during the colonial ordeal, the Indian today, revolutions that have not favored the Indian cause, Indian institutions that truly aim at defending the indigenous without sacrificing identity, the distortion of history to favor colonization, the “folklorization” of the Indian as plain exploitation, and above all, the cultural plurality that exists among the Latin American masses. This plurality the author would prefer to see maintained, basing his view, no doubt, on the recent emergence of the central European ethnic republics. Hence, this book advocates the rights of all surviving ethnic components, particularly the Indian, to safeguard themselves from the inroads of the Westernizing, colonializing cultures. At the same time, it implicitly calls for the formation of a Latin American culture that will strongly reaffirm its historical legacy and gain mature identity in spite of its diversity.

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Crítica y descolonización: el sujeto colonial en la cultura latinoamericana. Compiled by BEATRIZ GONZÁLEZ STEPHAN and LÚCIA HELENA COSTIGAN. Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1992. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. 669 pp. Paper.

Inspired by the Quincentennial attention to the voyages of Columbus, this hefty volume contains 36 articles on the colonial literature of Latin America. Most of the contributors are Hispanists currently teaching in North American institutions; the rest are scattered throughout the Western Hemisphere. If this collection is any indicator, colonial literature is not suffering from neglect at the end of the twentieth century.

As might be expected in such a collection, diversity is the most common thread linking the contributions. Geographically, most of the articles focus on Spanish America, but three excellent studies of Brazilian colonial literature by Constance Gabrielle Janiga-Perkins, Roberto Reis, and Lúcia Helena Costigan also appear. Literature written in Peru and New Spain monopolizes the contributions, yet the Caribbean, Venezuela, and Chile also earn some attention. Notably absent are any studies dealing with Central America, Colombia, and the La Plata region.