

given a new and continuous pagination (although this may be helpful to scholars who wish to cite the original articles in their own studies).

The subjects of the chapters are individuals, books, maps, intellectual ideas, and permutations and combinations of all of them. If I were to name my favorite chapter, it would be the sixth, "Cosmographers of Seville: Nautical Science and Social Experience," which originally was published in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old* (edited by Fredi Chiapelli, 1976). I had read, or heard Urusula Lamb read, at least six of the chapters in their original venues. Nevertheless, the insights still seem fresh and stimulating, the scholarship impressive, and the style enviable. We shall miss her.

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*Demons, Nausea, and Resistance in the Autobiography of Isabel de Jesús, 1611–1682.* By SHERRY M. VELASCO. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. x, 133 pp. Cloth. \$35.00.

The temptation is strong, when reading the copious literary production by and about early modern nuns and *beatas*, to dismiss them with the old saw, if you've seen one, you've seen them all. Closer examination, however, reveals numerous individual variations on a fairly standard repertory of themes. The *Tesoro del Carmelo* (Madrid, 1685), a spiritual autobiography by Isabel de Jesús (1611–1682), a Carmelite nun from Toledo, Spain, is no exception. It reproduces many of the standard motifs of the genre: youthful deliverance from sexual temptation; the dogged pursuit of sainthood in defiance of familial and other pressures to marry; frequent allusions to recurring illness; and explicit expression of the havoc wreaked by unsympathetic confessors. All the same, this text is unusual in at least two respects. Few early modern spiritual autobiographers commented so frankly and at such length on the act of writing itself. Fewer still linked the devil and nausea so directly to the precarious role of author.

The omnipresence of the devil and his minions is, of course, a prominent motif in the first-person works of major figures like St. Teresa and in the lives of lesser-known charismatics, such as Francisco Yepes, the brother of St. John of the Cross. The twist in Isabel's narrative is the way the devil gives voice to Isabel's anxieties about authorship. His making her (literally) sick to her stomach every time she tries to write about her spiritual experiences has little to do with the penitential refusal of food typical of "holy anorexia." Instead, it is merely one in a "series of strategies manipulated to avoid various forms of control and domination." Isabel's resistance to her persecutor thus indirectly legitimates her intervention in public spheres, such as autobiographical writing, that are normally closed to women.

This is an interesting argument. One wonders, however, if it is strong enough to sustain an entire book. It is not helped by the self-contained nature of the analysis; the author's attention centers relentlessly on the nun's text. One result of taking Isabel at her own word is that external realities rarely intrude. Sherry Velasco says

nothing of Isabel's social background, her overall career as a nun, her confessors, or the convents in which she lived. One would surely like to know more about such matters. Another drawback is that for a host of interesting episodes, such as her interview with a local Inquisitor or the four trips she claims to have made to North Africa to visit prisoners, one has only her side of the story. A longer and more ambitious book, based on more extensive research and greater attention to context, might have offset these shortcomings.

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*Spain, Europe, and the "Spanish Miracle," 1700–1900.* By DAVID RINGROSE. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Maps. Tables. Graphs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xv, 499 pp. Cloth. \$64.95.

This book is a publisher's blurb come true: a complete reinterpretation of the history of modern Spain. It asserts that by comparing their performance with northern European countries, the Spaniards themselves, and liberal and leftist intellectuals in particular, have misjudged their own record. What they have portrayed until recently as a narrative of failure is really a success story of economic growth, nationbuilding, and rising material prosperity.

These are bold statements, and although in the fine print the author constantly hedges his bets, one cannot fail to be impressed. David Ringrose has read widely and thought deeply, and the results are suggestive. The book's strength is its reconstruction of four overlapping urban systems that organized production and market exchange. These emerging economies—a Catalan-based Mediterranean system, a northern system linking the Cantabrian coast with its Basque and Castilian hinterland, a central economy dominated by Madrid, and an Andalusian system focused on Seville and Cádiz—were the true sources of dynamism in modern Spanish history, and their study fully justifies the author's preference for regional over national frameworks of analysis.

The paradox is that the book's parts seem so much better than the whole. Polemical emphasis on the Spanish "miracle" ends up detracting from a solid and important attempt to recast the evolution of modern Spain. For example, Ringrose consistently downplays the significance of the colonial economy, stressing its scant effects on peninsular production and commerce. It is hard to reconcile this posture, however, with his own characterization of the urban systems of the periphery. Although imperial trade was never the principal stimulus in these systems, by his own account, it would have been difficult to achieve comparable levels of dynamism without the colonial connection. Ringrose implies, moreover, that spending by the central state—which he repeatedly acknowledges as directly dependent on imperial income—and private remittances from the colonies played only a slight role in the metropolitan economy; at best, an unlikely point of view.

In its weaker moments, this book offers less a new interpretation than the tradi-