The Creation of the British Atlantic World (review)

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transnational human rights movement. Markarian writes a fascinating study of how the Uruguayan Left and the human rights movement worked together, drawing on specific and well-researched examples. For example, she shows, in just the right amount of detail, why members of the Uruguayan Left were able to mount such a successful human rights campaign in the U.S. Congress and why they worked so well with transnational human rights organizations like Amnesty International. Her study provides new insight into the various responses the Uruguayan Left had to the dictatorship, most especially its embrace of a new understanding of human rights and individual liberty.

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POLITICAL ECONOMY/GLOBALIZATION

The Creation of the British Atlantic World. Edited by Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. Pp. vi, 400. Notes. Index. $52.00 cloth.

Few historians have been more influential than Jack P. Greene in defining the field of Atlantic history during the past few decades. This book—written for the most part by Greene's former students—is both a tribute to and recognition of Greene's ambiguous legacy. The collection begins with a quotation from his 1996 essay "Beyond Power," in which Greene championed Atlantic history as a corrective to "the history of nation-states, a mainstay and the last vestige of the paradigm of power." Despite this statement, much of the work of Greene and his students has underscored the importance of political power, whether local or imperial, in the creation of the Atlantic world. The essays in this collection offer diverse perspectives on the British Atlantic, but in the end they raise doubts about whether it is possible, or even advisable, for Atlantic historians to move "beyond power."

This collection sets itself apart from others by directly confronting the similarities and differences between Atlantic and imperial histories. On one hand, critics contend that Atlantic history is little more than imperial or colonial history under a different name, especially when it often uses imperial labels—the British or Spanish Atlantic, for example—to define its bounds. But as Carole Shammas notes in an illuminating Introduction, Atlantic historians tend to avoid "examining the place of imperial politics in the shape of the transatlantic experience" (p. 5), focusing more on the ability of diverse populations on the peripheries to shape their own experiences. This volume combines traditional political history with the more fashionable study of subaltern or minority groups, and as in any collection of essays, the results range from exemplary to unexciting.

Several of the essays follow recent trends in colonial and Atlantic history by stressing the permeability of national boundaries. April Lee Hatfield's selection

examines maritime networks in the seventeenth-century Atlantic, arguing that trading connections "not only linked individual English colonies with one another and with England but also connected residents of England's colonies to an international Atlantic world" (p. 140). The essay demonstrates how an Atlantic approach to colonial America can be valuable not just in breaking free of American exceptionalism, but also in seeing beyond empires to view the informal networks that bound the Atlantic world together. Roy A. Kea's essay on the life of an African Christian woman performs a similar task, showing how the process of conversion—in this case from Catholicism to Moravian Pietism—could give converts tools for survival in the brutal slave societies of the Caribbean, however much imperial masters intended to use religion for social control.

Despite these two examples, most of the essays reinforce the importance of political power in the making of a British Atlantic. In a case study of Thomas Yong's attempt to colonize the Delaware Valley in 1634, Mark L. Thompson advances the concept of "national subjecthood," claiming that English colonizers attempted to draw national boundaries on the contested lands of North America, fitting strange lands and peoples into European conceptions of politics and ethnicity. The concept has some problems, as Thompson equates ethnicity and nationhood in a way that seems more appropriate for later periods than the seventeenth century, but it does help to explain how distant rulers extended their authority overseas. David Barry Gaspar's account of an incident in Antigua in 1724 offers further evidence of the importance of royal authority. In that year an English captain kidnapped several Africans from the Canary Islands and transported them to the Caribbean, intending to sell the men as slaves. The Africans managed to escape in Antigua, and they protested their enslavement to the governor, claiming that as "Subjects to the King of Portugal" they were entitled to fair treatment under international law. Challenging some of our notions about the slave system, the governor agreed, and repatriated the men—not out of sympathy for the Africans, but in recognition of the important alliance between Britain and Portugal. The incident serves as a reminder that despite the limits of imperial power, global politics could have a great impact on the lives of ordinary people.

The best essays in the volume recognize both the possibilities and the limits of imperial power. Selections by Robert Olwell and John E. Crowley examine the era after the 1760s, when Britons attempted to make sense of the new empire they acquired in the Seven Years' War. Olwell's chapter examines links between the remote new colony of East Florida and the royal botanical gardens at Kew, where English botanists attempted to domesticate exotic plants, just as imperial administrators, many of whom were naturalists as well, attempted to domesticate exotic lands and peoples. Crowley discusses the rise of visual representations of imperial landscapes during the same period. Taken together, the chapters describe a British empire that was impressive in its scope, but rather weak both in the core, where lots of Britons possessed serious misgivings about territorial empire, and on the peripheries, where colonization proved difficult. What these essays prove is that the best

Atlantic history does not move "beyond power," but instead examines exactly how political power functioned in the diverse and disorganized Atlantic world.

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POLITICS/GOVERNANCE

Modern Inquisitions: Peru and the Colonial Origins of the Civilized World. By Irene Silverblatt. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004. Pp. xv, 299. Illustrations. Appendix. Notes. Index. $79.95 cloth; $22.95 paper.

En los últimos años la bibliografía sobre la Inquisición colonial en Hispanoamérica ha sido enriquecida con valiosos estudios. Son diversos los libros, artículos y ensayos dedicados a los aspectos sociales, económicos, administrativos, políticos e ideológicos de la célebre institución establecida por orden del rey de España, Felipe II. Muestra del permanente interés que concita la Inquisición es este nuevo e imaginativo libro de Irene Silverblatt. Inspirada principalmente en las ideas de Hanna Arendt, Silverblatt explora el rol de la Inquisición peruana en la formación del "civilizado" mundo moderno.

Arendt creía que el colonialismo del siglo XIX había establecido los precedentes para la violencia del siglo XX, es decir que fue el origen de la "corriente subterránea" de violencia y terror, cuya manifestación más evidente fue el facismo. Los principios rectores del colonialismo, el pensamiento racial y el gobierno burocrático, desencadenaron los actos más violentos y presagiaron la creencia de que una nación estaba destinada a dirigir el mundo. Cuando Arendt escribió esto tenía en mente los imperialismos francés y británico, pero según Silverblatt el mundo había ya experimentado las "bárbaras misiones civilizadoras europeas" desde el siglo XV, cuando España empezó su propio proceso de formación estatal y de expansión colonial. Fue la empresa colonial española, y no la noreuropea, la que inició el proceso "civilizador" que combinó burocracia y pensamiento racial que la escritora alemana consideraba tan dañino, escribe Silverblatt. Para esta última, la Inquisición en cuanto fue "una de las más modernas burocracias de su tiempo," propagadora y legitimadora de un discurso de superioridad racial puede ser considerada una institución moderna y, como tal, partícipe del proceso "civilizador" antes mencionado. La propuesta de Silverblatt resulta seductora, pero a los estudiosos de la época colonial peruana, en general, y de la Inquisición, en particular, puede resultar difícil de aceptar.

El estudio de Silverblatt ha sido escrito a partir de la lectura de un amplio corpus documental y bibliográfico. Las abundantes notas a pie de página muestran la consulta de los papeles de Inquisición de Lima existentes en el Archivo Histórico Nacional, en Madrid. Pero de la confrontación entre las afirmaciones de la autora y