

ASSESSING RECENT REFERENCE WORKS ON LATIN AMERICA *

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- AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LATIN AMERICAN SPORT: PRE-CONQUEST TO THE PRESENT.* By Joseph L. Arbena. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1989. Pp. 324. \$49.95.)
- INTRODUCCION A LOS ESTUDIOS BOLIVIANOS CONTEMPORANEOS, 1960-1984.* Compiled by Josep Barnadas. (Cuzco: Centro de Estudios Rurales "Bartolomé de las Casas," 1987. Pp. 514.)
- FRENCH AND SPANISH RECORDS OF LOUISIANA: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE TO ARCHIVE AND MANUSCRIPT SOURCES.* By Henry Putney Beers. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989. Pp. 371. \$45.00.)
- EL PERIODISMO POLITICO DURANTE LA EPOCA MILITAR (1976-1983): BIBLIOGRAFIA COMENTADA DE LA LITERATURA DE DENUNCIA, EXILIO Y MARCO POLITICO SOCIAL.* By Bernardo A. Eltzer. Volumes 13 and 14. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones S. J. L., 1988. Pp. 123, 120.)
- CENTRAL AMERICA IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY.* By Kenneth J. Grieb. (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall, 1988. Pp. 573. \$95.00.)
- GUIA INTERNACIONAL DE INVESTIGACIONES SOBRE MEXICO/INTERNATIONAL GUIDE TO RESEARCH ON MEXICO.* (Tijuana and La Jolla: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte and the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1989. Pp. 502. \$15.00.)
- ANUARIO BIBLIOGRAFICO COLOMBIANO "RUBEN PEREZ ORTIZ," 1984-1985.* Compiled by Francisco José Romero Rojas. (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1988. Pp. 406.)
- BORDERLINE: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDERLANDS.* By Barbara G. Valk. (Los Angeles, Calif.: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1988. Pp. 711. \$65.00.)
- BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WESTERN EUROPEAN-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS.* By Ulrike Wolf. (Madrid: Instituto de Relaciones Europeo-Latinoamericanos, 1986. Pp. 207.)

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MEXICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHY/LA AUTOBIOGRAFIA MEXICANA: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY/UNA BIBLIOGRAFÍA RAZONADA. Compiled by Richard Donovan Woods. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988. Pp. 228. \$39.95.)

Like the swiftly changing fields and subfields they chart, reference materials on Latin America cannot be analyzed within a fixed set of parameters. Recent evaluations of reference works have assessed them via comparative quantification of published volumes, based on the assumption that what these works catalogue may indicate the scholarly direction and significance of research fields. Individual projects may also be judged for their clarity of purpose, the self-evidence of their contribution to the reference materials literature, and their improvements over previous volumes.¹ But in the context of rapid international and trans-cultural expansion of the reference compendiums as a genre, methodological rigor is difficult to define and still harder to apply. Furthermore, whatever method standards are determined in assessing a reference work, questions of cultural context, the compiler's ideology, and what a volume reveals beyond (or despite) its stated objectives all affect the value of an individual compilation.

The problem of determining examination standards applies to the critique of reference materials from all countries. Yet changing publishing conditions in many Latin American countries—shaped by unpredictable factors like the state of the national economy, sudden political change, and library accessibility—all call for different criteria of analysis than those applied to U.S., Canadian, and European works. Reference materials assembled in Latin America often reflect more directly a specific social context than U.S. and Canadian works do. The items currently under review, representing editors from six countries and a wide array of themes, demonstrate that reference materials instruct not only in their stated objectives but across the same spectrum of social and cultural circumstances that characterize scholarly monographs in Latin American studies. While this description fits all the volumes discussed, those from Latin America are linked more explicitly to the time and place of their writing than are their counterparts written in the United States and Europe.

Bernardo Eltzer's *El periodismo político durante la época militar (1976–1983)* defies evaluation outside the sociopolitical context of Argentine society in the 1980s. Although Eltzer has assembled a notable classification of journalistic items on military rule, the larger value of this reference work lies in its testimonial and denunciatory quality, which evokes the

1. See Richard D. Woods, "Latin American Reference Books: An Underappreciated Genre," *LARR* 24, no. 2 (1989):231–45; and Peter T. Johnson, "Facts, Statistics, and Bibliographies," *LARR* 22, no. 3 (1987):253–70.

political culture of Raúl Alfonsín's presidency (1983–1989). Like earlier works in this series, the thirteenth and fourteenth volumes are composed mainly of entries describing newspaper and periodical articles, in this case from the period of military administration known as the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional. Organized alphabetically by name and subject, notecard-style designations identify each article's theme and content. For these latest volumes, articles were gleaned from only twenty-two publications, fourteen of which are March 1976 issues of the Buenos Aires *Diario Clarín*. By the standards of most U.S. and Canadian reference works, no rigorous organizational structure is evident, nor does Eltzer explain his method of compilation. He has nevertheless indexed thoroughly what his series includes. For example, the subject register to the thirteenth volume cites more than twenty labor associations and federations.

Eltzer's reference series is concerned with the sociopolitical framework of military rule but was compiled during the post-military period in Argentina. What he has produced is a denunciatory testimonial, in the spirit of the prominent journalist opponents of military rule, the protests of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, and the highly publicized courtroom testimonials of the mid-1980s that helped convict Argentina's military leaders.² The tabulation of military excesses in *El periodismo político* assumes added significance when evaluated in the context of weak Argentine bibliographical literature for the recent past³ and in the absence of archival and other primary research materials as sources of information on the period from 1976 to 1983.

Francisco José Romero Rojas's *Anuario Bibliográfico Colombiano* reflects a different kind of bibliographical and cultural importance. This list of all Colombian publications (registered by federal law) also charts the foreign acquisitions of several important national libraries. The twenty-first in a series of *anuarios* begun in 1951, this well-organized volume contains neither annotations nor subject index. Full bibliographic entries are organized by topic and subtopic. The *Anuario's* four hundred pages of entries attest to Colombia publishing more books than any other Spanish American country except Mexico and being a major supplier of books to other South American countries. Romero Rojas documents the wide-ranging enterprise of several well-known publishing houses, the best-known being Oveja Negra, publisher of Gabriel García Márquez's fictional works and an impressive array of translated books.

2. See John Simpson and Jana Bennett, *The Disappeared* (London: Robson Books, 1985); Horacio Verbitsky, *Rodolfo Walsh y la prensa clandestina, 1976–1978* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Urraca, 1985); Jacobo Timerman, *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981); and Andrew Graham-Yooll, *A State of Fear* (London: Eland, 1986).

3. Hebe P. de Chocholous, "Argentina: necesidad de una bibliografía nacional," *Inter-American Review of Bibliography/Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía* 38, no. 1 (1988):11–28.

A telling section on musical recordings reveals something about the music that Colombians and other South Americans buy. The list of recorded music for 1984 and 1985 underscores Medellín's ongoing importance as a center for pressing records and recording tango music. Yet without distribution statistics and other information on "how" Colombians listen to music, the information on recordings can provide only a limited sense of a performer's popularity or the prominence of a style. The listing of Duran Duran, Dan Fogelberg, and Sheena Easton, however, as well as English-language song compilations that include "Llena tu cabeza de rock 85" demonstrate the spectacular international dissemination of popular music from the industrialized First World to South America. The music category of this bibliography thus raises important cultural questions—in this case, about the impact of the U.S. music industry. Similar problems of cultural impact can be studied via the works listed under science and technology headings, which reveal the influence of U.S. and Canadian educational texts and suggest the crisis in scientific research in Latin America.

Taken together with its antecedents, the *Anuario* for 1984–85 offers a useful guide to the research literature in many fields. Listings under "religion" and other areas point out that unlike recent trends in the United States and Canada and earlier investigations in Colombia, few authors have recently addressed themes related to liberation theology.⁴ In contrast, many studies have concentrated on violence in Colombia.

No such emphasis on studies of violence is found in Josep Barnadas's *Introducción a los estudios bolivianos contemporáneos*, suggesting an important distinction between the two Andean nations in the roles of societal violence and how they condition research in many fields. Also, the strength of Colombian publishing houses demonstrated in the *Anuario* contrasts with the weakness of the Bolivian publishing industry; Barnadas's work itself, the finest reference work yet published on Bolivia, was issued by a distinguished Peruvian publisher. The compiler also reveals the pronounced Peruvian influence on Bolivian studies in fields like archaeology, ethnology, and sociology.⁵

Introducción a los estudios bolivianos contemporáneos cites more than six thousand works, presents detailed discussions of the current literature for each thematic section, and balances a review of Spanish-language

4. See Hannah W. Stewart-Gambino, "New Approaches to Studying the Role of Religion in Latin America," *LARR* 24, no. 3 (1989):187–99; and Therrin C. Dahlin, Gary P. Gillum, and Mark L. Grover, *The Catholic Left in Latin America: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall, 1981).

5. David Cahill reviews some of the categories of Andean studies in which Peruvian theorists have influenced research directions and writing in Bolivia. See Cahill, "History and Anthropology in the Study of Andean Societies," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 9 (1990): 123–32.

works with materials in other idioms (although it does not consider works published in law, medicine, the sciences, and some other areas). Barnadas adheres meticulously to his straightforward purpose—to overturn the “symmetrical double ignorance” of Bolivian publications outside the country and of foreign works within Bolivia. Although common to some extent throughout Latin America, this “double ignorance” has reached unparalleled extremes for Bolivia, partly because of the harsh financial limitations facing Bolivian scholars in attempting to gain access to foreign publications.

Barbara Valk's *Borderline: A Bibliography of the United States–Mexico Borderlands* matches Barnadas's bibliographical skills but leaves no category unexplored. Valk's nearly nine thousand entries affirm the explosion in recent research on the border region—in Mexico, the United States, and elsewhere. Originally conceived as a computer database, *Borderline* improves on several border-related reference works.⁶ Like the Colombian *Anuario*, *Borderline* embraces a variety of publication forms that include maps, films, and unpublished papers. Section breaks are detailed. For example, research works on flora can be found under the subdivisions “Grasses,” “Trees and Shrubs,” “Succulents and Cacti,” and “Ethnobotany.” A larger heading of “Labor” distinguishes among material in “Education and Employment,” “Labor Unions,” “Strikes and Lockouts,” “Agricultural Labor,” and “Bracero and Guest Worker Programs.”

In contrast with this advanced organization of materials, Ulrike Wolf's *Bibliography of Western European–Latin American Relations* is remarkable for its methodological ambiguities. It contains no delimiting sections or subsections at all. A timid introduction informs the reader that this work is a “fairly comprehensive” guide on “most” of what has been written on this subject since the European Economic Community (EEC) was founded, although some material “might be missing.” In any case,

6. Like the variety of subfields in border studies, relevant reference works demonstrate a comparatively high level of research on this region within the field of Latin American Studies. Valk cites academic debts to Jorge Bustamante's *México–Estados Unidos: bibliografía general sobre estudios fronterizos* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1980) and Ellwyn Stoddard's *Borderlands Sourcebook: A Guide to the Literature on Northern Mexico and the American Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1983). See also Laura Gutiérrez-Witt, “United States–Mexico Border Studies and Borderline,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 6, no. 1 (Winter 1990):121–31; Michael C. Meyer, “The Borderlands: An Historical Survey for the Non-Historian,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1986):133–41; María Patricia Fernández Kelly, “The U.S.–Mexico Border: Recent Publications and the State of Current Research,” *LARR* 16, no. 3 (1981):250–67; Leslie Sklair, *Maquiladoras: Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide to Mexico's In-Bond Industry, 1980–1988* (La Jolla: Center for U.S.–Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 1988); *Arte Chicano: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of Chicano Art, 1965–1981*, compiled by Shifra M. Goldman and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto (Berkeley: Chicano Studies Library Publications Unit, University of California, 1985); and *United States–Mexico Border Statistics since 1900*, edited by David Lorey (Los Angeles: University of California Program on Mexico, UCLA Latin American Center, 1990).

the work is rendered unmanageable by the jumbled assemblage of citations. Moreover, Wolf overlooked recent efforts in several fields that have broadened the conception of international relations to include issues of social, cultural, and ideological contacts and influences, issues that bear directly on the more traditional realms of economic and political interaction.⁷

A considerably more informative and accessible reference work, the *Guía internacional de investigaciones sobre México/International Guide to Research on Mexico* will also leave researchers grappling with methodological uncertainties. Its editors have produced brief descriptions of hundreds of ongoing research projects by scholars in many fields, a body described collectively as “the only truly comprehensive multidisciplinary inventory” of continuing research on Mexico. Nevertheless, the *Guía internacional* is not all-encompassing. To reduce costs, the editors published their selection of research abstracts in Spanish or English but not both languages (unlike the 1987 edition). In addition, the number of investigators whose projects are described has dropped by some 30 percent, from 1,577 in the 1987 issue to 1,096 in the current volume. This decline represents in part the elimination of research projects that were judged to lack a strong social science or historical component, including entire sections on literature and the arts and Chicano Studies, as well as biological, marine, and physical sciences. The elimination of the 1987 category of “Chicano Studies” comes at a time when *Borderline* and other sources have documented a strong increase in research and writing in that field.⁸

The *Guía* is divided into three principal segments: “Mexican Studies,” “Mexico and the World,” and “Border Studies.” Research summaries are arranged alphabetically by author. Each numbered entry reveals the researcher’s institutional affiliation, starting and ending dates for the project, funding sources, and the investigator’s relevant publications. Strengths repeated from earlier editions—including excellent indexing and the volume’s unique potential for “predicting” the direction of Mexican studies—are matched by continuing weaknesses. Once again, the

7. On recent reassessments of approaches to international relations in history, see Edmundo A. Heredia, “Historia de las relaciones internacionales: aproximación bibliográfica,” *Inter-American Review of Bibliography/Revista Interamericana de Bibliografía* 38, no. 3 (1988):339–53; Thomas G. Paterson, “Defining and Doing the History of American Foreign Relations: A Primer,” *Diplomatic History* 14 (Fall 1990):584–601; Emily S. Rosenberg, “Walking the Border,” *Diplomatic History* 14 (Fall 1990):565–73; and Akira Iriye, “Culture,” in “A Round Table: Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations,” *Journal of American History* 77, no. 1 (June 1990):99–107.

8. See Alfredo Mirandé, “Latinos in the United States: New Directions in Research and Theory,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1989):127–44; Francesco Cordaso, *The New American Immigration: Evolving Patterns of Legal and Illegal Emigration; A Bibliography of Selected References* (New York and London: Garland, 1987); and Alex M. Saragoza, “The Significance of Recent Chicano-Related Historical Writings: An Appraisal,” *Ethnic Affairs* 1 (Fall 1987):24–63.

editors have not systematically reviewed doctoral research, possibly the most important indication of academic trends. In general, the methodology of the *Guía* is less diligent than that of Valk's *Borderline* or Barnadas's compilation. Rather, the *Guía* editors relied almost entirely on the cooperation of researchers who responded to eight thousand copies of a mailed questionnaire. No data are offered on the forms returned, why some replies were discarded while others were not, or why only 12 percent of the disclosures sought were entered in this reference work.

Joseph Arbena's *Annotated Bibliography of Latin American Sport: Pre-Conquest to the Present* traverses national boundaries and five centuries in presenting 1,379 entries ranging from sixteenth-century Mexican bullfighting to baseball star George Bell as a Dominican cultural icon. Annotated citations describe books, articles, documents, unpublished theses, and other sources relating to sport in Latin America. Arbena adopted a broad working premise that considers sport, physical fitness, and recreation "in terms of both individual and national development." The compiler has framed this work within the bounds of the new social history and more recent developments in cultural studies. Like Ulrike Wolf's *Bibliography*, Arbena's *Annotated Bibliography* begins with a note of regret about the few items originating from Latin America. By and large, however, Arbena has covered the important Spanish- and Portuguese-language literature through extensive research in the United States and visits to several libraries in Central and South America (including the libraries of many sports clubs).

Excellent subject and author indexes complement well-organized section divisions entitled "Theory and History," "Indigenous Traditions," "Iberian Background," "Colonial Era," and "National Period" (by country) as well as "Current Latin American Sports Periodicals" and "Hispanic Sports and Sportsmen in the United States." Because the last-named category is concerned mainly with Latin Americans and Hispanic Americans in professional sports, the term *sportsmen* is perhaps more acceptable than it might be in other circumstances, given that the culture and sociology of the Latino sports hero in North America has excluded women, just as this heading excludes women athletes. Readers may find more difficult to accept the small handful of items relating to women listed in other sections. Despite the assortment of materials presented (including poetry, prose, and newspaper editorials), Arbena might have gone further in his attempt to consider sport in a broad cultural, social, and political context. For example, the "Theory and History" section contains only one Spanish-language entry.⁹

Arbena's innovative section on Latin Americans in U.S. and Cana-

9. Gerhad Vinnai, *El fútbol como ideología*, translated by León Mames, 3d ed. (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1986 [1974]).

dian sports venues stretches the “border” of the region physically and conceptually. The compiler introduces a selection of works on the related themes of immigrants, race, and sports heroism in the United States, including annotations of materials on Roberto Clemente, Rod Carew, and Fernando Valenzuela as well as on race and class in some Latin American sporting locales. Because of this approach, Arbena might have documented in the theory and history section key studies in the theoretical literature on race and professional sports in the United States.¹⁰ In a second parallel with Ulrike Wolf’s *Bibliography*, Arbena’s compendium cannot resolve many research questions on the themes he has raised. Yet in the latter case, this limitation results not from bibliographic oversights but from Arbena’s skillful identification (through his selection of materials for inclusion) of areas in the literature not yet well-documented. No literature for Latin American immigrant groups compares with that on European immigrant communities in the United States in terms of the centrality of sport to communal life.¹¹ Additionally, Arbena’s directory shows that few studies have highlighted the mass following of short-distance sprinters in Jamaica, from Donald Quarrie to Ben Johnson, as expressed in music, folklore, and other popular forms.

Richard Donovan Woods’s *Mexican Autobiography/La autobiografía mexicana* adopts a directed approach to a genre of writing that the compiler believes has fixed categories of evaluation, making this study the most narrowly focused of the works reviewed. Like Arbena, Woods has broken new ground in assembling a reference work around a topic not previously well-conceived or well-understood. No reference works had addressed autobiography as a genre in Spanish America, and only two monographic studies and one anthology had appeared on the subject.¹²

10. Although the sociological and historical literature on Hispanics in U.S. and Canadian professional sports remains small, some of the important theoretical examinations of Afro-Americans in sport are directly relevant to the professional careers of Latin American migrants and the literature on them. For example, the careers of boxers Roberto Durán, “Panama” Al Brown, and Eligio “Kid Chocolate” Sardiñas are explained in part by two theoretical works: Al-Tony Gilmore, “Jack Johnson, the Man and His Times,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 6, no. 3 (1973):496–506; and William H. Wiggins, Jr., “Jack Johnson as Bad Nigger: The Folklore of His Life,” *Black Scholar* 2, no. 5 (Jan. 1971):4–19.

11. Reference works on immigrant communities in Latin America also give little evidence of the role sport played in daily life. See, for example, Centro de Documentación e Información sobre Judaísmo Argentino “Marc Turkow,” *Bibliografía temática sobre judaísmo argentino 4: el movimiento obrero judío en la Argentina*, vols. 1–2 (Buenos Aires: Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina, 1987); and Dionisio Petriella, *Los italianos en la historia de la cultura argentina* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Dante Alighieri, 1979). The recurrence of sports associations in a recent listing of Argentine ethnic organizations hints at the prominence of sport in immigrant communities. See Rosa Majjan, *Guía de las colectividades extranjeras en la República Argentina*, vol. 1, *Europa occidental* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales, 1988).

12. Adolfo Prieto, *La literatura autobiográfica argentina* (Buenos Aires: J. Alvarez, 1966); Gabriela Mora, “Mariano Picón Salas autobiográfico: una contribución al estudio del género autobiográfico en Hispanoamérica,” thesis, Smith College, 1971; and Raymundo Ramos, *Memorias y autobiografías de escritores mexicanos* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1967).

From this lack of reference studies, Woods concludes that autobiography is either “infrequently cultivated among the Spanish-speaking” or rarely recognized in reference works or scholarly monographs. This inference discounts autobiography in a variety of forms—perhaps neither recognized as autobiography in reference works nor “cultivated” as such but nevertheless representing important autobiographical literary traditions in Latin America.

The absence of reference materials on autobiography seems irrelevant to the significance of autobiography as history in monographic and scholarly studies that transcend the category of partisan memoirs. From a range of ideological perspectives, Sebastian Marotta and Carlos Ibarguren of Argentina, Guillermo Lora of Bolivia, and José Carlos Mariátegui of Peru have all written the histories of their countries through “life writing.”¹³ Also, “cultivated” by two generations of U.S. anthropologists, Spanish speakers in the hemisphere from “Don Taso” Zayas Alvarade to Domitila Barrios de Chungara, Rigoberta Menchú, and other women chroniclers have all portrayed the conditions in their communities in vital autobiographical statements. Woods recognizes the latter category in a section entitled “oral autobiographies,” although he maintains that historical and oral autobiography are not adequately appreciated.¹⁴

Woods’s effort to quantify is unconvincing. Comparing the writing of autobiography in Mexico with other genres as well as with the number of autobiographies published in the United States, Woods concludes that autobiography is an “underrated” genre and that Mexican culture “apparently does not encourage life writing. . . .” Yet Woods has identified 332 works and classified them into six subtypes of autobiography. He insists that one type, the ego-satisfying memoir, is particularly “Mexican” because its characteristics harmonize with the “Mexican personality.” What distinguishes the “Mexican memoir” from the Honduran, Venezuelan, or Canadian equivalents remains unclear, however. Woods’s meticulous approach is better reflected in his detailed and easily applied indexing system. Readers can search for entries by author, title, translation, subject, profession of autobiographer, genre of autobiography, and chronology. Moreover, items in *Mexican Autobiography* are presented in both Spanish and English, as is the work’s introduction.

13. Guillermo Lora, *A History of the Bolivian Labour Movement, 1848–1971* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Sebastián Marotta, *El movimiento sindical argentino: su génesis y desarrollo*, vols. 1 and 2 (Buenos Aires: Lacio, 1960–61); Carlos Ibarguren, *La historia que he vivido* (Buenos Aires: Peuser, 1954); and José Carlos Mariátegui, *Historia de la crisis mundial: conferencias (años 1923 y 1924)* (Lima: AMAUTA, 1959).

14. Domitila Barrios de Chungara, *Si me permiten hablar* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno, 1978); Rigoberta Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú, an Indian Woman in Guatemala* (London: Verso, 1984); and Sidney Mintz, *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960).

Partly because of Woods's specificity of definitions and his care in assembling this reference work, compiler's ideology is a strong determinant of content—more so perhaps than in other works reviewed here. Individual citations reflect Woods's unexplicit notions of autobiographical genre cultivation and the memoir as a reflection of the Mexican character. His evident disdain for reformist and revolutionary tendencies in Mexican politics at times relegates a number of valuable autobiographical works to marginal status. Woods's editorial remarks often disregard the multiplicity of interests that a work might generate among researchers, in contrast to the sensitivity to the potential breadth of readership exhibited by Arbena, Barnadas, and Valk. Some social historians, cultural anthropologists, and literary deconstructionists will recoil at Woods's tendency to find fault with any autobiographer's exclusion of what the compiler deems essential to a subject's life or to autobiography as a genre. For example, Woods states that Graciana Alvarez del Castillo's life writing is "eroded by 'costumbristic' Mexico and nostalgia" and that the memoirs of Alfonso de Icaza, "more than autobiography, are a biography of the cultural life of México."

No such misgivings are inspired by *French and Spanish Records of Louisiana*. Henry Putney Beers's authoritative bibliographical guide to French and Spanish archive and manuscript sources pertaining to colonial Louisiana reflects a wealth of knowledge accumulated during the author's career as an archivist at the National Archives of the United States and a historian for the U.S. Departments of State and the Navy. Like Arbena and Valk, Beers has expanded the conceptual and geographical boundaries of Latin America. His scholarly monograph on the history and academic value of relevant research materials addresses the region that is now defined as Mississippi, Alabama, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana. Beers aptly chose a system of regional chapter divisions that affords researchers efficient access to document collections and their descriptions. Beyond explaining the locations and potential uses of land records, ecclesiastical documents, military rolls, cabildo archives, and many other sources, Beers provides an administrative and political history of how institutions and governments have managed the archive collections he cites since the early nineteenth century. A bibliography of hundreds of titles on archival and manuscript holdings completes this impressive publication.

Kenneth Grieb's *Central America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* reflects erudition and scholarship equivalent to *French and Spanish Records*. Yet Grieb has chosen to impose standards on his compilation that limit the scope of his reference work. He intended *Central America* to provide a "broad but selective" guide to books dealing with Central America since the wars for independence. Yet as is the case with Woods's compilation, what has been left out of this edited study will intrigue

investigators: periodical publications of all kinds, books not issued in "typeset form in bound volumes," and most items not issued by trade and scholarly publishers. Thus the compiler's definition of what constitutes notable scholarship disregards many important types of Latin American publications. Stapled, typed, and other formats reflect financial and other restrictions, but they by no means preclude the content's quality or scholarly relevance. Despite Grieb's care in seeking out and annotating hundreds of items for this compendium, his rigorous standards for listing represent the imposition of U.S. and Canadian publishing standards on hundreds of potentially valuable works from Central America.

While researchers will judge *Central America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* on the basis of its helpfulness in identifying a body of literature, the diversity of reference works published demonstrates that no uniform set of guidelines can be applied in assessment or categorization. Regional differentiations might focus on country or geographical zones, but reference work categories could also be determined by linkages to the United States or a work's capacity to expand the conceptual or geographical boundaries of more traditional definitions of Latin America. As is true of scholarly works generally, it is impossible to separate the relevance or quality of a reference work from the emphasis and ideological orientation of its compiler or editors.

A range of factors can determine whether a work will prove a lasting addition to a library's reference section. The editors of the *Guía Internacional de Investigaciones sobre México* have compiled their study for short-term use. Their plans to produce a revised volume makes this work of immediate value only. In contrast, the scope and depth of *French and Spanish Records, Central America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, and *Borderline* suggest that they are unlikely to be improved on in the near future within the bounds of their defined objectives, except for Barbara Valk's volume, which is being updated constantly by UCLA's computer facilities. *El periodismo político durante la época militar (1976-1983)* will also prove useful in the longer term, in part because of Eltzer's meticulous review of periodical sources and the work's cultural relativity and because it is unlikely that another compiler will tackle this particular topic. The enduring quality of the *Anuario Bibliográfico Colombiano* also inheres in its thoroughness in reviewing a specific category of materials and in the cultural relativity of the works presented. More difficult to evaluate for their potential lasting quality are the works of Arbena, Barnadas, and Woods. Each makes an important contribution to the literature of reference works, but each is also subject to improvement and new interpretations of its chosen themes.

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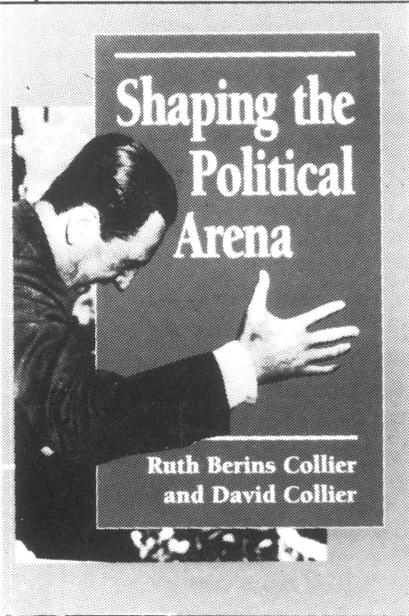
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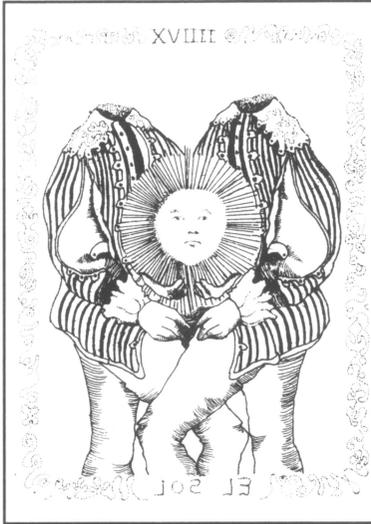
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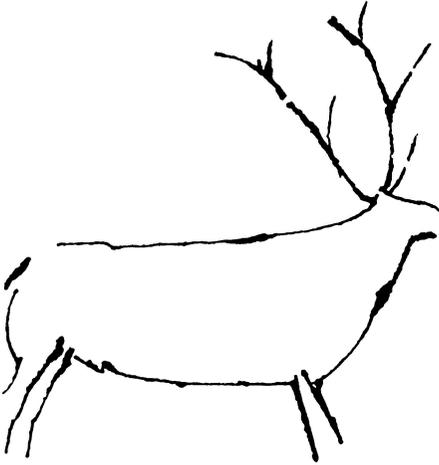
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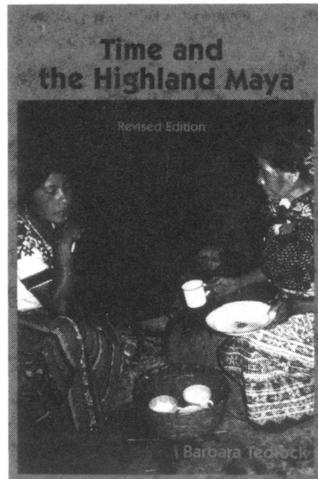
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