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Foreward

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FOREWORD

At this date it would certainly be naive to pretend that the theme of the New World and the New Man in Latin America remains unexplored; scholars from literature and history have long been its cartographers. The theme, however, has not been studied enough by "civilizationists," and it is my hope that a special issue dedicated to the topic will invite others to explore more fully one of the central aspects of our distinctly *American* heritage. Furthermore, Latin America is a neglected area in civilizational inquiry. It must be remembered—as Carlos Fuentes has noted—that "America" extends not only from sea to shining sea but from pole to pole.

The first three of these essays were originally presented at the 12th annual meeting—in Buffalo, N.Y., May, 1983—of the *International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations*. Upon the invitation of Vytautas Kavolis, co-editor of *The Comparative Civilizations Review*, to guest-edit them into a special issue on the topic of the New Man and the New World from Civilizational Perspectives, I asked the authors (myself included) to revise, expand and document their essays in accordance with standard *CCR* format, to focus consistently on the New Man and/or the New World, and to write with the civilizational interests of the Society in mind. The four essays published here range over almost five centuries but concentrate on the colonial period and on the 20th century.

Each contributor of course brings his own perspective, training, theoretical and historical interests to bear on his topic. In the essay on cannibalism I analyze the development of Europe's civilizational attitudes toward the New World in the 15th and 16th centuries by focusing on the language and iconography of European descriptions of cannibalism. In the second essay Victoria Chase studies Alejo Carpentier's interpretation of Columbus as a historical myth and paradigm in the novel, *El arpa y la sombra*. Ann McBride-Limaye applies both semiotics and Foucault's notion of the *episteme* to three of Carlos Fuentes's novels; her paper "constructs" Fuentes's "construction" of the New World. The first three essays of this issue, then, *study* the ideas of the New Man and the New World; they map relatively limited areas and are "scholarly" in tone, in intention. The fourth essay—by Braulio Muñoz—is different. While drawing on many of the same sources, it is essentially a personal statement on the New Man as a cultural ideal. Braulio Muñoz, like El

Inca Garcilaso de la Vega the son of an Inca mother and a Spanish father, not only writes *about* the New Man; he *embodies* the New Man.

The idea of the New Man and the New World in Latin America is an inexhaustible topic. No short collection of essays, regardless of their quality, their individual length, or their focus, can possibly be comprehensive enough to satisfy all critics. This assortment is no exception. As a whole, it might be compared to a 16th-century map of the New World. Certain areas are rendered in relatively great detail; the general outlines of the new lands are mapped in rough approximation to the truth; and the rest remains largely *terra incognita*. A map like this one generally invites other explorers, even if only to disagree. But, after all, that is the special lure of the New World.

Michael Palencia-Roth
Guest Editor