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Foreward

Wayne M. Bledsoe
University of Missouri at Rolla

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FOREWORD

In addition to the Presidential Address from the 20th Annual Meeting of the ISCSC, this issue of *Comparative Civilizations Review* contains articles dealing with Chivalry in the Age of Discovery; the development of Muslim geography in the Middle Ages; and a new definition of "civilization." The "Forum" section contains a report on the development and implementation of a "World Studies Program" at Queens College, N.Y., as well as a brief report on the comparative philosophy of voids.

In his presidential address, delivered in Santo Domingo at the 20th Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC), **Michael Palencia-Roth** analyzes the intercivilizational encounter that occurred between Europe and the New World during the early colonial period. He bases his analysis on the conflicting "monologic" and "dialogic" views of the world that were first formalized by the Russian cultural and literary critic, Mikhail Bakhtin. In Bakhtinian terms, "monologic" thinkers believe the entire world makes sense when perceived as a "system" governed by a set of rules, while "dialogic" thinkers reject this notion, preferring instead to see the world as a network of polyphonic, equal parts. Palencia-Roth's thesis is that the European conquest of the New World was a monologic enterprise with few if any dialogic interludes.

Michael Palencia-Roth, born in Columbia, holds degrees from Vanderbilt and Harvard Universities with specializations in English, Philosophy, Comparative Literature, and Germanics. He has taught at Harvard, the University of Michigan at Dearborn, and the University of Illinois, where he is currently Professor of Comparative Literature, Criticism and Interpretive Theory, and Latin American Studies. He is also the Director of the Program in Comparative Literature. He has published three major monographs and an extensive number of essays, many of which are on comparative civilizational topics.

Jennifer Goodman, Associate Director of Graduate Studies at Texas A & M University, examines European chivalry in the late fifteenth century and demonstrates that not only did chivalry continue to exist in the early modern age, but that it actually

functioned as a medium for international understanding and communication during the Age of Discovery. The article contains a wealth of bibliographical information as the author bases her thesis on a comparative study of literary fiction and historical sources. Comparisons are also made regarding the concept of chivalry in various cultures in the fifteenth century.

In addition to her administrative duties, Dr. Goodman is an Associate Professor of English at Texas A & M and her primary research and teaching interest includes medieval literature.

Ralph Brauer, formerly Professor of Physiology and Director of the Institute for Marine and Biomedical Research at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, is now a Professor Emeritus, UNC-W; Adjunct Professor of Biology, UNC-W; and Executive Director of the Institute for Research on the Interrelation of Science and Culture. Brauer's article analyzes the development of geography in the medieval Muslim world from the 7th to the 15th century with the intent of establishing a basis from which comparative studies can be made of the development of the natural sciences within various cultures. In addition to explaining the forces behind the growth of medieval Muslim geography, Brauer provides a list of topics, which in his opinion, have the potential for fruitful, comparative studies.

John Hord's "Civilization: A Definition," will be of interest to those readers who have ventured previously into this ethnological quagmire. Hord, an independent researcher from Fort Walton Beach, Florida, offers a definition of civilization based upon what he terms as "formal knowledge systems." This, the second part of a two-part series, begins with a critical analysis of some of the more traditional perceptions of civilization, and is followed by an explanation of the nature of formal knowledge systems. The article concludes with two definitions of civilization and an invitation for readers to respond.

In the *Forum* section of the journal, Professor **Frederick Buell** contributes an informative report on the design and implementation of a World Studies Program at Queens College in New York. Buell's report contains information on how the program was conceived; the philosophy and disciplinary aims embodied in the program; the preparation of faculty to participate in the program; and the World Studies curricula being implemented on the Queens campus.

Buell, one of the organizers and participants in the World Studies Program, is Professor of English at Queens College. He is the author of *W. H. Auden a Social Poet* (Cornell University Press) and he has published two books of poems. His poetry and fiction have appeared in a number of leading literary journals. He is a former Chairman of the English Department at Queens College and he is now head of the American Studies Program.

The final selection is **Archie J. Bahm's** "A Comparative Philosophy of Voids." This brief communiqué is a bit of a mind teaser and may require several readings to comprehend fully its message. Dr. Bahm is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M.

The *Forum* section of the *Comparative Civilizations Review* is intended to encourage discourse among the readership. Comments pertaining to articles published in the *CCR*, reports on "works in progress," announcements of special meetings, and other pertinent issues brought to the attention of the editor will be considered for publication in the "Forum" section of the journal.

Those readers interested in submitting material to the "Forum," should address their correspondence to Wayne M. Bledsoe, Department of History, University of Missouri-Rolla, Rolla, MO 65401. Those submitting articles for publication consideration should send three copies (3) to the same address.

Wayne M. Bledsoe