

Imperial Revisionism: US Historians of Latin America and the Spanish Colonial Empire (ca. 1915–1945)

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Since its inception, the discipline of Hispanic American history has been overshadowed by a dominant curiosity about the Spanish colonial empire and its legacy in Latin America. Carrying a tradition established in the mid-nineteenth century, the pioneers of the field (Bernard Moses and Edward G. Bourne) wrote mainly about the experience of Spanish colonialism in the Americas. The generation that followed continued with this line of inquiry, generating an increasing number of publications about the colonial period.¹ The duration, organization, and principal institutions of the Spanish empire have drawn the attention of many historians who did their archival work during the early twentieth century and joined history departments of major US universities after the outbreak of World War I. The histories they wrote contributed to consolidating the field of Hispanic American history in the United States, producing important findings in a variety of themes related to the Spanish empire. It is my contention that this historiography was greatly influenced by the need to understand the role of the United States' policies in the hemisphere. This was in fact the main organizing principle and motivating force in the new efforts to understand the Spanish colonial regime. As I shall argue throughout the article, the symbiosis and tensions between the (present) American informal empire and the (past) Spanish formal empire formed the crucible of much writing on colonial Hispanic American history during the period 1915 to 1945.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, due to increased facilities of travel abroad, US scholars were able to work at the colonial archives of Seville and Simancas, as well as in other Spanish repositories. Greater inter-American cooperation rendered more accessible collections of documents about Spanish colonial America in archives of

Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Venezuela, Argentina, and Chile. Libraries in the United States, following the lead of the Library of Congress, Yale, and Harvard, stepped up their collections of *Latino-americana*, paying special attention to the acquisition of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents and prints.² A wealth of documentary evidence, historians acknowledged, could help to critically reexamine stereotypes about Spanish colonialism built for centuries. The Black Legend in its multiple manifestations (Spanish cruelty towards indigenous peoples, Spanish censorship of ideas, the stagnation in learning and knowledge, religious intolerance, etc.) was reopened to cross-examination and new interpretation.³

Revisionist work during this period generated two distinct trajectories: one quite critical of Spanish colonialism, the other more tolerant and willing to correct the extreme views of the Black Legend.⁴ The condemnation one finds in the work of Arthur P. Whitaker about the inherent weakness of the Spanish empire in its North American frontier or in the work of Clarence Haring about the Spanish commercial monopoly found its balance in the more empathetic historiography produced by John Tate Lanning, Irving Leonard, and Lewis Hanke.⁵ These authors endeavored to show that Spanish censorship was ineffective, that enlightened ideas of science, politics, and philosophy had penetrated the Spanish colonies, and that university education in the colonies was not simply a recitation of scholastic texts.⁶ Though divergent in many ways, these trajectories produced a new understanding of the working of the Spanish empire that was concurrent with the need to articulate historical knowledge to the new conditions of US imperial informal governance. As I will try to show, these works were transected by an exercise in comparative colonialism—Spanish versus American empires—motivated in part by the need to understand the US position in the hemisphere.

To prove my point, I examine the works of five US historians of Latin America: Clarence Haring, a Harvard historian whose research centered on the administrative organization and economic policies of the Spanish Crown; Arthur Whitaker, who worked on the diplomatic tensions between the United States and Spain in the US southeastern frontier; Irving Leonard, a literary historian who discovered the dissemination in the colonies of important works of the Spanish *Siglo de Oro*; John Tate Lanning, whose work on colonial universities showed the imprint left by the Enlightenment in Spanish American higher education; and Lewis Hanke, a historian who revisited the work of Las Casas and other friars to find a cadre of religious militants devoted to protecting indigenous peoples from exploitation and servitude.⁷ Their contributions produced a comprehensive revision of the Spanish colonial past. In part, their revisions tempered the long-standing criticism of Spanish cruelty, exploitation, and fanaticism embedded in the Black Legend. In part, the new historiography highlighted the weakness of the Spanish empire, in economic, defensive, and institutional terms.

The US historiography produced between 1915 and 1945 about Spanish colonialism was part of a larger project aimed at the comparative study of empires, at

a time in which the United States itself was transforming itself into a contestant for hemispheric hegemony. This was a time in which intellectuals from North and South called for a revision of the Monroe Doctrine in the direction of a multilateral, more cooperative, and mutually beneficial hemispheric system. The historians examined here were sympathizers—and some of them promoters—of US Pan-Americanism, a vision that led by the early 1930s into the formulation of the Good Neighbor policy. The politics of Pan-Americanism informed these revisions of Spanish colonial history, projecting into the past contemporary concerns about development, regional integration, political experience, and the fostering of human capital. And vice versa, the new understanding of Spanish colonialism provided support for a “cultural vision” of US hemispheric expansion and hegemony. Contrary to the experience of the Spanish empire, the United States should export not just commodities and financial aid to Latin America, but mainly try to understand its diverse and complex cultures and, through knowledge and superior academic institutions, attempt to exert intellectual-cultural influence.

While at some crucial moments (World War II, for instance), there was an intense cooperation and exchange between the State Department and US scholars (Hispanic American historians among them), my point is not that US foreign policy was elaborated in the Latin American history classes of American universities. Rather I will show that the revisions of the Spanish colonial past served as intellectual support—and to an extent informed—US policies towards Latin America, at a time when these policies were shifting away from territorial acquisition and exclusive concern for trade and investments. These scholars (together with other politicians, publicists, and intellectuals) cooperated in the building of a new consensus about the need to build friendly and multilateral relations with the “southern neighbors” through intellectual cooperation, cultural exchanges, and deeper understanding of the region’s past.

Some restrictions in the textual corpus were needed in order to draw some preliminary insights about the relationship between empire-making and historical knowledge.⁸ I concentrate mostly on the work of these five scholars. Similarly, I deal briefly with these historians’ views of US–Latin American relations and policies (their thoughts on the Monroe Doctrine, US interventions on the circum-Caribbean, and the like) only to demonstrate their engagement with issues of US foreign policy.⁹ My objective is limited to presenting the existence of a particular US research agenda on the colonial history of Hispanic America, one that emphasized the drawbacks and achievements of empire, in order to place these enunciations in the context of the building of US Pan-Americanism and the Good Neighbor policy.

The article examines the works of major US historians of Latin America during the transition between Dollar Diplomacy and the Good Neighbor policy. Rescuing the Spanish heritage became more immediately useful during 1915–1945, when scholars and statesmen imagined a different articulation between the United States and the Latin American periphery. The establishment of a Benevolent Empire predicated on

inter-American cooperation and “mutual understanding” called for a more comprehensive understanding of Latin American societies, politics, and cultures. In particular, a deeper understanding of the legacies of the Spanish empire on contemporary Latin American nations was deemed crucial to the formulation of US policies towards the region.

Scholars and foreign-policy experts coincided on the need to understand “Hispanic American Civilization” as a way to improve inter-American relations. Pan-Americanism—an ideology that promoted hemispheric integration based on mutual cooperation in matters of trade, investment, mutual defense, technical expertise, and educational exchange—found enthusiasts among leading scholars in the emerging field of Latin American Studies. The cooperation was especially intense among historians, geographers, archaeologists, economists, and political scientists. They thought their new insights about the present conditions of Spanish America would prove useful in imagining new interactions among the nations of the hemisphere. Though it was a political scientist (Leo S. Rowe) who first called for an integral policy of “intellectual cooperation” with the southern republics, many historians collaborated in the building of a new consensus about the need of the United States to “face south” and build an enduring loose union or commonwealth in the Americas.

Studies on United States historiography on Hispanic America have tended to neglect the complicity or collaboration of US historians with Washington policies towards Latin America.¹⁰ The emergence of “Hispanic American history” has been portrayed as the product of professional specialization and differentiation, leading to separate this subfield from the mainstream of “American history.” Its practitioners have been depicted as scholars committed to historical objectivity and the critical analysis of documents.¹¹ Reviewing the evolution of Latin American history in the United States, Charles Gibson and Benjamin Keen found that “the transition from a domestic to a borderland to an exclusive Latin American context characterized United States research of the first quarter of the twentieth century and set it sharply apart from the work of Europeans and Latin Americans.”¹² Increasing autonomy, ampler availability of sources, and professionalism became the key words dominating the narrative of US historiography about Latin America.

Why these historians paid special attention to the Spanish empire has not merited much reflection. The overlap between historical work and diplomatic advice in the area of US–Latin American relations has been noted.¹³ Yet, so far, few studies have examined the ways in which historical inquiries into the region’s past could bring some perspective into the problems of “inter-American relations.” True, the period produced a historiography in which the brutality or benevolence of Spanish colonialism was at stake, yet this historiography produced “useful knowledge” in conversation with a US Pan-American vision and, hence, at the service of United States expansionism. We must now look at past colonial historiography as a power-knowledge device intertwined with the making of the American informal empire.

Clarence Haring and the Folly of Colonial Monopoly

Clarence Haring was one of the most important historians of the field. Chair of Latin American economics and history at Harvard University starting in 1923, Haring had a long career in which he combined research and teaching about colonial Hispanic American history with the promotion of Pan-American societies.¹⁴ In *Trade and Navigation between Spain and the Indies in the Time of the Hapsburgs* (1918), Haring undertook a thorough examination of the institutional and economic aspects of the Spanish empire in America. He examined the complex commercial, administrative, and fiscal machinery of empire in order to better understand the decline of Spain's global power in the seventeenth century. A dialectic of free trade versus state monopoly dominated his interpretation. Even mercantilist empires had used the forces of the market to sustain their accumulation of state power and economic international dominance. Spain did not. Though Haring credited the Spaniards for having played a civilizing role in the hemisphere—mostly through the evangelization of Amerindians—this “glorious task” could not be fully accomplished in the absence of “private enterprise.” At the beginning, during the Caribbean phase of colonization, there was some temporary freedom of trade and industry motivated by necessity. But soon a system of excessive bureaucracy stifled the forces of free enterprise, bringing stagnation and poverty to the American colonies.¹⁵

Haring had followed the development of the *Casa de Contratación* since its humble beginnings in 1503 (as a three-man agency) until it became, in the mid-seventeenth century, an “elaborately organized institution” in charge of regulating all the commerce and navigation of the Indies. The Casa became a major collector of taxes for the royal exchequer, the regulator of trade and immigration, a school of navigation, a supplier of naval stores to the Spanish armada, and a court of law for commercial disputes (28–45). This complex administrative machinery—the first bureaucracy in the Americas—initially oriented towards the control of royal interests in areas of taxation, navigation, and trade, ended up suffocating the early development of commercial capitalism in the colonies. The very expansion of bureaucratic organization under Philip II and his successor brought increasing levels of “red tape” to the relations between the Crown and the colonies, while increasing fiscal deficits forced the monarchy to sell public offices to augment revenues (46). To Haring, the 1625 decision by Philip II to sell the post of *alguacil mayor* of the *Casa de Contratación* to the Duke of Olivares was the original sin that corrupted the whole machinery of colonial government. It was at this moment that the state bureaucracy, which until then had recruited personnel on the basis of talent and experience, began to sell positions to prestige-seeking Spanish nobles and royal favorites (53–54).

Like the British colonies in North America, the Spanish colonies had also enjoyed a period of “salutary neglect,” but this had been too short to generate long-term development and the conditions for self-government. Before 1600 the Crown had promoted the development of agriculture in the Caribbean islands, introducing

wheat, sugar, vines, and olives. Unlike other mercantile powers, at first Spain allowed and encouraged the production of manufactures in the colonies (chiefly silk and woolen textiles), even though they competed with Spanish manufactures. This policy, combined with the resistance of local governors and viceroys to enforce royal regulations, permitted the growth of a limited intercolonial trade that connected New Spain with Peru, the area of River Plate with ports of Brazil, and the Pacific coast of Mexico with the Philippines (124–28). But soon the pressure of the Council of the Indies and of the Seville monopoly made the Crown prohibit some of these activities, curtailing drastically the number of ships allowed to supply the ports of Acapulco, Buenos Aires, and La Guayra. Once the Spanish commercial monopoly was firmly established—a system that limited trade to one city in the metropolis, Seville, and to a few ports in the colonies, and imposed high taxes and unreasonable trade-routes—the colonies were subjected to the tyranny of exorbitant prices and irregular supplies. These conditions stimulated the growth of illicit trade and, as a consequence, corruption became the name of the game.

What went wrong? To Haring, in the late sixteenth century, Spanish colonial policy was already out of tune with the mercantilist policies of other commercial empires: “From the foregoing, it is evident that Spanish policy toward colonial industries lacked the clearly defined outlines one associates with the mercantilist ideas of that age” (129). Its policy advisers did not understand that in order to maximize royal revenue and accumulate state-power it was necessary to grant concessions to private enterprise, even in the form of charter or privileged companies. Nor did they understand that it was illusory to try to keep bullion within Spain when the colonies were already engaged in trade with China and were already dependent on England, Holland, and France for their supplies of manufactured goods. American silver naturally tended to flow out of Spain and no system of commercial regulations would be able to stop this outflow.¹⁶ To the failure in economic policy (the ill-advised and outmoded mercantilism), the Spaniards added a new insurmountable problem: the importation of European aristocracy into America. When the faucet of free intercolonial trade and local manufactures was closed, the Crown began to transfer power to the Church and created a landed aristocracy in the Indies. This was perhaps Spain’s greatest blunder, for aristocratic privilege prevented the development of self-reliance, the work ethic, and social equality in Hispanic America. Parasitic friars and large estates, luxury at the side of ignorance, servitude, and favoritism resulted from this misguided European importation:

The Spanish Crown may be said to have kept the colonies, in an indirect way, peculiarly *in a state of dependence upon the home country*. It transferred to these frontier regions the aristocratic and ecclesiastical organization of a much older and more sophisticated community. The land was divided into great estates granted to the families of

conquistadores, to favorites at court, or to the cathedrals and monasteries. There grew up, therefore, on the one hand, a numerous and privileged nobility, which congregated mostly in the larger towns, and set the rest of the inhabitants a pernicious example of luxury and idleness; on the other, a powerfully endowed church, which, while it did some splendid service in converting the Indians, engrossed much of the land in mortmain, and filled the New World with thousands of parasitic, and often licentious, friars. (130–31, emphasis mine)

Here, in the second half of the sixteenth century, Haring found a lost opportunity for Hispanic America. An alternative model was possible—the North American road—but the region, constrained by an outdated form of mercantilism, failed to choose this path. “In a pioneer country, where lands are to be cleared and reduced to cultivation, comparatively small holdings and the stimulus of private ownership are generally needed to secure the most profitable and economical use of the soil” (131). Small-scale holdings, free trade, and greater social equality would have generated in Central and South America a society and economy similar to that of the Thirteen Colonies. Instead Hispanic America developed into a hierarchical, aristocratic society with great landed estates and servile labor, a place where Indian peasants tilled the land with primitive methods and lived in the greatest ignorance. In comparison to this “American” model, the biggest mistake—larger indeed than the erroneous or outdated mercantilism—was the attempt to introduce “feudal society” on American soil.

This led Haring to question the whole impact of Spanish colonization on the welfare of the natives. The Indian masses had accepted Christianity but this was all they had gained from “European civilization” as understood by the Spanish monarchs. In terms of human welfare, the Conquest had not produced net gains for the large majority of its peoples.¹⁷ In the rural districts, the Amerindians continued to live under similar conditions than before the conquest: with no improvement in their technologies of construction, manufacture, or agriculture. Only in the towns, where Spaniards and Creoles dominated, there were clear signs of “civilization.” Measured in these terms, the Spanish empire had not been a “progressive system” of transnational governance. Reduced to an ambivalent and incomplete evangelization, the civilizing role of Spanish colonialism left much to be desired. More importantly, always struggling to sustain the royal treasury, the Crown had failed to elevate the standard of living of the population—a policy objective distinctively “American.”

Three main factors were at the root of the failure of the Spanish empire, factors that the complex machinery of government was unable to overcome. One was the persistence of erroneous economic ideas: a trade monopoly with fixed ports, annual fleets, and maximum trade limits that discouraged individual self-reliance,

local commerce, and industrial enterprise. A second factor was the early establishment of aristocratic privilege and large landed estates for the benefit of the Church and a small colonial “nobility.” This reproduced on American soil (the “land of liberty”) servile labor and an aristocratic disdain for manual work. But the ultimate causal factor was *corruption*. The introduction in 1625 of the sale of public offices (at the very core of the colonial administration, the *Casa de Contratación*) undermined all possibility of responsible government: “The principal reason for the persistence of these irregularities is fairly obvious. Illicit trade between the colonies was possible because colonial officials were easily corrupted, and officials were corruptible because of the pernicious system, already alluded to, of buying and selling government functions” (150–51). The imperial bureaucracy, permeated by favoritism and bribery, was afterwards unable to enforce royal regulations on navigation and trade. Contraband grew to alarming proportions and, hence, the royal treasure lost great amounts of revenue, due to the corruption of royal officials in America. With the change of dynasty in the early eighteenth century, the Crown tried to revamp colonial trade, creating privileged companies and granting *asientos* for the introduction of slaves. But it was already too late, for Spain could no longer secure its supremacy over the seas, and rival imperial powers—England, France, and Holland—had already gained significant competitive advantage in the world market. The Bourbon’s short experiment with “free trade” among the colonies, the new *intendencia* system, and the revamping of military and naval defenses were insufficient to restore the power of Spain in the global economy.

In this context, the American colonies ceased to be an asset and became a liability to Spain. Its supplies came to be provided by foreign manufacturers while Spanish industry declined. Royal finances went into deficit, forcing the Crown to resort more frequently to the sale of public offices and the farming-out of taxes. Trade regulations, which at the beginning had stifled the “natural development” of intercolonial trade, ceased to be enforced, multiplying the opportunities for contraband trade. Underneath the decline of the Spanish empire was the persistence of economic policies inconsistent with Spain’s actual powers and resources in the global scene. What Haring considered the ultimate folly of Spanish imperial policy was the attempt to keep a territory vaster than a hemisphere (“half of the world”) under the monopoly of a city (Seville), with the help of a royal bureaucracy famous for its inefficiency and corruption. Keeping a system of fixed ports, annual fleets, and a list of prohibited goods only to sustain the flow of American silver to the royal exchequer was a “stupendous blunder” based on an erroneous reading of the international system. When other powers were rising to prominence, Spain could no longer control the “American hemisphere” for herself on “the slender pleas of prior discovery and papal investiture” (153). Other types of imperial dominion and hegemony were proving more efficacious and appropriate to the imperial rivalry of the seventeenth century. Interestingly, Haring shifted his criticism from the

commercial monopoly and a corrupted royal bureaucracy to the question of “Imperium,” the sovereignty over colonial territories.

Haring explicitly mentioned British commercial hegemony in the nineteenth century as one of these new models of global governance, as a better empire. But in actuality, *Trade and Navigation* dealt in a less explicit fashion but more recurrently with another model or possibility: the American informal empire. United States history presented an economy with an expanding frontier that, assisted by free trade and salutary neglect in questions of government, had developed from colony into a large nation-state, had carried out its own industrial revolution, and at the beginning of the twentieth century was contending for hegemony in the American hemisphere. This second “good model” implicit in Haring’s analysis was a combination of British “free-trade imperialism” with the frontier development plus benevolent imperial preeminence of the contemporary United States.

The author’s indictment of the Spanish trade monopoly and of the “blunders” of Spanish mercantilism cannot be understood outside of the framework of a comparative study of empires. Haring went into the treasure of Spanish archives to find the faults in colonial policy and institutions that could explain the contemporary divergence between Anglo-America and Spanish America. In these archives, he found certain answers to the paradoxical question of why the largest empire the world had known, in possession of rich mines of silver and gold, went financially and economically bankrupt in the seventeenth century and produced long-term economic stagnation in its colonies. Some of these answers (erroneous economic ideas, the transfer of feudal society to the Indies, and widespread corruption in the colonies) reappeared recurrently in his work.¹⁸ Haring’s colonial history was an enterprise of knowledge oriented towards the understanding of a problem that intrigued the US foreign-policy establishment: in which ways should the US expand its influence in Latin America in order to spread peace, progress, and mutual understanding over the hemisphere. The Spanish empire was a negative historical example: something that the US should not attempt to repeat.

Though apparently a counternarrative of empire, Haring’s criticism was aimed at a reconsideration of the Spanish empire in relation to other empires in world history. The same narrative that closed the experience of a past empire as a failed experiment presented the possibility of another type of imperial governance: a Benevolent Empire radiating influence through university training, expert advice, consumer advertising, and the promotion of free trade, private property, and democratic governance. In this way, Hispanic American colonial history could be a useful instrument for differentiating and elevating the “American path” to the level of exceptionality and exemplarity; a new and clear mirror in which contemporaneous Latin American nations could see their future.

Arthur P. Whitaker and the Question of Spanish Retreat

To my generation, Arthur P. Whitaker was known as a US historian of Latin America with an extensive knowledge of Argentine recent history, who had written books on the role of the United States in the independence of Hispanic America and edited a collection of essays on the Enlightenment in Latin America.¹⁹ Few, in fact, knew or remembered in those times that he was also the author of *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (1954), a book now revisited by postcolonial scholars critical of “Area Studies.” Fewer still would recall that, in the beginning of his academic career, Whitaker wrote three books that contributed significantly to a revision of Spanish colonial history in its relationship to US history. These contributions—*The Spanish-American Frontier, 1783–1795* (1927), *The Mississippi Question, 1795–1803* (1934), and *The Huancavelica Mercury Mine* (1941)—speak clearly about the sort of questions that interested US historians about Latin America’s past during the period of the Good Neighbor policy. In the late eighteenth century, the recently formed United States started to make important territorial acquisitions at the expense of Spain. This related to an earlier historical precedent. Since the seventeenth century, the economic decline of the Spanish empire and the weakening of its defense made possible for the rising powers (England, France, and the Netherlands) to dispute Spanish territories and sovereignty in the Caribbean. In the period of progress and reason, there was little Spain could do to bring back its economic glory and supremacy over the Atlantic.

Presenting himself as a practitioner of “American history” specializing in diplomatic history, Whitaker made a remarkable career. Raised in Knoxville, Tennessee, he studied first at the University of Tennessee and later took an AM from Harvard University (1917). After the war, he took residence in La Sorbonne and from there was able to visit archives of France, England, and Spain to disentangle a crucial issue of “American history”: the origins of the US acquisitions of territories that had belonged to the Spanish empire. At Harvard he undertook doctoral studies under Frederick Jackson Turner and Samuel Eliot Morison, graduating in 1924. He taught at Cornell and other colleges before accepting in 1936 a chair in Latin American history at the University of Pennsylvania. During World War II he worked as an officer and consultant of the State Department. In 1960 he received the Serra Award of the Americas for his contributions to the new field of Latin American history.²⁰

Between 1926 and 1941, he wrote three books and many articles on questions that were constitutive of the emerging field of US diplomatic history in relation to Spanish America.²¹ Central to his research interests was the question of why a powerful empire such as Spain and its colonies gave up little by little territories in its periphery to a weak nation-in-the-making, the United States. Early in his career Whitaker stated the problem in bold terms: Was the Spanish cession of the territories of Louisiana and Florida an experiment in colonial reconstruction? Or were these

cessions the result of a global economic and political process that Spain was unable to control?²²

Whitaker devoted much of his early academic life to finding the weak spots in the body of the Spanish empire. One of these spots was located in the frontier between the recently formed United States and the fringe Spanish colony of Louisiana. The two southern colonies (Louisiana and Florida), he discovered, had been the cradle of the first experience with Spanish deregulation of commercial monopoly. This experiment had failed, leading to greater contraband trade, which favored rival empires Britain and France. With time this generated the conditions that forced Spain to give up these territories. Central to Whitaker's revisionist interpretation of US-Spanish relations was the importance he attributed to the Treaty of San Lorenzo (1795), a treaty in which Spain gave in to the US demands to make the Mississippi River freely navigable. This treaty opened up opportunities for land occupation for Anglo-Americans in the Gulf area. Whitaker wrote, "After fifteen years of stubborn resistance, the Spanish government, in the Treaty of San Lorenzo (October 27, 1795), yielded to the Americans in the controversy over the southern boundary and the navigation of the Mississippi River. So abruptly did the surrender reverse the former course of Spain and so important was the treaty in relation to the westward expansion of the United States and the development of its foreign policy, that it is worthwhile inquiring into the reasons for the action of the Spanish government."²³ Whitaker's answer to this question was twofold: on the one hand, Spain, due to its own financial disarray, had been committed to a policy of peace—it could not afford new wars; on the other hand, an earlier treaty with France (July 1795) was expected to awaken fury on the part of England, Spain's ally. Furthermore, the US successful frontier policy, which promoted emigration to Louisiana, treaties with Native Americans, and settlers' revolts in Kentucky persuaded Spain that it was impossible to exclude Americans from settling and trading in the Mississippi valley. In the end, Whitaker thought that a combination of European diplomatic intrigues and the determined will of "the American people" ("seamen, river boatmen, merchants, traders, and frontiersmen") had won this impressive diplomatic and political victory over Spain (450).

The other weak spot was in Upper Peru, in the mining complex of Huancavelica. The mercury that Huancavelica produced was indispensable for the production of silver in Peru and New Spain and, consequently, fundamental for the fiscal sustainability of the Spanish empire.²⁴ The monopoly granted to Spaniards (*asiento*), combined with the royal provision of indigenous servile labor, worked well to produce abundant mercury until the end of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, out and increased corruption persuaded the Crown on the need to introduce reforms. The Crown at first took direct control of the mine and, by the end of the century, mining was open to private enterprise. The efforts at reform introduced first by governor Antonio de Ulloa and then by *visitador* José Antonio de Areche ended in the demise of the guild system and a decline in production until the

ultimate collapse of the mine in 1813. Like other efforts to reform a declining empire, the “Bourbon renaissance” had failed to invigorate the Huancavelica mining center.

While the diplomatic intrigues and negotiations that led Spain to relinquish Louisiana to France in 1800 (and it was later sold by Napoleon to the US in 1803) could illuminate the question of Spain’s retreat from North America, the failed efforts to relaunch mercury production at Huancavelica could contribute to explain the roots of the economic decline of the Spanish empire in spite of the Bourbon renaissance. Not surprisingly, the beneficiary of the Spanish retreat in the northern territories was the expansionist United States. Meanwhile in South America, it was clear that British and other European commercial interests—by means of contraband or through the official trade circuits—were ripping off the profits of a declining Spanish empire.

In preparation for his work on the Huancavelica mining complex, Whitaker wrote, with new materials he found at Seville and Simancas, a short biography of Antonio de Ulloa, the Spanish scientist and bureaucrat famous for his revealing reports about corruption, contraband, and cruelty in the viceroyalty of Peru.²⁵ Ulloa’s career served to underscore the cracks and faults of the Spanish colonial system. In 1734 Ulloa joined (together with Jorge Juan) the French scientific expedition led by La Condamine to Quito. Soon after arrival he entered into a dispute with the president of the Audiencia of Quito, which included the accusation that high local bureaucrats were involved in contraband trade. He had to run away to Lima seeking the protection of the viceroy. The findings of his interrupted scientific labors were published in 1748: The first volume containing the description of the viceroyalty of Peru was later translated into four major European languages. The second volume, a confidential report written only for the Council of the Indies, was later found by a British collector in Madrid and published under the title *Noticias secretas de América* in 1826. While the first volume was praised as proof that Spain shared in the glories of the Enlightenment, giving to the world information about the situation of its American colonies, the second became the source of much anti-Spanish propaganda. For it clearly indicated the various faults of the Spanish colonial administration: the venality of colonial officials, the tyranny of *corregidores*, the exploitation of indigenous peoples by Spanish priests, the horrors of the *mita* system, and the emerging conflicts between creoles and *peninsulares*.

Ulloa’s major failures as a colonial officer were twofold: (a) the failure to reorganize the production of mercury on a sound basis, as governor of Huancavelica (1758–1762), and (b) the failure to administer the recently acquired colony of Louisiana, for which he was appointed governor in 1765. In the first episode, Ulloa’s denunciation of fraud against treasury officials and miners, protected by judicial authorities, brought him the opposition of powerful enemies. In 1762 he begged the King to rescue him from this untenable situation. In the second episode, the lack of treasury funds forced him to relinquish authority to the latest French governor of Louisiana. A commercial decree issued by the Crown in 1768 caused a rebellion against the Spanish government, and Ulloa was expelled from New Orleans. Later, in

1779, he had another unfortunate incident. As commander of a fleet patrolling the waters of the Azores, he entered in combat with English seamen. He lost one Spanish ship and let a whole fleet of British merchantmen escape.

To Whitaker, the failures of Ulloa were symptomatic of the limitations of the Bourbon reforms. While opening up to the Western world new knowledge about the Spanish Indies, Ulloa was unable to revamp mercury production in Peru, nor could he administer a Spanish province in North America, already under the pressure of great power diplomacy. His “Peruvian Purgatory” and his expulsion from Louisiana were clear signals of the irrevocable decline of the Spanish empire. The Enlightenment came too late to Spain and its colonies.

Finding the weak spots in the Spanish colonial system—namely administrative corruption, the inability of the metropolis to control colonial authorities, and the rising contraband trade—allowed Whitaker to affirm the inevitability of rising rival empires: the British commercial and naval empire, and the emerging American continental empire. The novelty of Whitaker’s work was to put together these instances of imperial weakness and to underscore the importance of the breakdown of Spanish rule in the northern borders of the empire. The southern colonies of Florida and Louisiana were a site in which a greater history, the worldwide struggle between mercantilism and free trade, the imperial rivalry between the British and the Spanish empires, was to unravel. These were frontier areas that were close to home. After the Andean rebellions that shook the southern part of the empire in the 1780–1781, it was “here” in Louisiana and Florida that Spain lost its main diplomatic and commercial battles. In a way, the Treaty of San Lorenzo anticipated the independence movement in the rest of the empire, for it granted commercial liberty to peoples already rebellious to Spanish authorities.

In his explanation of the crisis of the Spanish empire during the Bourbon reforms, Whitaker took a road that Clarence Haring and others had traversed (hemispheric and parallel histories) in a geopolitical space dominated by the idea of “two hemispheres,” a notion clearly sponsored by the US Pan-Americanist movement. The dramatic fate of the Spanish empire was to be compared with that of other European imperial nations (namely France and Britain) and not with the United States. In this era of hemispheric (American) friendship and European collapse, the Atlantic Ocean was a true dividing line of separate histories. Whitaker wrote,

The trouble was not with the colonial system, which had its good points; nor was it antiquated conservatism, for Louisiana and the Floridas enjoyed a freedom of trade unparalleled in the British colonies of that day; nor altogether a faulty commercial organization, for the flourishing Virginia tobacco trade was a model of inefficiency; nor yet the corruption and incompetence of colonial officials, for the Spanish governors were no worse

than the British in this respect. *It was the very resemblances that were Spain's undoing.* Spain tried to accomplish with its empire what the French and the British were doing with theirs, namely to derive economic benefit from it; but since it lacked the indispensable economic organization its efforts resulted merely in a succession of irritations to the colonists, of disappointments to the Spaniards, and of affronts to foreigners. An immense contraband trade was but one symptom of the disorder; other symptoms were backstairs intrigues in Spain, revolutionary plots in the colonies, and international crises.²⁶

The Bourbon reformers had followed the same path as France and Britain, mercantilist policies, only to fail to their more powerful competitors. Internal forces and external conditions preannounced the economic crisis of the Spanish empire, and this made it impossible to retain its North American colonies. It was already written on the wall, by 1795–1800, that the British empire would follow the same destiny.²⁷ Confronted with a new type of colonization and expansionism, based on the individual initiatives of frontiersmen and of Indian traders, the British would sooner or later leave American territory to the US Americans. That is, the Monroe principle was a corollary of the global confrontations of two systems of economics and governance. The two forces that the Spanish reformers could not control—and that the British empire had to yield to—were economic freedom and republican government, an explosive combination “made-in” the USA.

In Louisiana and Florida, the “pressure of American skippers and frontiersmen” would ultimately cause the retreat of Spanish power.²⁸ “With more justice it might be said that the commercial history of Louisiana from 1768 to 1800, evolving from monopoly through contraband to partial freedom, then greater freedom, and finally to separation from Spain, is a rapid epitome of the decline of the Spanish empire” (203). In this sense, Whitaker regarded the “retrocession” of Louisiana neither a failure of Spanish diplomacy nor an achievement of French power-politics, but rather the inevitable consequence of the advance of the American frontier with its implicit principles of free trade and republican self-government. Louisiana was part of a larger global contention for arable land, activated by the industrial revolution. Since Spain could not profitably exploit its peripheral colonies in North America directly, it was forced to yield them to its “superior” competitors: British traders and American farmers.

Irving Leonard and the Colonial Book Trade

Irving Leonard, a literary historian at the University of California, Berkeley, was widely read among students of Latin American history. His book *Baroque Times in Old Mexico* (1959) was a classic reading often included in undergraduate courses about colonial

Spanish America. During the years of the Good Neighbor policy, Leonard tried to illustrate to US readers the impact of the Spanish literary renaissance (Golden Age) on the American colonies. To do so, he revealed the existence of an important and lucrative book trade between Spain and its colonies during the seventeenth century. By placing secular books onto the map of colonial Hispanic America, he was able to present the Indies as imbued with “modern” desire for knowledge and entertainment. Leonard’s work complemented the labor of other scholars (Whitaker, Lanning, and Hanke) who were trying to present Spanish colonialism in a more conciliatory fashion. If it could be demonstrated that Spanish book censorship was a myth, then, the doors were open for a reconsideration of the question of learning and knowledge (henceforth, “culture”) in the Spanish colonial context.

From the quarters of literary history, Leonard contributed to the study of the great cultural transfer produced by Spanish colonialism. In addition to evangelization, one aspect of the Spanish civilizing mission, the Spaniards had carried books to their colonies, books that contributed to mimicking of Spanish culture in areas of theatre and poetry and to spreading the ideas of Neoplatonism, the new Christianity (Erasmus), and the new interest in the study of nature. By doing so, Leonard helped to paint a different picture of Spanish America, one in which a secular book culture had developed as a consequence of the ineffective enforcement of colonial prohibitions. Hence, the Spanish colonial system could no longer be accused of “obscurantism,” one of the favorite terms of the advocates of the Black Legend.²⁹

Leonard’s research in the archives of Seville, Mexico City, and Lima produced an important discovery that contributed to the discrediting of the Black Legend. Against the view that the Spanish American colonies were sealed to new literary currents and the influence of European ideas, he showed that the works of the Spanish renaissance had reached the intellectual circles of New Spain and Peru. His most salient discovery was the finding that copies of the first edition of Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* were shipped to the Indies immediately after its publication. Tracing the shipment along the galleons’ route, he found copies of the masterpiece in Mexico City, Lima, and Cuzco in 1606.³⁰ Other book orders and shipment manifests led him to confirm the existence of an important book trade with the Indies. He found that colonial residents of New Spain and Peru were fond of Spanish *comedias* (plays) at a time in which novels of chivalry were declining in popularity. The lack of enforcement of the ban on imported books made all sorts of books, ecclesiastical as well as secular, available in the colonies.³¹ Due to huge transport costs, book prices were high, but this did not deter the colonial elites from ordering the newest books published in the Peninsula. Spanish censorship itself, argued Leonard, had been exaggerated: the Inquisition showed a “remarkable tolerance” for books of entertainment addressed to the general public.³²

Leonard’s analysis of the invoices and bills of landing presented to the *Casa de Contratación* and, on occasion, approved by the Holy Office revealed that “theology was not the sole interest or intellectual activity of the more serious readers in the

vicerealty of Peru,” for they purchased books on medicine, veterinary, mineralogy, laws, history, geography, philosophy, and grammar.³³ The same was true about the educated elite of New Spain. The “colonial mind,” he concluded, was more curious and complex than commonly believed (292). The shipment of Golden Age comedies to the Indies and, in particular, the popularity enjoyed by Lope de Vega’s plays in Peru and Mexico persuaded Leonard that colonial readers were an appreciative and enthusiastic audience that was in tune with Spain’s newest literary production. Lope’s plays were regularly shipped to Spanish America during the seventeenth century to cater to a public demand for entertainment. In Mexico City and Lima, people attended the *corrales* (popular theaters) to see fashionable plays enacted.³⁴

His depiction of the book trade and of the secular reading public were laudatory of Spain, revealing to what extent the empire had supplied books to colonial readers and contributed to their sentimental education through the theater (in addition to the Christian doctrine). Like any other market, Spanish merchants had supplied the demand for books in the colonies, and this had created certain simultaneity of reading in Spain and its colonies. Leonard wrote, “In a short time booksellers in scattered parts of Spain were hustling the latest novelties from their presses to Seville in time to catch the annual *flotas* to the Indies, thus virtually eliminating the time lag for colonial readers thousands of miles away. Even a work published in Madrid or Zaragoza might reach Manila on the other side of the world in the same year of its printing, and residents of Mexico City might receive copies of it within a few months, even weeks.”³⁵ Other aspects of the cultural transfer, on the other hand, did not produce such enlightened results. In a series of essays starting in 1929, Leonard tried to show the “curious” ways in which Spanish Americans played with the language of the motherland (*castellano*). Colonials imitated established literary fashions of Spain, such as “Gongorism,” writing a pompous local poetry, admired for its sound and ingenuity of composition rather than for literary qualities. In New Spain the local aristocracy devoted time and effort to poetry competitions (*certámenes poéticos*) in which local authors composed long and elaborate poems, borrowing half-lines from well-known poems.³⁶ In addition, local poets tried a variety of composition games, producing stanzas that ended with an echo, or poems that could be read horizontally as well as vertically, or poems that could be parted in half, right and left, or poems that could be read backwards.³⁷ Industry and ingenuity in word games came to replace artistic expression. Thus, the debasement of the creative impulse was the revenge of the repressed, taking the language of the conqueror apart in a multiplicity of ingenious poems devoid of sense.³⁸

In short, Leonard discovered that the colonial condition was celebrated in the form of conscious imitation of Spanish poetry—Gongorism at its worse³⁹—assembling fragments of original poems into compositions that lacked both meaning and coherence. Local poets treated the Spanish language as an assemble-piece game and enjoyed chopping up famous stanzas to produce new composites devoid of any meaning. In his later work Leonard elevated these “curiosities” to a crucial aspect of

a Baroque colonial culture, a time in which aristocratic prestige, leisure-class dilettantism, and the drive for social ascent generated a “mass production of metrical compositions” (145).

The reading public of Spanish America was complex and demanded all types of books. It tried to keep up with Spanish literary fashions and also to incorporate European novelties in the study of geography, medicine, botany, grammar, and related sciences. On the other hand, Leonard found limits to the extension of this “cultural transfer.” In his view the Spanish American colonies afforded a much larger market for books and entertainment than colonial officials and Spanish authors ever imagined. True, Lope de Vega’s plays delighted the masses in the colonies as well as in Madrid. But “Lope, like the Spain he understood so well, was provincial and both failed to perceive the true opportunities latent in the boundless reaches of the western hemisphere which were for three centuries the property of Castile.”⁴⁰

Here Leonard was transferring a business fiction created by the builders of the Pan-American movement in the twentieth century (Spanish America as a “land of opportunity”) to the seventeenth-century colonial book market. He imagined the Spanish American colonies as a large “hemispheric market,” made up by readers who demanded entertainment and knowledge, a society that celebrated its festivities with “mass-produced” poetry. Naturally, with this anachronistic exercise—imposing the values of the “American century” on a clearly less developed set of colonial economies—he found the Spanish empire wanting.

The United States, an informal empire in the making, had something to learn from the Spanish cultural transfer. Flooding the colonies with metropolitan books and ideas was a way of preventing colonial subalterns from developing their own perspectives and spreading their opinions. As Leonard later explained, Mexico and Peru were so overwhelmed by the big names of the Spanish Golden Age (Cervantes, Quevedo, Alarcón, Tirso de Molina, Lope de Vega) that they could not dare to carve a critical enunciatory space, either in the colonies or in Spain. Ascending Creoles had to contend themselves with “abject imitation” and “artistic inanition.”⁴¹ Leonard found two exceptions to this general rule: Sor Juana’s poetry and the works of Sigüenza y Góngora.

In 1927 he published his first essay on Sigüenza y Góngora, the multifaceted creole intellectual of New Spain, whom he considered “one of the greatest scholars of the seventeenth century in the Western Hemisphere.”⁴² A mathematician, astronomer, linguist, and historian, Sigüenza y Góngora was presented as a pioneer scientist who introduced the “scientific Enlightenment” in an environment dominated by superstition and scholasticism. He advised the viceroy how to prevent the flooding of canals, engaged in a controversy about the true nature of comets, rescued municipal documents and indigenous codices from destruction by fire, edited the first periodical of New Spain, wrote about buccaneers in the Caribbean, and attempted to complete a history of the Chichimecas. Similarly, Leonard presented the works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz as a forerunner of the

Enlightenment. A rationalist with a passion for knowledge, Sor Juana wrote about the subconscious emerging from the process of sleep (*Primero sueño*), about unrequited love, about male hypocrisy, and more importantly, about a woman's right to think and write. With the encouragement and tutorship of Sigüenza y Góngora, Sor Juana learned mathematics, read Descartes, and practiced some basic experiments in physics. She combated scholastic methods of learning as well as the authority of the Church in delimiting the quest for knowledge.⁴³

Rooting the Enlightenment in Latin America: John Tate Lanning

One of the constitutive elements of the Black Legend was the assertion that there was no critical thought in the Spanish colonies, as a result of book censorship, Catholic religious dogma, and the Crown's lack of interest in the education of colonial subjects. This view extended to the period of the Enlightenment, during which northern Europe engaged more fully in the observation of nature, in experimenting with laws of physics and astronomy, and this led to a search for useful knowledge in various fields of inquiry. Spain was said to have resisted sternly to the disruptive effect of Enlightenment ideas. In 1747 Voltaire wrote that Spain was a country with hardly any heroes and no single philosopher. Many contemporaries extended this negative assessment to the Indies. John Tate Lanning, a historian at Duke University, thought otherwise and strove to demonstrate it.⁴⁴

Contrary to conventional wisdom, he argued, the Enlightenment had penetrated the Spanish American colonies and had made quite a significant impact in its intellectual life. The core of his work centered on colonial universities. In his perambulations to Spanish and Central American archives, Lanning had discovered at least two thousand manuscript volumes with "oppositions," debates, examinations, and other documents produced by colonial universities. This evidence could serve to test the validity of the conventional wisdom that asserted that, trapped by scholasticism and religious fanaticism, intellectual life in colonial Hispanic America had been stagnant since the late sixteenth century.⁴⁵

The series of stereotypes that Irving, Ticknor, and Prescott had reinvented in the nineteenth century, and that Spaniards of the "Generation of '98" willingly replicated—that colonials learned by "rote memory," that repetition and servility were praised over critical thinking, and that religious dogma prevented the absorption of scientific ideas—could now finally be challenged and the question put to rest.⁴⁶ Already in a 1936 essay, Lanning found that certain writings coming from colonial Hispanic America did not validate the inherited view about the rejection of Enlightenment ideas in the region. Descartes, Newton, and Locke had found their way into unpublished theses of colonial universities. Early in the eighteenth century, some colonial scholars had started to experiment with problems of physics, medicine, and astronomy. Observation and experimentation became their mode of inquiry. Growing criticism of Aristotle revealed a new concern for natural laws and

that a penchant for intellectual discovery was rapidly transforming the colonial mind. This intellectual renovation or *renaissance* extended over most of the territory of the Spanish empire, from Mexico City to Guatemala, from Caracas to Lima.⁴⁷

In *Academic Culture in the Spanish Colonies* (1940), Lanning preannounced a vast program of research destined to overhaul the prevailing myth that Spanish colonialism had meant three hundred years of “theocracy, obscurantism, and barbarism.”⁴⁸ Though still unfinished—the outbreak of war in Europe had prevented him from checking back with his sources in Spain—his research constituted a break with the past in regard to the question of colonial learning and knowledge. He found that prior to independence there were twenty-five universities (ten major regal or pontifical universities and fifteen minor colleges run by the orders) that granted 150,000 degrees to students during the colonial period.⁴⁹ Rather than a small minority, Spanish colonial intellectuals were a “legion.” Contrary to conventional wisdom, degrees in theology and canon law were the minority, precisely because they required a prior degree in *estudia generalia* (general studies). As Lanning argued, religious instruction was not the equivalent of censorship of ideas nor did it imply a negation of recent currents of European thought.

In the classrooms of these colonial universities, churchmen promoted the learning of modern European ideas, which ran counter to scholasticism. But even outside of the universities, particularly in the latter half of the eighteenth century, civic associations such as *sociedades de amigos* and learning societies had begun to translate, publish, and disseminate the work of Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Condillac, and Newton.⁵⁰ And this was perhaps the real novelty of his discovery: to show that, by the mid-eighteenth century, university professors in New Spain, Peru, Guatemala, New Granada, Chile, and Río de la Plata were already teaching the physics of Newton, Locke’s theory of sensorial perception, and Cartesian ideas of mechanism and methodical doubt.⁵¹ Their students were clearly not trapped in the world of scholastic thought, nor were they prevented by Catholic dogma from studying the laws of nature. In short, Lanning suggested that scientific curiosity and practical rationality had already penetrated the walls of learning in colonial Spanish America.

Before the would-be patriots read the works of the *philosophes*, the churchmen were teaching the ideas of leading men of the “scientific Enlightenment.” More importantly, certain scholars in Hispanic America had already embraced the scientific method, as was known at the time: observation, experimentation, and methodical doubt. Already in 1680 Mexican scholar Sigüenza y Góngora had explained the nature of comets. In the early 1700s Father Feijóo was teaching students in Quito about Descartes and Newton. José Mutis, a Colombian Jesuit scholar, erected the first observatory in America in Bogotá in 1803. In New Spain, New Granada, and Peru, local naturalists were building botanical collections under the auspices of the royal *Protomedicato*. And Father Celis had published a compendium of Newton’s mathematics and physics (1787) that was available even at provincial universities in Peru. A true intellectual renaissance had been in the making

decades before the University of Chuquisaca presented the new works in political economy and political philosophy to the would-be patriots.⁵²

The more important defection from scholasticism was the massive rejection of Peripateticism for the sake of understanding the laws of nature. To Lanning, attacks on Aristotle were a sign of the end of a protracted struggle between scholastics and experimentalists, the latter winning across the fields.⁵³ Lanning found that Newton's ideas were widely disseminated in the world of colonial universities: "But it was in their eagerness to subscribe to the mathematically demonstrable laws of nature and in their desire to promote useful knowledge that the colonials were most typically *children of their century*. Newton, who symbolized the reduction of the laws of nature to a mathematical formula, became what was perhaps the greatest new intellectual influence in the history of the Spanish colonies."⁵⁴ Besides a few conservative reactions, the introduction of the "scientific Enlightenment" in colonial Spanish America did not generate much resistance from the Church. Indeed many of those who tinkered with the new ideas were themselves clergymen. The Crown, in turn, actively promoted the new ideals, sending scientific expeditions, establishing mining schools, ordering sanitation campaigns, and seeking the advice of local scholars in a variety of practical fields (such as flood control, vaccination, fiscal matters, and navigation of internal waters). Out of these concerted efforts a new type of scholar emerged in Hispanic America: a scholar given to observation and experimentation, one that sought useful knowledge and was not afraid of challenging the authority of religious dogma.

Layer by layer, Lanning peeled off the falsifications and prejudice built by the old school, revealing new truths about colonial learning and knowledge that reinforced Hanke's attack on the Black Legend.⁵⁵ For the Spaniards had not only struggled to provide some justice to Native Americans but also had given their colonies institutions of learning comparable to those of contemporary Europe. Thus, the backwardness of the Hispanic American intellectual could no longer be sustained. To the extent that the scholars of colonial universities were themselves "children of their century," they participated in the global construction of the Enlightenment. Though belatedly, Spanish American scholars had awakened to the world of modern European ideas, seeking mathematically demonstrable laws of nature.

The direct implication of this reassessment was a dramatic reduction of the intellectual lag separating Europe from Spanish America: "The truth is that instead of having a cultural lag of three hundred years behind Europe there was a hiatus in the Spanish colonies of approximately one generation from European innovator to American academician."⁵⁶ In fact, Lanning suggested that the lag had closed by 1800. Also important was the leveling of the two Americas, for José Mutis and Father Feijóo were contemporaneous with Benjamin Franklin, the complete American innovator and *philosophe*, or his successor Benjamin Rush.⁵⁷ More importantly, Lanning argued that US and Spanish American universities were on the same footing at the end of the colonial period: "What did they know of (our) universities, you say?"

One of them, brought up in South America, knew enough to appraise Yale as 'inferior, trifling, and contemptible.'"⁵⁸ As I shall argue later, this leveling made possible the politics of inter-American intellectual cooperation, placing the beginning of nation-formation in the two Americas at a similar level of intellectual development.

In 1944, after the United States nation had entered into WWII and found that few of its hemispheric friends were ready to declare war to Germany, and the outcome of the Civil War had buried all expectations of a democratic Spain, the sympathy of US historians towards Spain grew thinner. That year, Lanning wrote a new evaluation of Spanish colonial culture in which, although maintaining his general view about the Enlightenment in Spanish America, he conceded that the swing had gone too far to the opposite extreme: the White Legend.⁵⁹ He advised colleague historians not to exaggerate their Hispanic sympathies to the point of disregarding the existence of learning by memory, unpractical "savants" who monopolized university chairs, and the long-term "sterility" of certain branches of knowledge. In part, Lanning's middle-ground position reflected his realization that much of the historical knowledge produced to disarm the Black Legend had been used as means of political propaganda, both by the United States and by Spain. US Latin American historians, he suggested, had become trapped in the machinery of inter-American foreign policy.⁶⁰

Two aspects of Lanning's revision of colonial history need to be underscored. One was his sympathy for the work of Franciscans. In his earlier work on the missions of Georgia, Lanning had presented the Franciscans as the true builders of an evangelical empire, maintaining for two centuries missions in a hostile territory, where the Jesuits had failed before.⁶¹ In his newer work on academic culture in the colonies, he painted the colleges managed by the Dominicans in Peru as true sites of obscurantism and disorder. Only when the Franciscans took over, education improved. Similarly, in the late eighteenth century, the Franciscans presided over the transformation of colleges and universities throughout Spanish America, after the Jesuits had failed to modernize their ideas and institutions.⁶² The other aspect of his revision was the importance he attributed to the question of language. Since the beginning, most of the orders felt the need to study the native languages and publish grammars, catechisms, sermons, and other religious materials for evangelization. And it is well known that some colleges in Mexico and Peru tried to teach the children of the native elite in Latin.⁶³ By the mid-eighteenth century, that approach was considered a failure and all colonial universities and colleges shifted back to Spanish as the only language of instruction. If transmitting the idea of God, the Holy Trinity, or the Virgin Mary required communication through native languages, teaching the laws of nature and the principles of scientific inquiry necessitated the mediation of a unique, well-structured language. In the sixteenth century that language was Latin; by the eighteenth century it was considered that vernacular languages such as Spanish were structured enough to fulfill this task.⁶⁴

Hanke and the Black Legend

Lewis Hanke is best identified as the US historian who did the most to revise the Black Legend about Spanish cruelty against Indians.⁶⁵ His position was clearly stated in his 1949 book *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America*.⁶⁶ Unlike other imperial powers, Hanke argued, the Spaniards had domestically debated the legitimacy of conquest, the right of the Spanish Crown to subjugate Amerindians, and the best way to carry out the project of evangelization. While not a majority view among imperial policy-makers, Dominican and Franciscan friars had carried out a prolonged and difficult “struggle for justice” on behalf of the American Indians. The Crown and the Pope had heard the plight of Spanish friars and had attempted to stop the exploitation, ill treatment, and demographic collapse of the native population.⁶⁷

Hanke is recognized as the foremost specialist on the work of Bartolomé de Las Casas, the defender of the Amerindians. He contributed to unearthing, translating, and publishing the works of the great Dominican friar, promoting among students and colleagues the study of Las Casas’s works. In addition, Hanke’s work as editor and publisher of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* (from 1936) gave him the recognition of his colleagues for having expanded significantly the field and sparked the interest of young scholars in the study of Latin American history. In this section, I place Hanke’s contributions to the colonial history of Hispanic America within the context of Americanization: the process of familiarizing Latin American neighbors with US material culture, values, institutions, and ideas. In addition, a network of scholars in Spain, Latin America, and the US connected by their interest in the colonial past energized this revision of the Black Legend.

In 1931–1932, Hanke spent time in Madrid, Seville, and Simancas collecting materials for his dissertation at Harvard. There he found that Spanish historians (Rafael Altamira and Fernando de los Ríos, to name only the most salient) were busily publishing sixteenth-century documents of great potential value to researchers on both sides of the Atlantic. At the time the Spanish colonial period attracted scholars from Britain, Germany, France, and the United States to Spanish archives. In addition, the libraries and academies at Madrid helped Hanke discover the great attention that Latin American historians paid to the Spanish conquest. Recent work by Argentine historians (Rómulo Carbia, José Torre Revello, and Roberto Levillier) revealed that the Black Legend was still a question that stirred up debate between the contrasting nationalisms of Spain and Latin America.⁶⁸

In his search for other participants in the “struggle for justice,” Hanke came upon Whitaker’s article on Ulloa’s expedition to the equator and his damning comments on the colonial administration published as *Noticias secretas*. He found here a political text that had been used by Spain’s enemies—British commercial interests and Hispanic American independence leaders—to discredit the colonial past. In many respects, this text seemed comparable to Las Casas’s *Brevísima relación* (a founding text for the Black Legend) and, as such, Hanke decided to intervene in

the debate in order to throw doubt on the content of Ulloa's damning report. He did so by placing Ulloa's *Noticias secretas* (London, 1826) in its proper historical context: the wave of anti-Hispanic feelings that surfaced during the post-independence period. Ulloa's report, a document buried in the Spanish archives for a century, was unearthed and published only when it was necessary to present Spanish colonialism as a historical monstrosity. Something similar had happened with Las Casas's *Brevísima relación*, argued Hanke.⁶⁹

For centuries after its first publication, Las Casas's damning report of Spanish cruelties had been confiscated or taken out of circulation for its damaging effect on the Spanish nation. It was the French rationalists of the eighteenth century who unearthed this pamphlet and disseminated it, in order to present Spanish cruelty—side by side with Persian despotism—as the perfect opposite of the project of the Enlightenment. From France the Black Legend soon moved to England and from there to the British possessions in North America. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the *Brevísima relación* was interpreted as a true insight into the vengeful nature of Catholics. That is why—Hanke explained—the Puritans were accustomed to think of Spaniards as “murderous fanatics” (499). Here, in this process of willful falsification at the service of religious conflict and imperial rivalry, Hanke found a powerful argument for reinterpreting the Black Legend as an invention. This new interpretation demanded reading Spanish colonialism in a more favorable light, a revision that Hanke himself had begun to do, showing the struggle that friars had fought in the Americas on behalf of American Indians.

The story of Father Minaya, a rather small incident in the effort to bring justice to Amerindians, reveals the true extent of Hanke's commitment to the project of debunking the Black Legend. In 1537 Pope Paul III issued the bull “*Sublimus Deus*.” This document asserted that there were no nations on earth that lacked the intelligence needed to understand and receive the Catholic faith. This bull explicitly stated that Amerindians were “truly men,” rational beings who could not be deprived of their property or liberty for the sole purpose of evangelization. A year later, Charles V forced the Pope to reverse this bull, issuing a brief in which the Vatican recognized the Spanish monarch's supreme authority on decisions regarding the evangelization and the security of the American Indians. Hanke, puzzled by this reversal in papal policy, wanted to learn more. A document “accidentally found” in the Simancas archive presented him with the story of Father Minaya, a document that illuminated some unknown facts about this reversal of policy.⁷⁰

An obscure friar destined for Oaxaca, Father Minaya had traveled (evangelizing) as far as Nicaragua in order to prove his point: that the natives would voluntarily and peacefully convert to Christianity if kindly treated. Obsessed with persuading others of this finding, he joined Pizarro's expedition to Peru, only to clash with the conquistador over the latter's refusal to negotiate peacefully with Atahualpa.⁷¹ Back to Panama, Minaya denounced the expeditions (promoted or facilitated by Pedrarias) that daily went out in search of Indian slaves. Soon, facing

opposition from the Church, he sailed to Spain to present his case about the rationality of the American Indian (and against Betanzos's injunctions to the contrary) before Cardinal Cisneros. As the latter refused to accept his argument, Father Minaya went to Rome where he spoke to the Pope and obtained a letter addressed to Cardinal Tavera in support of his cause.⁷² In Rome, before he could celebrate his achievement, Minaya was arrested and sent back to Spain where he remained in confinement in a Dominican convent for two years.

According to Hanke, Father Minaya's "bad luck" had to do with the intense contention between the Vatican and the Spanish monarch over the terms of the Patronato. In Charles V's view, the Pope had overstepped his authority by addressing letters and briefs to friars in the American colonies without his consent or censorship. Father Minaya, in particular, had unduly bypassed royal authority by appealing directly to the Pope on a matter of exclusive prerogative of the Royal Crown. Because of the need of Charles V's military support in Europe, the Pope was forced to retract his earlier pronouncements about the protection of American Indians. To Hanke, the story of Father Minaya (and the colonial document found at Simancas) opened up a whole new dimension of Spanish colonialism: the struggle of ordinary friars on behalf of the Amerindians. These friars were ready to go to extremes in order to gain the recognition from the Crown and from the Pope that the Indians were rational men and that evangelization had to be conducted without repressive means. To Hanke, this was an important discovery: here was another "Las Casas" in a true struggle for justice; an obscure friar was able to change the position of the Pope and generate a confrontation with the king over the Patronato. Against all odds, these friars would carry their defense of the American Indians to the highest authorities in the world.

To us, this article presents also the possibility of a new reading of the twentieth-century search for the Spanish colonial past. A bibliophile with enough travel funds could dig up new archival evidence that could bring new light to the question of the Black Legend. The "discovery" that the capacity of the American Indian, as well as his rights to property and liberty, were matters of intense debate in the sixteenth century would lead Hanke and other US historians to revisit the question of Spanish colonialism.⁷³ Hanke's command of various European languages and his access to first editions of sixteenth-century manuscripts and books (in Spain, in New York, or in the Library of Congress at Washington) gave him the possibility of rapidly becoming an authority in this field.⁷⁴ From his chair as director of the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress, Hanke had access to the new bibliographic information coming from Spain, other European nations, and Hispanic America and was thus always updated about the latest publications and manuscript collections.⁷⁵

Understanding the Spanish Empire

The contributions of Haring, Whitaker, Leonard, Lanning, and Hanke could be read as multiple avenues for understanding the Spanish empire, its vast and long-lasting rule, as well as its failings. Studying the history of the Spanish colonial regime provided a list of mistakes, faults, and misconceptions that explained its long decline. Clarence Haring's *Trade and Navigation* (1918) was a treatise on the mistakes of the Spanish colonial empire. Haring pointed to the folly of commercial monopoly (an overregulated commerce and navigation and a wrong-headed mercantilism) as one of the causes of Spain's economic and institutional decline. Yet this was only the first of the problems facing the Spanish Crown. Administrative corruption, the exploitation of servile labor, and the artificial implantation of European aristocracy contributed also to undermine the foundations of the most powerful imperial power of the sixteenth century.

Haring's work confirmed the suspicion that the decline of the Spanish empire had been a protracted process, dating back to the seventeenth century.⁷⁶ Its roots were economic as well as institutional. A too-strict commercial monopoly had stifled the forces of economic growth and promoted a rent-seeking behavior on the part of the monarchy. An ineffective commercial monopoly, combined with the sale of public office, created a regime of generalized corruption, which, in turn, permitted the unrestrained growth of contraband. The Crown relied on silver mining to generate a wealth increasingly diverted to other European nations. The House of Trade, at first an exemplary bureaucracy, turned over time into an anachronistic machinery that stifled economic growth both in Spain and in her colonies. The Spanish empire, argued Haring, failed ultimately because it did not provide economic benefits to its Creole and Amerindian subjects.

Hanke, Leonard, and Lanning saw in the Spanish empire some redeeming values that needed to be rescued. The passion with which the mendicant friars defended the indigenous populations served to counter the dominant view about Spanish cruelty that was at the core of the Black Legend. Hanke's story about Father Minaya underscored the intensity and tenacity with which the men of the cloth carried on their "struggle for justice" in the Indies. The ineffectiveness of Spanish censorship resulted in the diffusion of entertaining literature throughout the colonies, challenging the hitherto prevailing view of Spanish obscurantism and intellectual isolation. Creole intellectuals, such as Sigüenza y Góngora, attested to the existence of critical thought in New Spain during the seventeenth century. In the following century, the revisionists argued, the colonies were able to absorb the ideas and teachings of the Enlightenment. Colonial universities were not places dominated by scholastic thought and outmoded methods of learning.

The works of US historians demonstrated the porosity and penetrability of the Spanish empire. Early work by Haring on buccaneers had revealed the weakness of Spanish fortifications in the Caribbean.⁷⁷ If Spain was unable to stop the growing

contraband trade, it was unlikely that it could keep European books and ideas from reaching colonial readers. Leonard did much to demonstrate that an active book trade existed between Spain and its colonies. Colonials in Mexico and Peru were aware of the latest plays published in Spain and enjoyed watching them performed at the theater. Lanning completed the picture, presenting Spanish colonial universities as receptive to new European ideas of science and philosophy. Spanish American scholars were actually “children of their century” engaged in the observation of nature and in practical experimentation. In short, US historians strove to disprove the inherited view of colonial Hispanic America as a land intellectually stagnant and empty of books. In their view, Spanish America could no longer be considered a territory that, due to Spanish censorship, was three centuries behind Europe’s intellectual development.

Of these historians, it was Arthur Whitaker who underscored the centrality of inter-European rivalries in the making of Spain’s defensive and political vulnerability. To him the Spanish empire during the eighteenth century presented various “weak spots” through which rival powers (Great Britain, France, and the United States) could penetrate with their merchants, settlers, and political ideas. Particularly after the Treaty of San Lorenzo (1795), Spain started to withdraw from her possessions in North America. This created an opportunity for the United States—an emerging and expansive nation—to acquire territory and navigation rights at the expense of Spain. The undoing of the Spanish empire, argued Whitaker, had started in its northern frontier, rather than in Mexico, Peru, or the River Plate. Entangled with diplomatic and naval pressures, Spain was forced to relinquish its positions in the Gulf Coast, Florida and Louisiana. The “Spanish retreat” contributed to accelerating US westward movement. Without US control of Florida and Louisiana, the expansion of the cotton South would have been unthinkable.

Even in the midst of the “Bourbon renaissance,” Spain had lost much of its defense capabilities, and its finances were in a state of total disarray, as a result of the decline in mining output in the colonies and the outbreak of wars. The lack of fiscal resources made the administration of fringe colonies, such as Florida, Louisiana, New Granada, and the River Plate, too expensive to sustain. More importantly, the ferment of free trade, assisted by the pressure of foreign traders and smugglers, seemed to anticipate the demise of the centuries-old commercial monopoly. The writings of Ulloa came to confirm what was already common knowledge. Due to creole dissent, official corruption, economic exploitation, and administrative mismanagement, already in the eighteenth century the Spanish empire was experiencing stagnation and decline. A small group of practical scientists and state reformers could do little to stem the tide of impending decline.

The revision of the Black Legend in matters of Indian policy, academic culture, and book circulation was not inconsistent with the discovery that the Spanish empire, under its Habsburg incarnation, was an outdated, outgrown, and inefficient machinery unable to control its vast territory or patrol its waters. Positive and

negative historiographical revisions—the softening of the Black Legend as well as the institutional and economic failings of the Spanish colonial system—could help historians understand the politics of the present. As I discuss in the next section, this historiography conversed with the politics of hemispheric integration, US leadership in the Americas, and the post-Dumbarton Oaks debate between regional or international organizations. A number of lessons could be drawn from this old empire to modern transnational forms of hegemony. The brutality of the Spanish conquest and the legacies of colonialism in terms of fragmented territories, economic backwardness, and persistent social and racial inequalities were to be avoided. If anything the United States had to be a provider of public goods, supplying technical and financial assistance to facilitate the region’s economic and social development, as well as the fountain of knowledge where its professionals and academics could be trained.

All these revisions projected the view of the Spanish colonial empire as a penetrable space, in terms of commerce, culture, and territory. To this extent, this revisionism could be dubbed “imperial,” for it served as grounding or rationale for better-thought and administered forms of empire. The comparisons raised by these authors were with the contemporary British Commonwealth and the US-sponsored defensive and cooperative organization for inter-American affairs. Both were examples of “modern empires” committed to the provision of public goods, legal and institutional transfer, and technical assistance in economic and social development. Underneath US historians’ criticism of the Spanish empire was the need to establish the superiority and convenience of other ways of engaging hinterlands nations: those that relied on persuasion, cooperation, selective adaptation, and a commonality of interests and ideals.

Why was there such an interest in revisiting previous interpretations about the Spanish empire? Clearly, professional academic interests motivated these inquiries. Available funding from foundations and the opening of Spanish archives provided the resources for these ambitious undertakings. Yet the geopolitical context that led the United States towards a rapprochement with its Latin American neighbors during the interwar period gave significance and actuality to these excavations into the colonial past. These scholars were particularly concerned with the contemporary place of the United States in the hemisphere and in the world. US historians participated in the making of a different form of imperial engagement: an empire based on moral suasion, technological superiority, and the extension of development and welfare to Latin Americans; a transnational form of governance by influence that could avoid the pitfalls of the Spanish empire. In this context, it was crucial to understand the decline of the Spanish empire and to have a more comprehensive view of its legacy to Spanish America (in terms of religion, education, and culture). If US scholars could dominate and summarize the totality they referred to as “Spanish American civilization,” this would be their greatest contribution to the construction of hemispheric peace and economic integration.

Pan-Americanism and US-Centric History

In this section we return to the foreign-policy context to characterize a project of history—colonial Spanish American history written from the United States—as a presentist and US-centric history. The historiography under examination had as a reference point the US model of historical development, including, of course, the British colonial experience in North America. Next, I move to present some instances of US historians' collaboration, support, and complicity with US Latin American policies. Historians of this period were particularly supportive of the Pan-Americanist movement, of which the Good Neighbor policy was a later modality.

Roosevelt's "protective imperialism" and Taft's "Dollar Diplomacy" were two passing modalities of exerting US influence on the region.⁷⁸ They were superseded in time by "Pan-Americanism," a doctrine that promoted a systematic and persistent effort in economic, intellectual, and cultural integration within the Western Hemisphere. After various failed efforts to integrate the Spanish American republics into a common front,⁷⁹ the United States launched the modern Pan-American movement in the 1880s, under the leadership of Secretary of State James G. Blaine. In an attempt to displace European economic influence in Latin America and, at the same time, to carve up a space of peace and prosperity in the hemisphere, the United States attempted to form a loose organization of American republics.⁸⁰

The movement grew out of an initial conference in Washington in 1889–1890, which assembled representatives from most of the countries in the hemisphere to discuss issues of common defense and commercial cooperation.⁸¹ Subsequent conferences, held in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Chile, and Havana, promoted schemes of regional cooperation in diverse fields.⁸² While the original project of a hemispheric custom union never materialized, cooperation on issues of social policies, science, finance, and trade regulations made substantial progress. Pan-American conferences also made some advance in matters of hemispheric defense and the arbitration of inter-American disputes.⁸³ Criticism aired against US imperialist ambitions in the 1929 Havana conference pressed the United States to change its position on the question of national sovereignty. In 1933, at the Montevideo conference, the United States agreed to sign the non-intervention clause demanded by the other American republics. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1933 declaration that the United States would treat the other American republics as one treats a neighbor consolidated a path, initiated in the 1920s, to promote inter-American cultural exchange and intellectual cooperation. Under the Good Neighbor policy, Washington promoted the idea of building a "community of neighbors" united by common interests and ideals. In foreign-policy terms, this meant a shift from the unilateral Pan-Americanism of the 1910s to the more multilateral and effective cooperative efforts of the 1930s and 1940s.

Embedded into the ideal of Pan-Americanism was the assumption of US leadership or supremacy over the "sister republics" of the hemisphere. Believers in

Pan-Americanism took the expansion of US trade, investment, and technology to Latin America as a “natural” development—an inevitable consequence of the superior productive capacity of the United States—and, to this extent, presented Latin America’s economic dependence as a given. Though several of the US historians examined here were critical of US imperialism in the Caribbean and warned Washington to take seriously South Americans’ fears of US economic supremacy, they thought that a “culturally sensitive” US foreign policy would go a long way towards disarming Latin Americans’ suspicions and distrust. To most of them, a culturally engaged Pan-Americanism could strengthen existing economic and financial ties between Latin America and the United States with new bonds of culture. They expected that enhanced “mutual understanding” could generate among Latin American elites the consensus necessary to produce tangible benefits in areas of economic cooperation and mutual defense. Mutual understanding required greater efforts in matters such as the translation of literary and historical texts, professor and student exchanges, technical assistance, art exhibits, and so forth. In other words, the rhetoric of Pan-Americanism (now potentiated by the GNP vocabulary) called for the United States’ continued dominance in the hemisphere, but this time armed with the additional instruments of cultural and intellectual influence.

The historians examined here, by and large, agreed with the doctrine of Pan-Americanism. The definitions they gave of the term varied. To Haring, it meant “a desire for cooperation in the promotion of commerce, education, public health, and other mutual interests, and in facilitating the peaceful settlement of disputes that arise between the American republics.”⁸⁴ Pan-Americanism was a shared faith in the common destiny of the American republics, one that seemed fully supported by the parallel historical trajectories of Anglo- and Spanish America. Haring was one of the first to recognize that the ABC powers (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay) had in some ways converged with the United States in economic progress and political stability.⁸⁵ The other nations (the west coast or Andean nations) lagged behind, but in time, with the help of the United States, they could also join the path of growth and democracy.

To Whitaker, Pan-Americanism was part of a wider concept, the “Western Hemisphere idea,” which proclaimed that the peoples of this hemisphere stood in a special relation to each other that separated them from the rest of the world.⁸⁶ This idea pertained more to the fields of politics and diplomacy than to the sphere of culture. The great intellectual currents that affected the Americas (the Enlightenment and positivism) had come from Europe. For these reasons, the Western Hemisphere idea had failed to generate a common history of the Americas.⁸⁷ To Whitaker, the years 1933–1940 were the heyday of Pan-Americanism, due to FDR’s commitment to the policy of non-intervention in Latin American affairs, and the promotion of cultural cooperation by his assistants, Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles. The policy of the Good Neighbor enjoyed wide appeal among intellectuals in

the United States, including historians Charles Beard and Herbert Bolton (142–43). After World War II, this hemispheric conception began to decline due to the emergence of competing bipolar divisions of the world (North–South; East–West).⁸⁸ US and Latin American enthusiasts continued to build the machinery of the inter-American system at a time in which international politics started to be dominated by the dynamics of the Cold War.

United States historians looked at the Spanish empire from a presentist (twentieth-century), US-centric perspective. The “American path” to republican government and economic development was taken as the standard against which the experience of the Hispanic colonies were to be measured. Clarence Haring’s work on the decline of the Spanish empire since the seventeenth century was couched in terms that alluded explicitly to the US historical experience. Private enterprise, small-scale farming, free trade, and greater social equality—the key failings of the Spanish colonies—were also the defining features of the “American model” of economic, social, and political development. To Haring, American exceptionalism informed the study of Spanish colonial history. The Spanish colonial regime was based on excessive economic regulations, had pursued an erroneous land policy that created great landed estates and, hence, a newly created aristocratic class, and possessed a vast empire impossible to control, where corruption and contraband reigned supreme. These features were exactly the opposite of the experience of the Thirteen Colonies under British control and, because of this original difference, the Spanish American colonies were doomed to economic and political backwardness. Haring judged the Spanish commercial bureaucracy in terms of “organization versus efficiency,” terms that invoked contemporary discussions in corporate, Taylorist “America.”⁸⁹

Haring faulted the Spanish empire for not improving the “welfare” of its indigenous inhabitants, projecting back onto the past a contemporary notion (the minimum standard of living). The same resort to American exceptionalism was present in Whitaker’s diplomatic analysis of the “Spanish retreat” from Florida and the Gulf. It was the indomitable American frontiersmen who had forced on the great powers the free navigation on the Mississippi River and the territorial concessions that led to the Louisiana Purchase. His thesis projected Manifest Destiny (1845) fifty years into the past. A similar reliance on contemporary “American ideals” can be found in Leonard’s works. Leonard imagined that the Spaniards could have taken advantage of their colonial possessions to develop a hemispheric market for books. In the seventeenth century! His anachronistic exercise revealed to what extent present reality invaded the narrative and interpretation of the colonial past. He spoke of mass-produced poetry, a figure of speech clearly, but one that betrayed the concerns of a historian working in an advanced industrial society.⁹⁰ He spoke of “boundless opportunities” for the sale of books in colonial markets—if only Spaniard authors could have written about colonial topics and with a sensibility appropriate to colonial readers! He judged the colonial book trade with the standards of modern publishing houses in the United States and Europe.

Similarly, Lanning made an explicit comparison between US Enlightenment thinkers (Rush and Franklin) and Hispanic American intellectuals. This leveling allowed him to argue that students of Spanish colonial universities were only a generation behind the great philosophers and inventors of the American Revolution. But perhaps it was Hanke's view that Bartolomé de Las Casas was the first "human rights fighter" of the Americas that contained the greatest doses of presentism.⁹¹ He proposed that in the sixteenth century Spanish theologians and philosophers had built the notion of a common humanity naturally entitled with rights, centuries before the French Revolution (or, for that matter, centuries before the UN declaration of 1947).⁹² Thousands of letters addressed by colonials to the Crown criticizing colonial policies were to him evidence of the existence of "free speech" in sixteenth-century Hispanic America. To Hanke, the Spanish empire, in spite of all its destruction and violence, gave voice to a core of religious intellectuals who resisted imperial reasons. Francisco de Vitoria, Montesinos, and Las Casas had built a devastating critique of Spanish cruelty and violence in both conquest and evangelization and, because of their criticism, the Crown ended up protecting the "naturales." Other empires (the British and the French) had failed to do so. Thus, modern empires ought to learn from Spain a valuable lesson. The preservations of native cultures should be a moral imperative of modern empires.

Engagement with US Foreign Policy

In different ways, all five historians participated in discussions about US foreign policy in Latin America, whether directly involved with US government agencies or not. During World War II, Lewis Hanke wrote various articles on international relations. One of them aimed at persuading American readers that the Nazi threat in Latin America was less pressing than purported. Another essay dealt with the question of the need for effective cultural exchange between the United States and Latin America. Another suggested that Latin America was no longer a "cultural colony" of Europe and was, instead, struggling to create its own American culture. And still another emphasized the importance of Latin American "cultural fusionist" intellectuals who advocated for a multiracial concept of nationhood.⁹³ In these articles, Hanke used his knowledge of Latin America's cultural hybridity to push forward the notion that a cultural commonwealth was more likely to form among the American republics than between Latin America and Europe.

We know that Irving Leonard worked for some time as key consultant of the Rockefeller Foundation's Humanities Division, which sponsored his travels to South America in 1937–1938.⁹⁴ Later he was appointed by the ACLS and the State Department to conduct a survey of Latin American Studies in twenty US universities. The result of this work was published in 1943.⁹⁵ During World War II, Arthur P. Whitaker worked as an officer of the State Department, providing ideas for the intellectual and political cooperation between the two Americas. An active promoter

of Pan-Americanism, in 1939 Whitaker gathered leading exponents of Mexican political, social, and cultural life in a conference, whose essays he later compiled in a volume, *Mexico Today* (1940).⁹⁶ Knowing Mexico's peculiarities and internal affairs, he indicated, was of great significance for the "future development of inter-American relations" (ix).

Whitaker followed closely the evolution of US contemporary policy toward Latin America. In 1941 he started the publication of *Inter-American Affairs*, an annual review of political events and foreign-policy issues in the region. When Cordell Hull published his memoirs (1949), Whitaker assessed the achievements and failures of the ex-Secretary of State, revealing secret tensions between him and Undersecretary Sumner Welles.⁹⁷ After the Dumbarton Oaks agreement, he intervened in the discussion about the role of regional associations (such as the Pan-American Union) in a new world order.⁹⁸ As Peggy Liss recalls, he often chatted with students telling them that he singlehandedly drafted the Act of Chapultepec (1945).⁹⁹ Though this was an exaggeration, he maintained a close connection with key policy-makers in Washington. When Whitaker published his book *The United States and South America* (1948), ex-Undersecretary Welles wrote the introduction, pointing out the key economic and strategic importance of South America to the United States.

Clarence Haring was also an enthusiastic promoter of Pan-Americanism. In 1926–1927 he undertook a tour of South America to evaluate the forces of nationalism and anti-Americanism in the region. His book *South America Looks at the United States* (1928) is an important contribution to US foreign policy, to the extent that it presents Latin American intellectuals and the local press as key agents of the construction of modern Yankeeophobia.¹⁰⁰ Both the great economic power of the United States and the confusing and capricious use of the Monroe Doctrine, he argued, had created distrust, suspicion, and misplaced hatred among South Americans.¹⁰¹ In the early 1930s, Haring made trips to the Southern Cone to understand better the current political upheaval of the region.¹⁰² In addition, he recruited intelligence gatherers that kept him informed of political developments in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. He sent these secret reports to the Council on Foreign Relations—of significant influence in Washington—to be discussed in their special sessions on Latin America.

In the midst of the Great Depression, Haring helped to organize round-table sessions of Latin America at the Institute of Public Affairs of the University of Virginia. This was one way to promote Pan-Americanism as a "meeting of minds," where US business leaders, policy-makers, and scholars could debate about US challenges and problems in the region. Haring was skeptical about the formation of an inter-American intelligentsia. But he was in favor of promoting within the United States the ideas of friendship and cooperation embedded in the program of Pan-Americanism. In 1945 Haring edited a textbook called *Our Latin American Neighbors*, which received a quite favorable reception among US high-school teachers.¹⁰³ In

addition, Haring sponsored the formation of Pan-American societies all over the east coast, often speaking at the opening ceremonies.

During the WWII years, John Tate Lanning was managing director of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*. Among his achievements was having made an agreement with the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (Nelson Rockefeller) to expand the distribution of copies of the journal. With subsidized printing, the *Review* was able to send copies to historians working in Mexico, Central and South America, stimulating the exchange of publications among historians.¹⁰⁴ This was part of a greater effort to cultivate the field of Latin American Studies as part of the war effort (its “cultural front”).¹⁰⁵ During his tenure as editor of *HAHR*, Lanning published special issues devoted to *indigenismo*, the “Negro in Latin America,” Brazil, and the Portuguese empire in America to broaden the field so as to better represent the cultural diversity of Ibero-America.¹⁰⁶

US Latin American historians dwelled at length on matters of US foreign policies towards Latin America.¹⁰⁷ In fact, these historians contributed significantly to the writing of the history of US–Latin American diplomatic relations. Hiram Bingham, the Yale archaeologist and historian, published in 1913 a critical assessment of the Monroe Doctrine, claiming that the US should abandon such outdated policy, now incompatible with the degree of civilization acquired by the ABC nations. Haring’s criticism of the Monroe Doctrine went in the same direction, as were the writings of Leo S. Rowe, the director of the Pan-American Union and an early promoter of inter-American intellectual cooperation. Catholic historian Guy Inman also acknowledged the need to revise the doctrine if the United States was to gain back the trust of its southern neighbors. While condemning the relevance of the Monroe Doctrine to the twentieth century, US historians presented the attraction of US commodities and technologies as irresistible and, consequently, imagined no major obstacles to the increasing economic integration between North and South America.

US historians contributed to the cause of Pan-Americanism. Herbert E. Bolton, in his famous 1932 address “The Epic of Greater America” made the understanding of each other’s histories a necessity derived from the very success in inter-American cooperation.¹⁰⁸ In the 1920s and 1930s historians contributed to the building of a system of “intellectual cooperation” with Latin America, acting as ambassadors of US high culture. The cooperation between Mexican historian Silvio Zavala and US historian Lewis Hanke for a series of books dealing with the “History of the Americas” can be read as one product of the new “inter-American policy” that tried to incorporate “native historians” in the reshaping of the discipline. The IPGH (Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia), established by the Pan-American Union, was a visible institutional mark of the new cooperation. Yet, despite minor concessions, the subdiscipline (Hispanic American history) remained centered on the interests of the metropolis (Washington) and dominated by the question of how to build a better hemispheric empire at a time of major geopolitical transformations.¹⁰⁹

Back to América—the Imperiality of Hispanic American History

There are various ways in which a discipline, history, could be “imperial.” First, it could be dubbed “imperial” because its practitioners appropriate for themselves the whole field of inquiry and pretend to have a superior knowledge of such a field. Second, these historiographical revisions could be considered “imperial” because they put in conversation different imperial or colonial pasts in an effort to distinguish which empire (the Spanish, the British, the French, or the American) was the most effective and long-lasting. Third, it could be argued that US historians placed their discoveries at the service of foreign policy, in the sense of providing a reliable background for the understanding of the problems facing modern empires or commonwealths. Finally, Hispanic American history could be called “imperial” to the extent that its assumptions and purposes translated the concerns of the US foreign-policy community in the realm of history.

In various ways, Hispanic American history was an imperial undertaking. Hispanic American history, a discipline that consolidated after the First World War (the *HAHR* was founded in 1918), claimed to have built a unique area of expertise, far superior to its competitors in Europe and nonexistent in Latin America.¹¹⁰ The new subdiscipline took interest in understanding the main legacies of Spanish colonialism to the formation of new republics and in relation to “modern Latin America.” Questions of economic nationalism, racial diversity and mixture, religious hybridity, and the persistence of premodern political traditions and forms of social interaction, all came under the gaze of Hispanic American history. As I have tried to show, US historians’ predicaments about the need to better understand Latin America corresponded closely with key principles of US Pan-Americanism and were responsive to the calls of the Good Neighbor policy for cultural and intellectual cooperation.¹¹¹

Haring, Whitaker, Leonard, Lanning, and Hanke were pioneers of the field of Hispanic American history, a field of knowledge that sought to possess a full understanding of the past of the periphery we call “Latin America.” They provided practitioners in the field a place in the annual conferences of the American Historical Association and a specialized journal in which to publish their findings (the *Hispanic American Historical Review*). They also produced a remarkable number of bibliographical aids to help researchers and graduate students.¹¹² And they marked the research agenda for following generations by pointing to essential questions about the Spanish American colonial past.

These pioneers of Hispanic American history never separated their knowledge enterprise completely from the interests of US history. While some scholars aimed at extending the scope of American history to the territory of the “Spanish borderlands,” others tried to produce new historical knowledge about the whole territory of the Spanish empire. And most of the Latin Americanists claimed that their findings were relevant to a better understanding of US history. Confronting the

disdain or rejection from “American historians,” in the 1930s the Latin Americanists sought to build a separate history of the hemisphere. This was an ambitious and comprehensive intellectual undertaking that, though centered in US universities, required some degree of cooperation from Latin American scholars.

The histories these authors wrote were narratives with a purpose, knowledge with a practical use. First, revisiting the Spanish empire provided a window to better understand “Hispanic American civilization” at a time when there was a rapprochement between the United States and Latin America. Second, the experience of the Spanish empire represented to the makers of US policy in Latin America a negative example not to be imitated. Third, in the period of 1915–1945, US historians working in this field were very much engaged in the politics of US Pan-Americanism.¹¹³ Their histories were so tied to the politics of inter-American cooperation that, in the 1960s and 1970s, this consensus came into question. Historians began to demand a greater independence between the subdiscipline and Washington’s policies.¹¹⁴

US historians were quite aware that their historical work could be appropriated for various competing transnational projects—Pan-Latinism, Pan-Hispanism, or Latin American anti-imperialism—yet they remained attached to US Pan-Americanism. Even those scholars whose work was benevolent towards Spanish colonialism (like Hanke, Lanning, or Leonard) rejected the attraction of Pan-Hispanism. Their histories aimed at contributing to the better understanding, not of Spanish glories, but of “Hispanic American civilization.” In their path to knowing Latin American realities, these historians encountered sufficient evidence of anti-Americanism and economic nationalism—and warned Washington policy-makers about this politico-cultural obstacle. They not only contributed narratives and insights about the very progress of US Pan-Americanism, but they also gave political and cultural intelligence to the State Department and related institutions.¹¹⁵

Lanning’s rescue of colonial learning was directed against two promoters of anti-Hispanic myths: the Americanists represented by John Erskine, and the anti-Americans represented by R. Blanco Fombona.¹¹⁶ A promoter of the uniqueness of the American way of life, Erskine had contributed to popularizing the notion that the colonial Spanish Americans lacked a critical mentality, contrasting the backwardness of Spanish universities with the modernity of Harvard and Yale. His anti-Hispanic criticism was instrumental to the establishment of US superiority in the fields of higher education and intellectual life. From a different perspective, Venezuelan intellectual and publicist R. Blanco Fombona had presented the Spanish conquest and all that followed as detrimental to the development of critical thought. Trying to highlight the superiority of post-independence leaders and the brilliant mind of national scholars from Latin America, Fombona derided colonial institutions as residuals of barbarism, superstition, and religious conformity. Unlike Erskine, Fombona’s anti-Hispanic rhetoric was informed by an anti-imperialist (anti-US)

agenda. Lanning was quite aware that his historical investigation of colonial universities could help to correct both types of “antipathies.”¹¹⁷

The defense of Spanish colonialism had to walk the narrow path between the extremes of two types of nationalism: one built by the anti-imperialists, the other promoted by traditional promoters of US expansionism. Finding this middle ground was crucial for the double task of US foreign policy in Latin America: to deflect criticism against “Yankee imperialism” and to establish friendly relations with Latin American intellectuals. In the Good Neighbor era, it was clear that US influence could expand through the persuasion of American commodities and the exportation of the American way of life.¹¹⁸ But, at the same time, it was necessary to present the US perspective on history (its search for objectivity, its sympathetic understanding of the Other) directly to Latin American scholars, seeking their cooperation.¹¹⁹

In the period of 1915–1945, geopolitical concerns transpired too easily into the terrain of history. US historians revisited the long experience of the Spanish empire in order to find answers to the current predicament of United States policies in Latin America. Their histories projected into a remote past the concerns of the present. Before FDR announced the beginning of an era of friendly cooperation and neighborliness (1933), colonial historians began to imagine an alternative form of commonwealth in the Americas—one that was in many ways the reversal of the Spanish empire.

The politics of inter-American intellectual cooperation necessitated a certain convergence of literacy, education, and cultural trends between the two Americas. The Pax Americana—an empire of goods, technology, consumer desires, cooperative bureaucracies, and political ideals—required that the difference in knowledge not be abysmal. This might explain why Lanning was interested in calibrating the gap in knowledge that separated Europe from the Spanish colonies. He reduced this “gap” from the mythical three hundred years to only “one generation.” This leveling of knowledge production made feasible the establishment of an intellectual cooperation between the United States and Latin America.

In the transition from Dollar Diplomacy to the Good Neighbor policy (ca. 1915–1945), US historians concerned themselves with understanding better the Spanish empire. These efforts were presented as integral to the project of establishing cordial and cooperative US hegemony over Latin America. In the historical works of Haring, Whitaker, Leonard, Lanning, and Hanke, the “loose union” envisioned by supporters of US Pan-Americanism appeared—sometimes explicit, other times implicit—as the reversed side of the workings of the Spanish empire. One cannot fail to see in these works a dose of intellectual complicity in the making of US informal empire.

Most of these historians were critical of the Monroe Doctrine, rejected as outdated US interventions in the Caribbean and Central America, and aspired to amicable relations with the “southern republics.” Yet, at the same time, they supported the continuity of neocolonial engagement with the region: the expansion of US trade, direct investments, and loans.¹²⁰ Fred Rippy and Guy Inman were

perhaps the most belligerent against US investment in the region, the latter strongly criticizing the politics of Dollar Diplomacy. And few of their voices were raised against the United States exerting cultural influence on the region. Indeed most of them favored the cultural policies associated with Pan-Americanism. The lessons to be drawn from the study of other empires was that forms of cultural engagement (ideological persuasion, intellectual cooperation, legal and institutional transfer, and participation in a common commodity culture) were more enduring than other forms of imperial intervention (gunboat diplomacy, direct intervention, and financial pressure). Clarence Haring argued that old colonial empires (maritime empires as well as territorial possessions) were doomed. In the twentieth century, they were being replaced by “modern empires,” complex machines of cultural transfer that required neither territorial possessions nor maritime pressure. He preferred the British Commonwealth as a way of organizing cultural and institutional influence throughout the hinterlands and, at points, wrote of the Pan-American movement as a sort of “commonwealth” of the hemisphere.

Conclusions

The histories Haring, Whitaker, Hanke, and others wrote about the Spanish empire were not odd contributions to be later corrected by new historiography. In fact, these findings persisted as central to the research agenda of US historians specializing in colonial Spanish America. As a recent bibliographical survey concedes, much of this architecture of ideas still informs the colonial historiography of Spanish America.¹²¹ I have suggested here that this historical revisionism put in critical dialogue the US contemporary ambitions for hegemony in the hemisphere with the past experience of Spanish colonialism, and that both the positive and negative views on the Spanish colonial past served to illuminate the predicaments of contemporary US Pan-Americanism.

This essay joins the efforts of many scholars to present history as a form of power-knowledge, complicit not only with the formation of nation-states but also mainly constitutive of the powers of Eurocentrism, whiteness, and colonialism.¹²² United States historiography about colonial Spanish America was infused with a concern about the role of the United States in the hemisphere and, in particular, with the question of the appropriate ways of projecting influence to the “southern republics.” Out of the revisionism of the Spanish colonial past came a valorization of cultural forms of imperial engagement, which were considered ancillaries to economic and financial supremacy. This was perhaps the most relevant “colonial question” posed by US historians as they revisited the history of Spain’s long-lasting empire. With their “imperial revisionism,” US historians contributed to imagining the true contours of the Pax Americana in the period that followed the First World War.

Notes

¹ Gibson and Keen wrote in 1957, “The first two decades of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, the period of the editorship of J. A. Robertson, formed a period of concentration, specialization, and elaboration in monographic work on the colonial period.” Charles Gibson and Benjamin Keen, “Trends of United States Studies in Latin American History,” *American Historical Review* 62, no. 4 (1957): 860–61. The importance of study on the colonial period in the formative period of the field is also emphasized by Mark L. Grover, “Latin American History: Concerns and Conflicts,” *History Teacher* 21, no. 3 (1988): 349–65.

² See Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Library Accumulation and the Emergence of Latin American Studies,” *Comparative American Studies* 3, no. 4 (2005): 415–36.

³ There was also during this period a new interest in “Columbus studies.” See Martin Torodash, “Columbus Historiography since 1939,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 46, no. 4 (1966): 409–28.

⁴ There is a large bibliography about the Black Legend. Among the earlier works, see Charles Gibson, *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New* (New York: Knopf, 1971); William S. Maltby, *The Black Legend in England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558–1660* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1971); and Philip Wayne Powell, *Tree of Hate: Propaganda and Prejudices Affecting United States Relations with the Hispanic World* (New York: Basic Books, 1971). Among recent contributions, see María DeGuzmán, *Spain’s Long Shadow: The Black Legend, Off-whiteness, and Anglo-American Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); and Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan, eds., *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

⁵ The work of revisionists did not go unchallenged. Bailey Diffie protested the claim made by Lanning that colonial culture was permeable to the ideas of the Enlightenment, and Charles Gibson thought Hanke went too far in presenting Spanish colonialism as benevolent and legitimate. See Benjamin Keen, “Main Currents in United States Writings on Colonial Spanish America,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 65, no. 4 (1985): 657–82.

⁶ In the midst of World War II, Lanning changed his position regarding the question of the Black Legend. The Spanish, to whom they had looked with some sympathy for the management of a large empire, for its protection of indigenous peoples, for its porosity to the penetration of Enlightenment ideas, now was under a fascist regime, allied with Nazi Germany. So he warned historians to reconsider their sympathies towards Spain.

⁷ My selection of authors may seem arbitrary in a period where many practitioners of the new Hispanic American history were making contributions on the colonial period. The

most noticeable absences are Herbert Eugene Bolton, Earl J. Hamilton, Lesley B. Simpson, and Roger Merriman.

⁸ The reader will also notice that I have spared details about the academic careers and political connections of the selected scholars in order to concentrate on the content of their historical narratives. A more comprehensive argument about “intellectual complicity” with the Pax Americana will probably require dealing more extensively into these connections.

⁹ I deal with Clarence Haring’s views in Ricardo D. Salvatore, *Disciplinary Interventions: U.S. Scholarly Engagement with South America, 1900–1945* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁰ A notable exemption is Tulchin’s study of Dana Munro, perhaps because Munro was both a diplomat and a historian. See Joseph S. Tulchin, “When Diplomats Become Historians,” *Reviews in American History* 3, no. 2 (1975): 241–48.

¹¹ See, in particular, Marshall C. Eakin, “Latin American History in the United States: From Gentlemen Scholars to Academic Specialists,” *History Teacher* 31, no. 4 (1998): 539–61. Important studies on Hispanic American History include Lewis Hanke, “The Development of Latin-American Studies in the United States, 1939–1945,” *The Americas* 4, no. 1 (1947): 32–64; Howard F. Cline, ed., *Latin American History: Essays on Its Study and Teaching, 1898–1965* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967); Mark T. Berger, *Under Northern Eyes: Latin American Studies and U.S. Hegemony in the Americas, 1898–1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); and Helen Delpar, *Looking South: The Evolution of Latin Americanist Scholarship in the United States, 1850–1975* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008). A useful guide to the works of US Latin Americanists is Martin H. Sable, ed., *Guide to the Writings of Pioneer Latinamericanists of the United States* (New York: Haworth Press, 1989).

¹² Gibson and Keen, “Trends of United States Studies,” 859.

¹³ See, for instance, Delpar, *Looking South*.

¹⁴ The obituary that Whitaker wrote after the death of Haring is illustrative and includes a representative bibliography of Haring’s works. See Arthur P. Whitaker, “Clarence Henry Haring (1885–1960),” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 41, no. 3 (1961): 419–23.

¹⁵ Clarence Henry Haring, *Trade and Navigation between Spain and the Indies in the Time of the Hapsburgs* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 24.

¹⁶ Haring was one of the first historians to point out that the very success of the “oriental commerce” carried through the Manila galleon was “one of the principal causes for the relative decline of that [trade] between Spain and America in the seventeenth century” (*ibid.*, 147).

¹⁷ Haring wrote, “It is, in fact, very doubtful if the mass of natives were much better off after, than before, the conquest. They lived in their own villages, separated from the whites, and in deepest ignorance. Of the blessings of European civilization they had scarcely any noteworthy share. Their lot had perhaps been slightly ameliorated by the introduction of domestic animals, plants, and vegetables from the east; but they also received many diseases. And almost all of their ancient culture was gradually lost. Christianity they had accepted, but many of them retained, as they do to-day, heathen beliefs and practices mingled with the higher religion. In the rural districts, therefore, native modes of building, and often of agriculture, too, prevailed” (ibid., 132–33).

¹⁸ See, for instance, Clarence Henry Haring, *The Spanish Empire in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1947), chapters 13, 14, and 16.

¹⁹ I refer here to his well-known books: Arthur P. Whitaker, ed., *Latin America and the Enlightenment* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1942), reprinted in 1961; and Arthur P. Whitaker, *The United States and the Independence of Latin America, 1800–1830* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1941), reprinted in 1964.

²⁰ See Peggy K. Liss, “Arthur Preston Whitaker (1895–1979),” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60, no. 3 (1980): 473–75.

²¹ To an extent, he shared with his contemporaries John Tate Lanning, Lesley Byrd Simpson, and Herbert Eugene Bolton an interest in drafting the history of the “Hispanic borderlands” later to become integral parts of US territory.

²² See Arthur P. Whitaker, “The Commerce of Louisiana and the Floridas at the End of the Eighteenth Century,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 8, no. 2 (1928): 190–203; and Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Spanish-American Frontier, 1783–1795: The Westward Movement and the Spanish Retreat in the Mississippi Valley*, 2nd ed. (1927; repr., Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1962).

²³ Arthur P. Whitaker, “New Light on the Treaty of San Lorenzo: An Essay in Historical Criticism,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (1929): 435.

²⁴ See Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Huancavelica Mercury Mine: A Contribution to the History of the Bourbon Renaissance in the Spanish Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941).

²⁵ Arthur P. Whitaker, “Antonio de Ulloa,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 15, no. 2 (1935): 155–94.

²⁶ Whitaker, “Commerce of Louisiana,” 201–2, emphasis mine.

²⁷ Between the time of the Treaty of San Lorenzo (1795) and the year in which Spain gave Louisiana back to France (1800).

²⁸ Whitaker, “Commerce of Louisiana,” 202.

²⁹ “We have no right to condemn,” wrote Leonard, “in sweeping terms, the Spanish colonial regime as ‘tres siglos de teocracia, oscurantismo y barbarie.’” Otis H. Green and Irving A. Leonard, “On the Mexican Booktrade in 1600: A Chapter in Cultural History,” *Hispanic Review* 9, no. 1 (1941): 13–14.

³⁰ He documented the arrival of eighty-four copies of *Don Quixote de la Mancha* at Lima in May 1606. Prior to him, in 1911, a Spanish historian had proven the dispatch of those copies to the Indies. See Irving A. Leonard, “Don Quixote and the Book Trade in Lima, 1606,” *Hispanic Review* 8, no. 4 (1940): 285–304; Irving A. Leonard, “On the Cuzco Book Trade, 1606,” *Hispanic Review* 9, no. 3 (1941): 359–75; and Green and Leonard, “On the Mexican Booktrade.”

³¹ See Irving A. Leonard, “Best Sellers of the Lima Book Trade, 1583,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 22, no. 1 (1942): 5–33.

³² Irving A. Leonard, *Books of the Brave: Being an Account of Books and of Men in the Spanish Conquest and Settlement of the Sixteenth-Century New World* (1949; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 113.

³³ Leonard, “Don Quixote,” 292.

³⁴ See Irving A. Leonard, “A Shipment of Comedias to the Indies,” *Hispanic Review* 2, no. 1 (1934): 39–50; Irving A. Leonard, “More Conjectures Regarding the Identity of Lope de Vega’s ‘Amarilis Indiana,’” *Hispania* 20, no. 2 (1937): 113–20; and Irving A. Leonard, “Notes on Lope de Vega’s Works in the Spanish Indies,” *Hispanic Review* 6, no. 4 (1938): 277–93.

³⁵ Leonard, *Books of the Brave*, 315–16.

³⁶ Leonard wrote, “This was the *certámen poético*, a poetic tournament which, in the Baroque age, permitted the self-styled elite of Old Mexico to demonstrate an alleged devotion to Euterpe, the muse of lyric verse, by exhibitions of metrical manipulation and verbal gymnastics.” Irving A. Leonard, *Baroque Times in Old Mexico: Seventeenth-Century Persons, Places, and Practices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), 130.

³⁷ See Irving A. Leonard, “Some Góngora Centones in Mexico,” *Hispania* 12, no. 6 (1929): 563–72; and Irving A. Leonard, “Some Curiosities of Spanish Colonial Poetry,” *Hispania* 15, no. 1 (1932): 39–54.

³⁸ Leonard discusses at length these poetic competitions in Leonard, *Baroque Times*, chapters 9 and 10.

³⁹ See *ibid.*, 146.

⁴⁰ Leonard, “Notes on Lope de Vega’s Works,” 293.

⁴¹ Leonard, *Baroque Times*, 131.

⁴² Irving A. Leonard, “A Great Savant of Seventeenth-Century Mexico: Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora,” *Hispania* 10, no. 6 (1927): 399.

⁴³ Leonard deals with both scholars in Leonard, *Baroque Times*, chapters 12 and 13.

⁴⁴ “Because scholasticism held on into the eighteenth century, colonial intellectual life has been decried as decadent and any study of it as futile. Research must pull together these loose threads, for to understand Spain in America it is even more necessary to know new-world scholasticism and its history than it is to know puritanism in order to understand New England.” John Tate Lanning, “Research Possibilities in the Cultural History of Spain in America,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 16, no. 2 (1936): 150–51.

⁴⁵ See Lanning, “Research Possibilities.” See also John Tate Lanning, “The Reception of the Enlightenment in Latin America,” in *Latin America and the Enlightenment*, 2nd ed., ed. Arthur P. Whitaker (1942; repr., Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1961), 71–93.

⁴⁶ On the exuberance of anti-Spanish sentiment and rhetoric in the works of Irving, Ticknor, and Prescott, see Iván Jaksic, *Ven conmigo a la España lejana: Los intelectuales norteamericanos ante el mundo hispano, 1820–1880* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2007). An excellent collection of essays on US Hispanism in the nineteenth century can be found in Richard L. Kagan, ed., *Spain in America: The Origins of Hispanism in the United States* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

⁴⁷ “In the University of Merida, high in the Venezuelan Andes, as well as in the University of San Carlos de Guatemala, and the universities of Caracas, Mexico and Lima, the revolution was thoroughly achieved in the last half of the eighteenth century.” John Tate Lanning, *Academic Culture in the Spanish Colonies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 84.

⁴⁸ John Tate Lanning, “A Reconsideration of Spanish Colonial Culture,” *The Americas* 1, no. 2 (1944): 173.

⁴⁹ Lanning, *Academic Culture*, 33, 55.

⁵⁰ Lanning wrote, “all authorities state without equivocation” that Descartes, Leibniz, and Newton were taught at Quito at the time of La Condamine expedition in 1736 (*ibid.*, 65).

⁵¹ “The system of methodical doubt came to be accepted, if not actually followed, everywhere in America between 1736 and 1800” (*ibid.*, 74).

⁵² See Lanning, “Research Possibilities,” 158–60.

⁵³ Lanning, *Academic Culture*, 67.

⁵⁴ Lanning, “Reconsideration of Spanish Colonial Culture,” 174, emphasis mine.

⁵⁵ His work clearly complemented and advanced Leonard’s discovery of an active book trade between Spain and the colonies.

⁵⁶ Lanning, *Academic Culture*, 85.

⁵⁷ On the US Enlightenment, see Henry Steele Commager, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977).

⁵⁸ Lanning, *Academic Culture*, 86.

⁵⁹ See Lanning, “Reconsideration of Spanish Colonial Culture.”

⁶⁰ Lanning’s words are clear: “Here, after a long period of indifference, many have been aroused to an awareness of Latin America, some for political and self-seeking purposes, and we must not be startled if some of their ideas have the appearance of emanating from politicians. Our overlapping agencies, frequently making more use of uniformed celebrities than of authorities, have read too much too soon into the recent modest findings tending to modify the black legend in Spanish colonial culture” (ibid., 168–69).

⁶¹ See John Tate Lanning, *The Spanish Missions of Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935).

⁶² See Lanning, *Academic Culture*. This sympathy for Franciscans is easy to explain. Lanning had collaborated with Franciscan researchers in locating and publishing key sources for his study of missions in Spanish Florida. Later, he had cooperated in the foundation of the Academy of American Franciscan History (1944), had published various articles in the Academy’s journal (*The Americas*), and was granted the Serra Award in 1958 by the members of this Academy.

⁶³ See Walter Mignolo, “Literacy and Colonization: The New World Experience,” in 1492–1992: *Re/Discovering Colonial Writing*, ed. René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 51–96. See also Serge Gruzinski, *El pensamiento mestizo* (Barcelona: Paidós, 2000), chapter 4; and David A. Brading, *Orbe indiano: De la monarquía católica a la república criolla, 1492–1867* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991), chapter 5.

⁶⁴ On the emergence of rhetoric about Spanish patriotism, see Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, *Cómo escribir la historia del Nuevo Mundo. Historiografías, epistemologías e identidades en el mundo del Atlántico del siglo XVIII* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2007).

⁶⁵ See Helen Delpar, “Lewis Hanke and Latin American History: The Legacy of an ‘Old Christian,’” *SECOLAS Annals* 34 (2002): 141–55.

⁶⁶ Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America* (1949; repr., Boston: Little, Brown, 1965).

⁶⁷ Hanke later revisited the question in Lewis Hanke, “Bartolomé de Las Casas and the Spanish Empire in America: Four Centuries of Misunderstanding,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 97, no. 1 (1953): 26–30; Lewis Hanke, “The Dawn of Conscience in America: Spanish Experiments and Experiences with Indians in the New World,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107, no. 2 (1963): 83–92; and

Lewis Hanke, "More Heat and Some Light on the Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 44, no. 3 (1964): 293–340.

⁶⁸ See Lewis Hanke, "Some Studies in Progress in Spain on Hispanic American Colonial History," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 15, no. 1 (1935): 105–13.

⁶⁹ See Lewis Hanke, "Dos Palabras on Antonio de Ulloa and the *Noticias Secretas*," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 16, no. 4 (1936): 479–514.

⁷⁰ See Lewis Hanke, "Pope Paul III and the American Indians," *Harvard Theological Review* 30, no. 2 (1937): 65–102.

⁷¹ According to Hanke, Father Minaya called Pizarro a murderer and a thief and refused to participate in further episodes of "robbery" (*ibid.*, 83).

⁷² The Pope's letter stated that friars in the Indies could excommunicate those Spaniards who enslaved Indians.

⁷³ I place the word "discovery" in quotation marks because other historians (British, Spanish, German, and Latin American) were also making contributions about this subject.

⁷⁴ Hanke found that the New York Public Library had in the 1930s the best collection of Lacassiana available in the United States. Also interesting is the reference he made to a copy of Betanzo's retraction found in a convent of Bolivia.

⁷⁵ See Juan Friede and Benjamin Keen, eds., *Bartolomé de Las Casas in History: Toward an Understanding of the Man and His Work* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971).

⁷⁶ Other scholars argued for a late eighteenth-century decline in the Spanish empire. See, for instance, Bernard Moses, *Spain's Declining Power in South America, 1730–1806* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1919).

⁷⁷ Clarence Henry Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies in the XVII Century* (London: Methuen, 1910).

⁷⁸ The literature about the passage from Big Stick to Good Neighbor is immense. A fundamental reading is Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Though most authors have argued that the politics of cultural diplomacy developed in the late 1920s and early 1930s, others have argued for an early cosmopolitan engagement with culture in the Theodore Roosevelt presidency. See Richard H. Collin, *Theodore Roosevelt, Culture, Diplomacy, and Expansion: A New View of American Imperialism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985).

⁷⁹ An effort that started with the 1826 Panama Congress, convened by Simón Bolívar.

⁸⁰ See Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1954), 74–78.

⁸¹ There are many studies of the Pan-Americanist movement. A few can be mentioned here: Bryce Wood's classic, *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967); Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938–1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Mark T. Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions: Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913–1921* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986); and David Sheinin, ed., *Beyond the Ideal: Pan Americanism in Inter-American Affairs* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000). For a cultural reading of US engagement with Latin America, see Gilbert M. Joseph, Catherine C. LeGrand, and Ricardo D. Salvatore, eds., *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.–Latin American Relations* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998); Gretchen Murphy, *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); and Ricardo D. Salvatore, *Imágenes de un imperio: Estados Unidos y las formas de representación de América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2006).

⁸² There were advances, through special Pan-American conferences on issues of banking, women's rights, child welfare, labor standards, preventive medicine, and national parks. In addition, Pan-American conferences served as a vehicle for the promotion of international law.

⁸³ In 1923 the majority of participants signed a convention to present inter-American disputes to third-party arbitration.

⁸⁴ Clarence Henry Haring, *South American Progress* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 216.

⁸⁵ This argument is further developed in Salvatore, *Disciplinary Interventions*, chapter 5.

⁸⁶ Whitaker, *Western Hemisphere Idea*, 1.

⁸⁷ Whitaker wrote, "More broadly, despite several centuries of the common experience of development in a New World environment, the history of the Americas has so far successfully resisted the efforts of American historians to integrate it in accordance with the Western Hemisphere idea" (*ibid.*, 176).

⁸⁸ Paradoxically, Whitaker argued, the decline of the Western Hemisphere idea ("the substance") coincided with the strengthening of the institutions of Pan-Americanism ("the formal" or "instrumental"). See *ibid.*, 5.

⁸⁹ In fact, this was the title of the chapter dealing with the *Casa de Contratación's* functioning.

⁹⁰ See Leonard, *Baroque Times*, 145.

⁹¹ See Lewis Hanke, "Free Speech in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 26, no. 2 (1946): 135–49.

⁹² See Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007).

⁹³ See Lewis Hanke, *Selected Writings of Lewis Hanke on the History of Latin America* (Tempe: Center for Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1979), part VIII, 415–40.

⁹⁴ Leonard started to work at the Rockefeller Foundation in 1937. During World War I, he was hired by the US Post Office to censor letters coming from Europe to Latin America (searching for German influences).

⁹⁵ Irving A. Leonard, “A Survey of Personnel and Activities in Latin American Aspects of the Humanities and Social Sciences at Twenty Universities of the United States,” *Notes on Latin American Studies* 1 (1943): 7–46. See also John J. Tepaske, “An Interview with Irving A. Leonard,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 63, no. 2 (1983): 233–53.

⁹⁶ Arthur P. Whitaker, ed., *Mexico Today* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1940).

⁹⁷ Arthur P. Whitaker, review, “The Memoirs of Cordell Hull,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 29, no. 1 (1949): 81–93.

⁹⁸ See Arthur P. Whitaker, “The Role of Latin America in Relation to Current Trends in International Organization,” *American Political Science Review* 39, no. 3 (1945): 500–11.

⁹⁹ Liss, “Arthur Preston Whitaker,” 474. The Act of Chapultepec, Mexico, March 1945, otherwise called the Treaty on Inter-American Assistance and Solidarity, was the clearest expression of a continental defense against foreign aggression. It was the basis for the 1947 Rio Treaty.

¹⁰⁰ Clarence Henry Haring, *South America Looks at the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

¹⁰¹ See *ibid.*, chapter 4, 60–79.

¹⁰² See, for example, Clarence H. Haring, “Revolution in South America,” *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 2 (1931): 277–96; Clarence H. Haring, “Presidential Elections in South America,” *Foreign Affairs* 10, no. 2 (1932): 327–31; and Clarence H. Haring, “The Chilean Revolution of 1931,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 13, no. 2 (1933): 197–203.

¹⁰³ Harriett McCune Brown, Helen Miller Bailey, and Clarence Henry Haring, eds., *Our Latin American Neighbors* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1944).

¹⁰⁴ At the height of this program, in 1943, twelve hundred copies were distributed free of charge.

¹⁰⁵ See Arthur S. Aiton, et al., “Farewell and Hail,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 25, no. 1 (1945): 1–2.

¹⁰⁶ See Arthur R. Steele, “John Tate Lanning (1902–1976),” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, no. 3 (1977): 516–19.

¹⁰⁷ In part, the issue is examined in Salvatore, *Disciplinary Interventions*, chapter 7.

¹⁰⁸ Bolton wrote, “The increasing importance of inter-American relations makes imperative a better understanding by each of the history and culture of all. A synthetic view is important not alone for its present-day political and commercial implications; it is quite as desirable from the standpoint of correct historiography” (quoted in Whitaker, *Western Hemisphere Idea*, 148).

¹⁰⁹ I use the term “empire” as a composite of areas of influence, including both colonial possessions in the Caribbean, military interventions in Central America, and neocolonial dependency in South America. I mean by the term “empire” any form of extraterritorial sovereignty or influence. Whereas in the past it was more common to speak of “imperialism,” or to deny or minimize the influence of “colonial adventures” in the history of the United States, now scholars use more confidently the term “empire” and acknowledge this to be a permanent feature of US capitalism and culture. See Joseph, LeGrand, and Salvatore, *Close Encounters of Empire*; Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004); Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Greg Grandin, *Empire’s Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); and Fred Rosen, ed., *Empire and Dissent: The United States and Latin America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); among others.

¹¹⁰ In the region, historians endeavored to produce national histories, somewhat related to current methodologies and concerns in Europe. Latin American universities relegated the name “History of America” to the study of the colonial past. Dividing itself into Discovery, Conquest, and Colonization, this was a Hispanic-centric narrative, difficult to mold into the “preface” of the emerging Hispanic American nation-states.

¹¹¹ See Ricardo D. Salvatore, “The Making of a Hemispheric Intellectual-Stateman: Leo S. Rowe in Argentina (1906–1919),” *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 2, no. 1 (2010), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/92m7b409>.

¹¹² See Salvatore, “Library Accumulation.”

¹¹³ See Ricardo D. Salvatore, “If Bolton Would Awake Today,” in *The International Turn in American Studies*, ed. Armin Paul Frank and Marietta E. Messmer (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, forthcoming).

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Frederick M. Nunn, “Reflections on the Quiet Revolution,” *History Teacher* 2, no. 3 (1969): 29–31.

¹¹⁵ Such as the Council on Foreign Relations.

¹¹⁶ See Lanning, “Reconsideration of Spanish Colonial Culture.”

¹¹⁷ “The two antipathies—that against Spain and that against the United States—are seldom combined. The writer who fulminates against the United States usually feels that he requires an all-Hispanic footing to box with such a colossus” (ibid., 167–68).

¹¹⁸ The notion of a US empire as promoter of welfare and consumer culture is explored in Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005). A similar argument with regard to the US informal empire in Latin America can be found in Ricardo D. Salvatore, “Early American Visions of a Hemispheric Market in South America,” in *Transnational America: The Fading of Borders in the Western Hemisphere*, ed. Berndt Ostendorf (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2002), 45–64.

¹¹⁹ On the US policy of intellectual cooperation, see Salvatore, “Making of a Hemispheric Intellectual-Statesman.”

¹²⁰ In the mid-1920s, Princeton professor Dana Munro, the same as Clarence Haring of Harvard, called for the end of US interventions in the Caribbean.

¹²¹ Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, “Silver, Slaves, and Sugar: The Persistence of Spanish Colonialism from Absolutism to Liberalism,” *Latin American Research Review* 39, no. 2 (2004): 196–210.

¹²² Among the works critical of history as a site of power-knowledge, we can mention Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); among others. A historiography critical of inherited traditions and participant of some postcolonial sensibilities can be found in Mark Thurner and Andrés Guerrero, eds., *After Spanish Rule: Postcolonial Predicaments of the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

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