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sanctimonious, and *navel-gazing* come frequently to mind when traversing this work, which reads as though it were held together with pieces of chewing gum, frayed duct tape, and baling wire but with precious little logic or solid argument. Apparently we are to dream of Yellowstone as a new utopian space where people of all races can join together as one in harmony. That's a great thought, and a nice dream, but where does such sentimentalism take us? Without a clear proposal, at what point does a fantasy go beyond a pleasant dream of unity into action?

Michael Snyder

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Spain, Europe and the Wider World, 1500–1800. By J. H. Elliot. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009. 352 pages. \$38.00 cloth.

Few historians of Spain and the larger Spanish empire rival J. H. Elliot in terms of developing broad conceptual frameworks that seek to identify and explain the major periods of the early modern Spanish world. Scores of graduate students and professional historians have read Elliot's work with an eye toward dissecting his use of evidence, which he gathers from multiple sources, mainly in print form rather than archival-based, and the way he integrates the latest contributions to the historiography. Elliot is part of a cadre of British scholars who have shaped the field of Spanish and Spanish American history through a careful reading of an extensive range of printed matter and secondary materials. The works of David Brading, John Lynch, Anthony Pagden, and Hugh Thomas share shelf space with those written by J. H. Elliot. One would be hard-pressed to find a graduate research seminar about colonial Latin American history at a public or private research university in the United States or Canada that failed to assign at minimum one reading written by these British scholars (or, at the very least, readings that were shaped in part by the scholars' research and interpretations).

Elliot's latest contribution to the literature is a sequel of sorts to *Spain and Its World, 1500–1700* (1989), which tried to bring rhyme and reason to the field of Spanish historical writing. Elliot established a unity to early modern Spain by situating its politics, diplomacy, economy, and diverse society within a larger European context. Much of Elliot's scholarship has sought to link the Iberian Peninsula with the major patterns and personalities of European history, not to mention with the difficulties of maintaining such a vast and far-flung empire. Whether he makes analytical comparisons between the Count-Duke of Olivares and Cardinal Richelieu or the colonial projects of Spain and Great Britain, Elliot has done much to show his fellow Europeanists just how interconnected the historical experiences of Spain and Europe have been.

Often film critics express disappointment in Hollywood sequels. Historians will not have this problem with Elliot's sequel. As a series of lectures, articles, and conference papers, *Spain, Europe and the Wider World* elucidates a number

of themes that Elliot sees as key to understanding Spain's role in the early modern world, including the symmetries in European overseas expansion, the asymmetries in conquest and colonization, and the reconfigurations that took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as former European colonies made the uneasy transition to nation-states.

In particular, Elliot employs the methodology of comparative history in order to establish a network of connections among Spain, Europe, and the Atlantic world, with Asia and Africa also added to the mix when circumstances call for it (for example, the African slave trade or trade with South Asia). In many ways, the above-mentioned themes that Elliot finds so compelling are case studies for the comparativist. Eschewing the nation-state or civilization as the natural unit of study, practitioners of comparative history employ case studies of either contiguous or analogical relations to test a hypothesis, which in turn relies on the development of explanatory variables and the use of evidence to confirm, alter, modify, or reject a previous hypothesis regarding the subject matter. Elliot does not quite articulate his approach to comparative history in this way, but the research questions that he asks of his evidence mirror quite nicely those posited by comparativists, including Laura Benton, Micol Seigel, and Philip Curtain, among others.

Elliot also provides keen insight into the evolution of Spanish historical writing since the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1975. Setting aside the traditional preoccupation with the "Spanish problem" or the "Spanish question," which tried to explain why Spain was so different, that is, backward and in decay, from the rest of western Europe, a new generation of Spanish historians began to travel abroad; digest and assess the major trends in international historiography; and, finally, question the suppositions of the previous generation. The result of this long intellectual exercise has been the end of the *hispanista*, or the foreign scholar who had to fill the gaps in the historical literature or develop new interpretations of the Spanish past by utilizing the theoretical frameworks most influential in the historiography. According to Elliot, with democratization in full bloom in Spain, "there is no longer any need to look to foreign researchers . . . Spanish scholars are perfectly capable of doing this for themselves" (xv).

Historians and graduate students alike will profit from reading J. H. Elliot's sequel to his 1989 work, especially the author's solid application of the comparative method to early modern history. When we take the long view of Elliot's professional career as a historian and as a member of the British cadre of *hispanistas*, we cannot help but wonder if a third installment is forthcoming, one that would transform the first two books into a trilogy worthy of any academic or research library.

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