

American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches. By Patricia Seed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. Pp. xii, 299. Maps, appendix, notes, index. \$29.95.)

In *American Pentimento*, Patricia Seed argues that European traditions and goals, rather than distinctions among indigenous societies between nomadic and settled groups, account for concepts of “Indians” in the Americas. One purpose of this intellectual history is to debunk the myth that a “universal” or international understanding justified the transfer of significant assets from native residents to European settlers. Another goal, both scholarly and political, is to show how the powerful paradigms of conquest continue to operate in the disparate demands of contemporary indigenous peoples for land (in the north) or for dignity and rights (in the south).

Seven chapters form the core of a book in which Seed explores the nuances of language and practice that distinguished English from Spanish “invention of Indians” as colonizers pursued virtue and tangible wealth in the Americas. The English, who found moral value in farming, ignored indigenous cultivation (done largely by women). By defining Indian society as one based on hunting—a male occupation in the Americas, but a leisure activity for elites and royalty back home since Norman times—settlers not only justified expropriation of “wasteland” for “planters” (English settlers), but also paved the way for future stereotypes of the lazy (male) Indian and for the twentieth-century claim that cultural origin was grounds for refusal to grant indigenous communities rights to intensive cultivation of land.

The Spanish, in contrast, aimed to extract gold and silver for export to Spain, not to produce agricultural wealth or moral strength in farming. Thus, Spaniards justified exacting mineral tribute and labor from conquered indigenous societies as fair return for converting “cannibals” to “Christians.” Instead of taking land—settlers and natives alike owned land to produce foodstuffs, while Spain drew from Moorish law to retain ownership of the minerals and other underground deposits—the Spaniards robbed the original residents of their autonomy. By separation or subjugation, Seed shows, both European practices upheld a system that continues to deny Spanish American indigenous communities the right to extract gold, diamonds, and oil and prevents North American Indian nations from developing land that they supposedly never cultivated.

To make her case, Seed turns to published sources, which range from the observations of conquerors to treatises on land law from both cultures and both sides of the Atlantic, to trace a rich history of ideas and legal practice. She leaves to others the task of fleshing out her sweeping argument through the judicial records, administrative reports, and private correspondence.

The rhythm of this meticulous comparative case study is broken by the addition of two stand-alone chapters. A single chapter on Portuguese colonialism shows that initial reliance on Jesuit missions

deprived Brazil's natives not just of mineral rights and labor but also of land, making it perhaps the most devastating model for contemporary peoples. However, this insight might have been woven into a more comprehensive "Iberian" treatment. Further, the chapter draws attention to Seed's silence about French and Dutch ideological and legal systems in the Americas and challenges to Spanish and British models in the land-poor and quickly depopulated Caribbean. Similarly, a chapter aptly titled "Fast Forward" flags the importance of the two-hundred year period between the colonial systems and present societies, but, in a mere ten pages, only hints at important connections and continuities.

American Pentimento raises the bar in the comparative tradition in Atlantic history by offering a new paradigm, not only of the "invention" of Indians as an ideological process, but also of the complex intertwining of morality, avarice, history, culture, and ideas drawn upon by European societies to justify their right to extract wealth—territories, minerals, labor—from the Americas. Reaching back, Seed demonstrates that it is imperative to understand the cultural origins of each colonizing society, and, looking forward, she convincingly shows how colonial ideologies defined the roles and boundaries that Native Americans seek to redefine in the present. For scholars and students of Atlantic history, this book is a virtuoso demonstration of how key themes such as cultural encounters, empire and governance, religion and society, Atlantic economy, and the circulation of ideas can, as the metaphor in Seed's title implies, be painted into a multilayered picture that, when scratched, reveals links between past and present. *American Pentimento* will provoke lively discussions in graduate seminars and advanced-level undergraduate courses in colonial, Atlantic, and, it is hoped, European intellectual history for some time to come.

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Dear Brother: Letters of William Clark to Jonathan Clark. Edited by James J. Holmberg. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, in association with the Filson Historical Society, 2002. Pp. xxx, 322. Illustrations, introduction, notes, sources cited, index. \$35.00.)

It has been William Clark's fate always to be overshadowed, first by his brother, George Rogers Clark, and subsequently by the mercurial Meriwether Lewis. Yet he was a considerable figure in his own right. A veteran of Indian wars in the Old Northwest before joining Lewis's great journey of discovery, he held important posts