

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

A decade ago, representatives from a host of concerned institutions met at Austin, Texas to plan the inauguration of a journal dedicated to the multi-disciplinary needs of research and scholarly communication among Latin Americanists. Notwithstanding the absence of a national association at that time, the collaborative energies of numerous individuals and institutions succeeded in bringing forth the *Latin American Research Review*. Since 1965 the journal has served as a forum for topical reviews, research reports, and the exchange of professional information. Under the energetic leadership first of Richard P. Schaedel and more recently of Thomas F. McGann, LARR has performed effectively in contributing to ongoing scholarship and pedagogy in the broad, often diverse realm of Latin American studies. As intended by the founders, editorial responsibilities and institutional staffing were to be transferred periodically, thereby assuring the infusion of new ideas while broadening the experience and benefits offered by LARR itself. It was within this context that the Executive Council of the Latin American Studies Association, meeting in May 1973 at the Fourth National Convention in Madison, Wisconsin, approved the bid from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Now, with the appearance of our first issue we, the incoming editorial staff, would like to share our plans and thinking with LARR's readership.

In attempting to maintain and to build upon the tradition of excellence established by our predecessors, we are committed to the widest and most extensive exchange within the world of Latin American scholarship. Substantial expansion of the Editorial Board and the convening of occasional meetings—the first of which was held at San Francisco last November—have been designed to encourage and augment our sources of advice and guidance. The Board was structured to be as representative as possible, providing a blend of senior and junior scholars from many disciplines. This is to be a working board whose members will play an active role in LARR editorial decisions. In addition, we shall stress communication through the frequent attendance by either one or both of the Editors at conferences of Latin Americanists. Whether participating officially on programs or speaking more informally with those in attendance, we will seek to maintain close and responsive contact with Latin Americanists. We strongly urge that you write us with your advice, criticisms, ideas, and suggestions. Whether or not you are pleased with LARR under

our stewardship, please let us know. The only effective insurance that LARR serves the interests of its readership is to receive communication from you.

We have adopted some revisions in content and format which deserve comment. The research-reviews on selected topics remain central to LARR in fulfilling the primary purpose for which it was originated. We expect to rely basically on manuscripts which arrive unannounced in the mail, but we reserve the right to commission pieces, and we already have contacted a number of scholars to solicit possible manuscripts for future publication. The quality and diversity of the research-reviews obviously depend upon the extent to which we have the opportunity to examine significant work. With the guidance of our Editorial Board and outside referees, we can avoid publication of unimportant or mediocre articles. The availability of outstanding pieces, however, is a matter over which the editors can exercise somewhat less influence. Moreover, the dearth of contributions in some important disciplines during the first nine years of LARR, most notably in language, literature, and the arts, further reflects patterns of submission. All of our encouragement, solicitation, and entreaties can be productive only through the response of Latin Americanists here and abroad.

We have revamped and expanded the section entitled "Research Reports and Notes." Here, our intention is to publish contributions of varying lengths including research designs, interim reports on research in progress, methodological discussions, and detailed accounts of the activities of research centers in Latin America. These contributions, which we are already soliciting and will be presenting regularly, will serve the dual purpose of informing LARR's readers of work in progress from a variety of disciplines, concomitantly strengthening the links between scholars in this country and their colleagues throughout the hemisphere. These will not duplicate materials already available in the Current Research Inventory, which we will continue to compile annually. As will become evident, we are decreasing substantially the reporting of such miscellaneous items as the listing of past meetings, movement of professionals, assorted institutional notes, and the like. These we have placed in the capable hands of Felicity Trueblood, Editor of the *LASA Newsletter*. We hope to avoid the repetition of information in both LARR and the *Newsletter*. With the latter itself having become an important and useful vehicle for communication among Latin Americanists, the arrangement should be mutually beneficial. The presentation of such material in the *Newsletter* will also free additional pages in LARR for articles and reports.

With this issue the *Latin American Research Review* inaugurates a

new section, "Books in Review," under the direct responsibility of the Associate Editor. While the constraints of time have prevented us from printing here more than a fraction of what we hope will be the normal coverage of this section, our goal is to commission review essays of several works on the same subject in addition to conventional book reviews and notes. Ideally, the vehicle of extended reviews will provide yet another medium through which Latin Americanists can communicate their ideas and opinions to one another.

Our editorial procedures in the handling and evaluation of manuscripts should be a matter of record. The Editor and/or Associate Editor read and give a preliminary assessment to each piece which is received. At this stage our major concern revolves about the appropriateness of the manuscript insofar as LARR editorial policy is concerned. Except in those cases in which we feel strongly that the subject matter or the author's orientation suggests a different journal is advisable, we will forward the manuscript immediately to a member of the Editorial Board without prior notification, and a report is returned within three weeks' time. When the manuscript goes to a non-Board referee for evaluation, a card is sent in advance. If we learn that the reader cannot accept the assignment promptly, we will go to another person. The Editors share a strong concern over the problem of delay from author's date of submission to receipt of an editorial decision, and will do our utmost to facilitate the process. It is our fervent hope that we can send a definitive reply to an author within no more than three months of the date of submission. At this writing, the relative absence of a backlog of articles permits prompt publication once a manuscript is accepted. LARR will continue to avoid the circumstance, so common with many professional journals, in which an accepted article may gather dust for 12 to 18 months before finally seeing the light of day.

As a final note, we want to reiterate our appreciation for the unstinting cooperation of the Texas staff of LARR. Thomas F. McGann, Cheryl Wilkins, and Arlene Moody have been more than generous in working with us through the many months necessary to consummate the transfer to the University of North Carolina. Their unqualified aid and advice have been indispensable. Beyond this inadequate expression of gratitude, we can only hope to continue the fine work that the readership of LARR has come to expect. Again, we invite and urge all of you to share with us your comments, wishes, and collective wisdom. In this way, the *Latin American Research Review* can further the objective of intellectual discourse and dialogue which all of us pursue for the benefit of Latin American studies.

JOHN D. MARTZ, *Editor*

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