

**Renaissance and Reformation**  
**Renaissance et Réforme**



**Quinones, Ricardo J. North/South: The Great European Divide**

David M. Posner

Volume 40, numéro 3, été 2017

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086158ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28762>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Posner, D. (2017). Compte rendu de [Quinones, Ricardo J. North/South: The Great European Divide]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 40(3), 325–327. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28762>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2017

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

**é**rudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Fernand Braudel, and engaging in a philologically meticulous close reading of an epic poem with attention to rhyme scheme. This guy can do it all. In sum, a dazzling debut from a young scholar who is destined to make his mark on our profession. I can't wait to read whatever he writes next.

HILAIRE KALLENDORF

Texas A&M University

**Quinones, Ricardo J.**

***North/South: The Great European Divide.***

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016. Pp. xi, 177. ISBN 978-1-4875-0005-4 (hardcover) \$50.

The eminent and prolific comparatist Ricardo J. Quinones has covered a great deal of intellectual ground in the course of his long career, and the present volume constitutes, among other things, a kind of high-altitude retrospective over some (but not all) of that career's major way-stations. Well-known as a scholar of Dante, of literary Modernism, and of Renaissance literature and culture, Quinones turns his attention here to the time-honoured problem of the cultural, social, and historical divergences between northern and southern Europe. He is fully aware that he is treading a well-worn path with a lot of company, and does not shy from engaging predecessors like Montesquieu, Max Weber, Mme de Staël, and Jean Bodin.

*North/South* is structured according to four master concepts, set forth in the preface and revisited repeatedly in the course of the book: Christian liberty, skepticism (Christian or secular), tolerance, and time. At first glance, these concepts may seem too vast or vague to be useful, but they come into sharper focus when linked to the author's previous work, where each of them receives more substantial definition and treatment; as one example, the last of them, time, is exhaustively thought through in the author's first book, *The Renaissance Discovery of Time* (1972). Likewise, the present book's binary title manifests a connection with the author's *Dualisms: The Agons of the Modern World* (2007), and indeed agonistic pairings (with echoes of René Girard and Harold Bloom) are everywhere in *North/South*, beginning and ending with the geographical division of the title, but along the way revisiting oppositional pairs

like Erasmus/Luther, England/Spain, Protestant/Catholic, industry/agriculture, skepticism/belief, and so on. It is of course all too easy to fall into trivial cultural stereotypes in this kind of discussion, and while Quinones consciously resists doing so, he is not always wholly successful; in this, however, he is at least in good company (e.g., Montesquieu).

The book comprises eleven short chapters, each of which engages one or more of the author's four master concepts with reference to specific texts, in an attempt to show the development of the north-south divide over time. Situating the origins of that divide—uncontroversially, at least to readers of this journal—in the Renaissance, Quinones structures his intermittent and recursive narrative as one of decline, intertwining it with an account of the gradually increasing polarization of Protestantism and Catholicism. He is concerned above all with showing the unfolding of big ideas in history, and if this sounds suspiciously Hegelian, the author cheerfully owns up to it in chapter 7, "Centring the Great Bases in Thought," a paean to Hegel's understanding of history that is in some ways the conceptual heart of the book. In tone and argument it seems initially to stand apart from the other chapters, which appear more concretely grounded in texts and history, but in fact it gives to the rest of the book a theoretical structure that might otherwise have been difficult to discern. One might do well to read this chapter after the preface and first chapter, and only then circle back to the rest of the book, whose brief looks at topics ranging from the decline of Spain, to climatological explanations for national cultures, to the problem of free speech in John Stuart Mill are better understood from within this conceptual framework. The penultimate chapter, whose title ("The Pending Revival of the South") resonates in an unfortunate way with the American reader, brings this argument of ideas into the present. It makes a case for Spanish Romanticism and *modernismo* as the beginnings of a kind of cultural recovery, and reminds us that the *pensée de midi* of Camus offers us a salutary way forward, recuperating a Mediterranean perspective that has been too long neglected.

The book often moves almost too rapidly, leaving at times an impression of superficiality, or perhaps a sense that we are reading an (erudite and entertaining) undergraduate lecture rather than something more substantial or scholarly. It might, however, be fairer to say that this book should be read in conjunction with the author's earlier work; indeed, Quinones himself situates *North/South* as the third element of a quasi-trilogy, the first two components

of which are *Dualisms* and *Erasmus and Voltaire: Why They Still Matter* (2010). (Erasmus and Voltaire, not incidentally, figure prominently in the present volume's discussions of tolerance and skepticism.) Read in this way, the sketches he offers here become more finished drawings with detail and depth. It is also true that the ideas on offer in *North/South* are not just elaborations or restatements of earlier arguments, but also in some cases correctives, redirections of, or polyphonic alternatives to those arguments. All the more reason, then, to read this slim volume as a kind of revisionary coda to the more weighty volumes Quinones has already published.

DAVID M. POSNER

Loyola University Chicago

**Rajchenbach-Teller, Elise.**

***“Mais devant tous est le Lyon marchant”: Construction littéraire d’un milieu éditorial et livres de poésie française à Lyon (1536–1551).***

Geneva: Droz, 2016. Pp. 597 + 18 ill. ISBN 978-2-600-01882-1 (paperback) US\$98.40.

One of the basic premises underlying the argument of this book is that all literary productions are collaborations. This concept is by no means new; it has emerged as one of the basic tenets of the approach known as “histoire du livre” in French and “Book History and Print Culture” in English. The author uses this premise to build a sophisticated and compelling argument about how a diverse group—of poets, printers, booksellers, and editors—came together to create a literary identity for the city of Lyons during the decade-and-a-half between 1536 and 1551 through the publication of vernacular poetry collections. Eschewing the traditional notion of an “École lyonnaise” of poetry driven by poets, the author tells a story about how a wide-ranging cast of characters created a myth of the city in which vernacular poetry, commerce, and good letters become its distinguishing features.

The book is divided into three main parts. The first part presents a prosopography of the main actors in the promotion of French vernacular literature. The second part elaborates the range of symbols and images of Lyons used to create the myth of Lyons as a political and cultural centre. The final