introverted dreamscapes of Georgia O'Keefe and Marsden Hartley. Howard Lamar observes that "all of these painters have come to terms with place—indeed with nature" (p. 190), and he senses a feeling of belonging that was missing in previous periods.

Discovered Lands, Invented Pasts is not only a survey of the development of Western American art; it is also a striking example of human perception—the tendency to see what one wants to see. The American myths of discovery, pioneer spirit, and rugged individualism are too deeply rooted to be erased by simple facts such as the disappearance of the real frontier. The essays in this book unravel several dimensions of Western art, and the numerous color and black-and-white prints illustrate the theme well. A bibliography would have given interested readers the opportunity to look deeper into the subject. In addition, the book should have included a list of the plates of paintings represented in the exhibition accompanying this book and a description of the exhibition itself. The book is certainly more than a mere exhibition catalog and can stand on its own, but I am sure it will entice everybody who has a chance to go and see this temporary exhibition, either at Yale University Art Gallery from 19 September 1992 until 3 January 1993 or at Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, from 6 February to 11 April 1993.

Cornelia S. Feye

In Defense of the Indians. By Bartolomé de Las Casas; translated and edited by Stafford Poole, C. M. Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992. 410 pages. $18.00 paper.

In August 1992, five hundred years after participating in the genocidal invasion of Central America, the Roman Catholic church of Guatemala asked the Mayan Indians for pardon. The bishops' pastoral letter to that effect cited "errors and contradictions in the actions of members of the church that have fallen unjustly on the indigenous people . . . . We, the current pastors of the church, ask for forgiveness."

The contemporary Guatemalan bishops, however, are in the minority. The Vatican is celebrating "500 years of Christian evangelism" and pushing forward with the process of canonization of Junipero Serra, the Franciscan missionary who established the California mission system, the primary colonizing institution of

the Spanish in California—as Dominican Fray Bartolomé de las Casas had been in the sixteenth-century church.

In Defense of the Indians is the sole English translation, in its entirety, of Las Casas's 1550 argument against the position of Spanish theologian Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who had justified Spanish ("just") warfare against and enslavement of the indigenous peoples of Mexico and Guatemala. The treatise has been newly translated from Latin—Las Casas wrote the treatise in Spanish, but only the Latin translation has survived—and edited by Reverend Stafford Poole. The translator provides a clear, American English version without sacrificing Las Casas's style, which is "repetitive, verbose, technical, and often filled with close scholastic reasoning" (p. xxvi). The publication is welcome and timely.

The editor has provided an excellent table of contents, with summaries of each chapter and twenty-two pages of helpful endnotes organized by chapter and page. However, the reader aches for an exhaustive index, and, most certainly, the nonspecialist would be aided by a historical essay as a framework for reading the treatise: The five-page foreword by Martin E. Marty of the University of Chicago, and the eight-page editor's preface, although useful and interesting, are inadequate. A listing of all of Las Casas's exhaustive writings that have been published, along with a bibliography of scholarly books and articles on his life and work, would have been useful to scholars and students.

The significance of Las Casas's decades of experience with the native peoples of Mexico and Central America cannot be overestimated: Las Casas witnessed the period of initial brutal Spanish military invasion and its aftermath of protracted native resistance and Spanish warfare, enslavement of the Indians and harsh working conditions, which led to deadly smallpox epidemics and saw the destruction of tens of millions—90 percent of the population—with ancient cities and vast expanses of irrigated farmlands in ruins. Nor should Las Casas's role as "defender of the Indians" be underestimated in modifying Spanish colonial institutions and laws, codified at the end of the sixteenth century in the "Laws of the Indies."

Juxtaposing the state (the federated crowns of Castille and Aragon), as expressed by its lapdog, Sepúlveda, and the church, as expressed by Las Casas, cannot help but make Las Casas appear to be a protector of the Indians in the face of state aggression. Actually, what Las Casas represents is the flip side of the coin of modern colonial-

ism and an absolutely integral part of the process—paternalism, Christian evangelism as pacifier of native populations.

The recent film *The Mission* neatly, albeit unintentionally—the project was initiated and financed by the Society of Jesus—dramatizes the nature of the conflict between the religious and the secular. But, whether the native peoples are hunted down and enslaved by agents of the state or congregated into missions, their way of life and self-determination are destroyed permanently.

Too often—the film as well as most presentations of Las Casas, including the book under review, are guilty of this—the missionary is viewed as a savior, rather than personifying another form of colonialism, perhaps even more insidious in its subtlety. It would be historically retrograde to (justifiably) vilify Columbus (representative of the state) while viewing Las Casas as a heroic figure. As Professor Marty notes in his foreword to *In Defense of the Indians*, "[A]s the stock of Columbus has turned bearish, that of Las Casas has gone bullish."

In reading and assessing Las Casas, one should keep in mind that he never once questioned Spanish authority and colonialism in the Americas but only the means employed to accomplish control of the native population. It is well known— and Professor Marty makes the point—that, in 1516, Las Casas proposed that African slaves be transported to America to supply badly needed labor. In his *Historia de las Indias*, written many years later, Las Casas expressed regret for the idea and conceded that Africans should also be treated as human beings and not be enslaved. Still, he did not question colonialism or attempt to resolve the labor issue.

Many would argue, and Professor Marty does so, that Las Casas must be viewed in the context of the times, and no historian would take issue with that cautionary note. However, the missing character in Las Casas's writings and railings, as well as most current accounts of the period, is that of Spanish jurist Francisco de Vitoria—"the father of international law"—and a contemporary of Las Casas and Sepúlveda. Las Casas refers to Vitoria only in passing on four occasions in *Defense of the Indians* and rarely in his other works. Indeed, in his *Apología*, Las Casas strongly asserted that Vitoria had little or no influence on his thinking. Las Casas was truthful—his paternalistic arguments have little in common with the legal reasoning of Vitoria, who posited that no crown (state) has the right to invade and claim the territory of another people and that all peoples have the right to self-determination.

If Las Casas's views are not considered in relation to Vitoria's, the *zeitgeist* of early sixteenth-century Spain is distorted. Vitoria, who never visited the American colonies, maintained,

- The Vatican—"Holy Roman Empire"—possessed no sovereign right.
- The pope had no legal authority.
- Punishment of those who refused conversion to Christianity was legally unjustified.
- There was no justification for despoiling unbelievers of their land in order to punish them for their alleged wickedness.
- The Spaniards were not the messengers of God.
- Both property and sovereignty existed among the indigenous peoples of America, and their territories could not be regarded as *terra nullius*—vacant land.
- Territories subject to preexisting sovereignties, however rudimentary, could not be acquired by occupation.
- If the fact of having discovered an inhabited world gave Europeans the option of taking it into possession, the Indians would have just as much right to extend their sovereignty over Spanish or other European lands.
- Cession of sovereignty performed by an indigenous sovereign in a treaty later ratified by the colonialists could not constitute an invulnerable title—the ignorance of the assignor, the psychological disproportion between the contracting parties, and the use of force that vitiated consent made these treaties unequal.

Thus, Vitoria concluded that the titles whereby America had been acquired and dominated were invalid in law.

Although Vitoria's legal theory was ignored by the European rush to empire, it has persisted as the fundamental basis of "the law of nations" or international law. In the 1975 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice at The Hague, which concluded that the Spanish-colonized tribes of the western Sahara had the right to independence—the territory had been annexed by neighboring Morocco when the Spanish pulled out—Vitoria was cited by the World Court:

> It is well known that in the sixteenth century, Francisco de Vitoria protested against the application to the American Indians, in order to deprive them of their lands, of the concept of *res nullius*. This approach by the eminent Spanish jurist and

> canonist was adopted by Vattel in the nineteenth century . . . the concept which should be adopted today.

What is useful in Las Casas's work is his nearly anthropological observations of the native peoples he encountered, always insisting, however, that they would make ideal Spanish "subjects" if "properly" treated. If Las Casas is read in terms of his being one kind of agent of colonialism, rather than a "defender of the Indians," his writings reveal that soft underbelly of colonialism and imperialism still very much with us today. An observation of the duality of imperialism by the late historian, William Appleman Williams comes to mind:

> We Americans . . . have produced very, very few anti-imperialists. Our idiom has been empire, and so the primary division was and remains between the soft and the hard (*Empire as a Way of Life*, 1980).

Las Casas's was perhaps the first "soft" imperialist, the precursor of the modern liberal.

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Letters from New France: The Upper Country, 1686-1783. Translated and edited by Joseph L. Peyser. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 248 pages. $34.95 cloth.

Any collection of original documents is welcome, especially if it makes records in another language available to a wider anglophone audience. One must be grateful to the University of Illinois Press for its decision to publish. This book contains a selection of documents, often just parts of them, relating to the northwest territory of New France, the *pays d'en haut*, which included the lands west of the Ottawa River and around the Great Lakes. (In 1717, the Illinois territory between the Mississippi and Wabash/Ohio valleys was attached to the colony of Louisiana, which covered all land to the south along the Mississippi.) It includes some ninety-two pages of history written by the editor, 108 pages of documents, twenty pages of terse endnotes, eleven pages of tables in appendices, and two pages of bibliography. To put this in perspective, the equivalent of ten to twenty-five pages (UIP format) of documents