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*All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the
Iberian Atlantic World* (review)

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REVIEWS

SCHWARTZ, STUART B. *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2008. xiii + 336 pp.

In this engaging book, Stuart B. Schwartz (George Burton Adams Professor of History at Yale University) explores early modern popular religious dissidence and toleration in the Iberian Atlantic world. Schwartz conceives of this study as a “cultural history of thought” (6), relying on stories about largely unknown common folk, whose doubts and dissenting views about salvation, sex, and other religious issues challenged Roman Catholic orthodoxy. Although Schwartz has drawn his data from Inquisition records in Spain, Portugal, the Canary Islands, the Spanish Indies, and Brazil, he eschews a quantitative method in favor of presenting serial microhistories of religious nonconformists on both sides of the Atlantic. He argues that these stories show basic patterns and contexts that help explain the widespread prevalence of dissident views by atheists, relativists (who found truth in different religions), universalists (who thought all could achieve salvation), and skeptics. According to Schwartz, these rustic dissenters were everywhere, and by the eighteenth century their views had merged with Enlightenment ideas to produce greater freedom of religion and conscience in the Iberian Atlantic world. The result is a well written and carefully argued book that still leaves its readers in doubt about what these popular dissidents represented: Were they precursors of religious tolerance or just a few unorthodox cranks, denounced by fellow citizens to the Inquisition?

Ideas or beliefs that conflicted with Church dogma were propositions (*proposiciones*), and they were subject to the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal. Propositions fell into approximately five categories—blasphemy, sexual improprieties, criticisms of the Church or clergy, ideas in conflict with dogma, and offenses against the Inquisition. The Inquisition dealt with these propositions differently over time, depending on contemporary concerns and changing interpretations of dogma within the Church.

Many Jewish and Muslim converts to Christianity mixed elements of Catholicism with their former faiths. Although some Jews thought that the Law of Moses was the only route to salvation, many others had converted to Christianity and believed that either faith might be acceptable to God. Moreover, Jewish and Muslim converts alike were reluctant to believe that parents and ancestors suffered eternal damnation for their beliefs, as Church dogma instructed. The large *morisco* population in Iberia frequently became exponents of relativism, either feigning an acceptance of Christian precepts or taking the position that each person could be saved according to his or her own law. Portuguese courts prosecuted the same range of propositions as their Spanish counterparts, but they focused more attention on rooting out crypto-Jews. Schwartz argues that throughout the Iberian Peninsula, however, Old and New Christians, renegade Christians forced to live under Muslim rule in North Africa or Granada (before 1492), and doubters of all sorts (from learned theologians and intellectuals to humble folk) asserted that more than one path existed to salvation, in contradiction to Church law.

Heterodox religious thinking, popular dissidence, sexual license and illegitimacy, and religious relativism all thrived in Spanish and Portuguese America, where bureaucratic and social controls remained weaker than in the Iberian Peninsula. The presence of dense and highly civilized Amerindian populations in Spanish America and a large slave population in Portuguese Brazil also promoted both religious syncretism and greater toleration. Although efforts to extirpate idolatry and Andean religious practices represented a hard line against any non-Christian forms of religion, most churchmen in the Spanish Indies treated enduring pre-Columbian spiritual practices as “religious errors” that could be combated by education. Some learned thinkers even argued that indigenous or African religious traditions prepared the way for evangelization. Moreover, local or popular religious traditions flourished in the New World—local shrines, festivals, chapels, confraternities, and the canonization of American saints. Schwartz argues that all of these traditions promoted the idea that there were multiple paths to salvation.

According to Schwartz, this popular substratum favoring freedom of conscience and religious relativism in the Iberian Atlantic world merged with the philosophical, political, and religious changes associated with the European Enlightenment to produce a greater level of religious freedom. The Inquisition became weakened

in the second half of the eighteenth century, and prosecutions of religious dissent became more uncommon, as the Inquisitors concentrated mostly on censorship. He points out, however, that the French Revolution, the Napoleonic invasion, and conservative elements in the newly independent Latin American nations reinforced Catholic orthodoxy for a time, but the overall trend was toward greater freedom of conscience and choice in religious matters.

The thesis that a long tradition of religious tolerance existed throughout the Spanish and Portuguese Empires is intriguing, yet the evidence presented in *All Can Be Saved* leaves the reader with a series of unanswered questions. How representative were these dissident common folk, and how widely accepted were their unorthodox beliefs? After all, people brought before the Inquisition were guilty of actions that most citizens apparently accepted as transgressions or even serious crimes, for without popular support the Inquisition's power would have withered, as it did by the late eighteenth century. Moreover, Schwartz admits that these dissenters were likely a minority in their own societies, and it is difficult to determine from the Inquisition cases presented just how these unorthodox ideas shaped popular attitudes throughout the Iberian Atlantic world over time. In addition, how did these ideas change over time, and what was the nature of their relationship to the spread of religious tolerance by the late eighteenth century? Even a quantitative analysis of these cases (which Schwartz self-consciously decides not to employ) would have provided few convincing answers to such questions. Nonetheless, Stuart Schwartz has provided an ambitious study of religious tolerance and dissidence that encompasses the whole Iberian Atlantic world over a long time period, and his provocative thesis will undoubtedly provoke controversy and stimulate new research.

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KAMINSKY, AMY K. *Argentina: Stories for a Nation*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008. 283 pp.

Amy Kaminsky's earlier books consolidated her reputation as an original and wide-ranging critic of Hispanic literatures. *Reading the Body Politic* (1992) is an important intervention in debates about gender and sexuality in Latin American literature. In *After Exile* (1999), she told the story of Latin American exile literature—a fairly familiar story by now—through looking at literary production not in Spanish but in the languages of countries where some of the exiles ended up (particularly Swedish, since that is a language she herself knows well). Her anthol-