

# INEQUALITY AND IDEOLOGY IN BORDERLANDS HISTORIOGRAPHY

Ralph H. Vigil

University of Nebraska, Lincoln

- HOUSEHOLD LABOR PATTERNS AMONG MEXICAN AMERICANS IN SOUTH TEXAS.* By Elizabeth K. Briody. (New York: AMS Press, 1989. Pp. 432. \$57.50.)
- VIEWS FROM THE APACHE FRONTIER: REPORT ON THE NORTHERN PROVINCES OF NEW SPAIN.* By José Cortés. Edited by Elizabeth A. H. John, translated by John Wheat. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. Pp. 192. \$21.95.)
- LET THERE BE TOWNS: SPANISH MUNICIPAL ORIGINS IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST, 1610–1810.* By Gilbert R. Cruz. Foreword by Donald C. Cutter. (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1980. Pp. 236. \$24.95.)
- WHEN JESUS CAME, THE CORN MOTHERS WENT AWAY: MARRIAGE, SEXUALITY, AND POWER IN NEW MEXICO, 1500–1846.* By Ramón A. Gutiérrez. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991. Pp. 424. \$49.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.)
- SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE SOUTHWEST, 1350–1880.* By Thomas D. Hall. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989. Pp. 287. \$35.00.)
- LIFE AND LABOR ON THE BORDER: WORKING PEOPLE OF NORTHEASTERN SONORA, MEXICO, 1886–1986.* By Josiah M. Heyman. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991. Pp. 247. \$40.00.)
- THROWN AMONG STRANGERS: THE MAKING OF MEXICAN CULTURE IN FRONTIER CALIFORNIA.* By Douglas Monroy. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991. Pp. 355. \$29.95.)
- PEDRO DE RIVERA AND THE MILITARY REGULATIONS FOR NORTHERN NEW SPAIN, 1724–1729.* By Thomas H. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer, S.J. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988. Pp. 367. \$40.00.)
- TEJANO ORIGINS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SAN ANTONIO.* Edited by Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991. Pp. 198. \$19.95.)
- SPANISH BLUECOATS: THE CATALONIAN VOLUNTEERS IN NORTHWESTERN NEW SPAIN, 1767–1810.* By Joseph P. Sánchez. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990. Pp. 196. \$30.00 cloth, \$15.95 paper.)

Francisco de Quevedo, acerbic critic of the world of appearance that characterized seventeenth-century Spanish society, characterized read-

ing yesterday's authors as a conversation with the past in which the eyes listen to the dead. He failed to note, however, that something similar occurs when reading historians of the present who write about the past. In both cases, the "conversation" is one-sided, indirect in that ear and voice have been replaced by eye and printed page, and uncertain because readers must "listen" to representations of past events shaped by the particular author's personality, circumstances, and interests.

Given the choice between "conversing" with a book written by a dead soul gone to grass or one of more recent vintage, I prefer to read the older histories. Because the dead cannot be summoned to elucidate what they have written, readers have the advantage of judging the accuracy of their accounts in the light of hindsight.

In this post-Christian era that has dispensed philosophically with eternal verities formalized by a universal church, readers recognize the affinity between social position on the one hand and thought and action on the other. Guided by Karl Mannheim's insight that humans "act with and against each other in diversely organized groups," scholars recognize that much of what was written in the past largely reflected the modes of thought of an upper stratum "stabilized on the basis of authority."<sup>1</sup> In the case of the Spanish-Mexican borderlands, an isolated frontier society on the northern frontier of New Spain, custom ruled; and the values and standards that maintained the existing order formed part of a scholastic worldview interpreted by priests and civil officials.

While it is comparatively easy to recognize the ideological and utopian elements of thought in accounts of the Southwest recorded in Spanish and Mexican times, the world we live in at the end of the twentieth century no longer enjoys a common frame of reference for either the past or the present. Since the 1960s, it has become apparent that Europe and America have "been splintered into countless fragments of atomized individuals and groups."<sup>2</sup> Divergent worldviews arise in a society divided into classes, generations, haves, have-nots, racial and ethnic groups, support groups, vested interest groups, specializations within disciplines, and the like. Clashing modes of thought compete, and depending on one's particular perspective, the past viewed in the light of the present is perceived variously by different groups and their leaders. As Mannheim commented, "What was a king for one was a tyrant for another."<sup>3</sup>

Despite the diversity of U.S. society, the melting-pot theory of U.S.

1. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, translated by Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, n.d.; first published in 1936), 4–8, 276.

2. *Ibid.*, p. xxiii. Perhaps the best example of "the absence of common values in society" is the "schizoid subjectivism" of much contemporary art. See Roland N. Stromberg, *After Everything: Western Intellectual History since 1945* (New York: St. Martin's, 1975), 94.

3. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 23.

history prevailed in high school and college textbooks up through the 1950s. As Diane Ravitch has explained, this approach attempted to neutralize social, economic, religious, racial, and ethnic differences “by ignoring them.”<sup>4</sup> In the case of borderlands historiography, the literature of the 1950s continued to reflect a conservative bent despite the appearance of Carey McWilliams’s *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States in 1949*.<sup>5</sup>

McWilliams’s brilliant synthetic study lacked primary sources and full documentation, sometimes contradicted itself, and remains what I have characterized elsewhere as “an impressionistic study that has aspects of New Deal Liberalism mingled with benign condescension.”<sup>6</sup> But even with its flaws and McWilliams’s untenable idea that the Indian part of the cultural and racial inheritance of Mexicans and Mexican Americans was “more important than the Spanish,” he correctly perceived that the Hispanic heritage of the borderlands was originally “one heritage, unified in time.”<sup>7</sup>

McWilliams further noted that the Spanish part of the Hispanic heritage was itself fractured into two parts after being split. Although he was chiefly concerned with the fantasy heritage of the borderlands that exalted dead “Spaniards” and despised live “Mexicans,” this dichotomy in the Spanish tradition is most apparent in interpretations of Spanish-Indian relations. The counterpart of the White Legend, which emphasizes Spain’s civilizing mission and the humanitarian aspects of its colonial policy, is the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty and injustice during the conquest and exploitation of the Native American civilizations.<sup>8</sup>

Chicano studies, which emerged in the 1960s, initially focused on an intense but simplistic concern with defining Chicano ethnic identity, and much of this literature lacked historical perspective. Emphasis was placed on the Indian heritage, romanticized by selective interpretation, and on Mexico’s “Indian” and “mestizo” heroes. The Hispanic heritage thus remained polarized, and the myth of the Mexican American past created by “Anglo” social scientists and writers was replaced by newer myths. As I have noted elsewhere, the Chicano, portrayed in some versions as a trilingual, bronze descendant of Mexican Indians and African

4. Diane Ravitch, “Multiculturalism, E Pluribus Plures,” *American Scholar* 59 (Summer 1990):337–54.

5. Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, reprinted in 1968 by Greenwood Press and translated into Spanish in the same year. The edition I have used is a new one, updated by Matt S. Meier and published by Praeger in 1990.

6. Ralph H. Vigil, “The New Borderlands History: A Critique,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 48 (July 1973):189–208.

7. McWilliams, *North from Mexico*, 29.

8. See *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New*, edited by Charles Gibson (New York: Knopf, 1971).

slaves, was depicted in an all too angelic light and was unrecognizable to students of human nature.<sup>9</sup> Dismissal of the Spanish past and emphasis on the Indian heritage by Chicano activists thus failed to acknowledge the cultural influence of Spain in America, most evident in the language and religion of Spanish-speaking borderlanders and the Mexican migrants of the twentieth century.

### Two Eighteenth-Century Spanish Accounts

Examples of the older historical literature that reflect ideological positions are General Pedro de Rivera's official reports on the status of the military posts of northern New Spain in the 1720s and Lieutenant José Cortés's report of 1799. As Thomas Naylor and Charles Polzer observe in their handsome edition, *Pedro de Rivera and the Military Regulations for Northern New Spain, 1724–1729*, the presidio assumed new importance during a century of national reconstruction and the defense of "an already over-burdened colonial system with limited finances." The need to economize while still defending the missions and civil settlements of the north was considered important, as was protecting the "established routes of silver transport" (p. 2).

Rivera's report of his frontier inspection generally confirms that soldiers at the presidios were ignorant of their duties, lacked offensive and defensive arms, and were charged inflated prices for supplies. Although his report is chiefly concerned with the status of the presidios, Rivera reveals a bit about the social order that prevailed in the Interior Provinces.

At the military post located in Santa Fe, Rivera dismissed twenty "worthless and useless" reserve officers. He considered the eighty men left in the company sufficient to protect the province. Among those dismissed were some who also received wages as district magistrates (*alcaldes mayores*). According to Rivera, these civil officials, while exercising their rights as soldiers in their jurisdictions, had harmed the public, especially the Indians. Rivera considered the Indians of New Mexico to be hard workers: "As a result, all these Indians are wealthy, and even the poorest have enough to live comfortably" (p. 217). The report pointed out that most Indians owned horses, assisted the presidial soldiers in the campaigns at their own cost, maintained good customs, and did not drink to excess.

José Cortés's report on the northern provinces seventy years later placed the region in a broad global context. Recently translated, it was given the title *Views from the Apache Frontier* by its editor, Elizabeth John. Cortés, aware of England's "limitless" commercial ambitions and the

9. See Vigil, "The New Borderlands History," p. 193; p. 204, n. 26.

expanding borders of the United States, pointed out the danger that these two powers posed to New Spain's northern frontier.

As a Spanish patriot who believed in his country's civilizing mission, Cortés attacked the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty and injustice, which had become a major theme of foreign writers. A well-read, keen observer influenced by Enlightenment thought, Cortés differentiated among Indian groups. For example, his discussion of the Apaches stated that if these hardy, polygamous people "had a defender who could represent their rights on the basis of natural law, an impartial judge could soon see that every charge we might make against them would be offset by as many crimes committed by our side. There are old and recent documents that cover and support my assertion" (p. 30). While Cortés admired the courageous Apaches and the bold and truthful Comanches, he also wrote of the savagery of other Indian groups. For example, he reported that the Taovayas of the Red River had good qualities but treated their captives cruelly: "[The Taovayas] copulate in the vilest manner, and exhibit other abominable inclinations" (p. 85). Cortés further observed that given the long experience of Spaniards with the Indians of the Texas coast and adjacent islands, these Indians of defective character and cannibalistic inclinations should either be settled in missions far from the coast or killed, "sparing no one but the innocent young" (p. 89).

As a military officer who believed that seeking peace with the Apaches entailed both military force and gentle persuasion, Cortés underscored the importance of pacifying the Indians through the institutions of the presidio and the mission. He also praised the "faithful, long-suffering" soldiers defending the interior provinces and the work of friars like Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez, "a priest of very worthy ideas, great integrity, and well-recognized virtue" (p. 106).

### *Late-Twentieth-Century Interpretations of Colonial Realities*

One example of the new historiography focusing on the art of war and the actions of soldiers is Joseph Sánchez's *Spanish Bluecoats: The Catalan Volunteer in Northwestern New Spain, 1767–1810*. Various historical works, beginning with Hubert Howe Bancroft, have offered details about this military unit. Sánchez has mined these studies and archival documents to place the Catalan Volunteers "within the greater picture of the Bourbon Reforms and the defense of the Spanish empire" (p. xvii).

Between 1767 and 1815, the Catalan Volunteers played roles in pacifying Sonora, colonizing and defending California, exploring the Pacific Northwest, and fighting in the war for Mexican independence. *Spanish Bluecoats* is mainly concerned with the Catalan Volunteers' various assignments and activities as colonizers, but biographical sketches

of officers shed light on their personalities and provide information about their behavior as viewed by Father Junípero Serra, subordinates, and civil officials.

The Indians of California and the Pacific Northwest are mentioned in this study but are usually characterized merely as either friendly or hostile. Sánchez does point out that some Catalonian troopers married Indian women in California. One example was Antonio Yorba, "whose family today represents an important link to California's past, dating back to the 1769 founding expedition" (p. 128)

Works dealing with the military history of Spain in the borderlands demonstrate the evolving concept of war from medieval to modern times. Changes brought about in military life and discipline in the eighteenth century were directly related to other Bourbon reforms. As Naylor and Polzer observe, "Military dominance did not engulf the northern provinces until the mission system serving the native populations had weakened considerably and until social and economic life had stagnated from fierce native resistance and diminishing royal subsidy" (p. 1). Attitudes toward Indians and the rules of war, as found in these works, also demonstrate the middle ground between the early-sixteenth-century image of the Noble Savage and the view of many nineteenth-century Anglo-American and Mexican frontier settlers that Indians were lawless savages standing in the way of civilization.<sup>10</sup>

Cortés's eighteenth-century report is typical of the Age of the Enlightenment, which as Benjamin Keen has noted, "neither idolized the savage nor branded him with the stigma of an inherent inferiority."<sup>11</sup> Cortés's praise for the typical frontier soldier is also confirmed by more recent studies comparing the conduct of the leather-armored soldiers with that of members of the regular Spanish army.<sup>12</sup> For example, Sánchez observes that Fernando Javier de Rivera y Moncada, "a mestizo, was as good as any colonial frontier officer in the Spanish empire" (p. 66).

The eighteenth-century mind continued to pay lip service to the idea that warfare had limiting rules and was a contest between potential equals. But the Age of Reason, while largely attributing differences between savages and civilized humans to environment, "wrangled bitterly about the capacity, character, and achievement of the Indians." Keen has pointed out that the Enlightenment mentality also entertained "no serious

10. See, for example, Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 72–75; and Donaciano Vigil, *Arms, Indians, and the Mismanagement of New Mexico*, edited and translated by David J. Weber (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1986), 7.

11. Benjamin Keen, *The Aztec Image in Western Thought* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1971), 218.

12. See articles on the presidio and the *soldado de cuera* in *The Spanish Borderlands: A First Reader*, edited by Oakah L. Jones, Jr. (Los Angeles, Calif.: Lorrin L. Morrison, 1974). The essays were first published in the *Journal of the West*.

doubts concerning the superiority of civilization over savagery."<sup>13</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, the Noble Savage had been transformed from "a man of reason and good sense into a man of emotion and sensibility," in Robert Berkhofer's words.<sup>14</sup> Nineteenth-century romantic convention subsequently made much of the vanishing American and the "safely dead Indian" but also separated humans into superior and inferior races. Indians were viewed as alien others, and Anglo-Americans of the nineteenth century found it hard to accept former Mexican nationals of the newly conquered borderlands as equals.

Granted the essential truth of the Black Legend, there are degrees of evil and goodness. Not all Spaniards exploited Indians: many defended them while still others married them. Nor is it becoming for U.S. historians to decry the Spanish imperial enterprise while ignoring the basic truth enunciated years ago by Lesley Byrd Simpson: "[W]e are living in a land wrested from the Indians in a conquest just as ruthless and infinitely more thorough than that of Mexico."<sup>15</sup>

Given the great measure of ruthlessness displayed in the Spanish imperial enterprise, Spanish New World society nevertheless reserved a place for Indians and believed them capable of becoming Spaniards. In contrast, English and Anglo-American frontier settlers did not view Indians as a necessary part of society, and as John Francis Bannon observed, "counterparts to the friar and the padre rarely figured prominently in the story of the Anglo-American westward movement."<sup>16</sup> Conversion and assimilation were important Spanish aims, and rather than conducting a policy of "ethnocide," Spain created a multi-ethnic society with positive features not found in other colonization efforts then and now. As Jacques Lafaye and James Lockhart have argued, "One need only compare it with the Anglo-Saxon colonization of America, based on the containment or eventual elimination of the Indians instead of their assimilation or incorporation in colonial society, to realize that, to a great extent, the Spanish organization of a multiethnic society was a unique, although hardly perfect, achievement."<sup>17</sup>

The last five decades have witnessed various dissolutions in which whole nations have fragmented into ethnic groups. In the United States, ethnic movements in the 1960s included black nationalism and the similar agendas of Chicano and American Indian groups.<sup>18</sup> As I have noted

13. Keen, *The Aztec Image*, 218.

14. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*, 78.

15. Lesley Byrd Simpson, *Many Mexicos* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959), 25.

16. John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970), 5.

17. Jacques Lafaye and James Lockhart, "A Scholarly Debate: The Origins of Modern Mexico—Indigenistas vs. Hispanistas," *The Americas* 48 (Jan. 1992):315–30.

18. Stromberg, *After Everything*, 208.

elsewhere, the ethnic movements of the 1960s not only made the "regular majority" fearful but aroused ethnic self-consciousness among various descendants of turn-of-the century immigrants. "Tribalism" became apparent among those who were neither Nordic nor Anglo-Saxon (meaning White Anglo-Saxon Protestant or British-American). These "unmeltable ethnics" viewed Indians, Blacks, and Chicanos as "colored minorities" having "cultures of the poor."<sup>19</sup>

Tribalism in the United States increased in the 1980s and is now associated with the idea that what joins individuals together "is not the sharing of bread but the sharing of enemies," as Cormac McCarthy has phrased it.<sup>20</sup> Lip service is currently being given to cultural pluralism by various individuals representing various groups, but if culture may be defined as transmitted organized human behavior that continues over more than one generation, then it is obvious that the "minority experience," the "mainstream experience," and class differences based on economic and educational circumstances are probably as important as any "cultural" heritage in determining behavior and values among most people living in the United States.<sup>21</sup>

The current interest in ethnic, religious, racial, and gender conflict, which Robert Hughes has termed a "juvenile culture of complaint,"<sup>22</sup> makes it likely that Ramón Gutiérrez's study of marriage, sexuality, and power will engage readers interested in reexamining social relations between conquerors and conquered and between exploiters and victims. Gutiérrez discusses numerous aspects of this history of inequality in *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846*. But his chief aim is to give "voice to the mute and silent" by using three models of marriage to explain Pueblo Indian society, the seventeenth-century Spanish colony, and the colony reestablished after the 1693 reconquest of New Mexico. His introduction

19. Ralph H. Vigil, "New Ethnic Literature: A Review Essay," *New Mexico Historical Review* 49 (Apr. 1974):153–70.

20. See Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian or The Evening Redness in the West* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 307. This epic Western based on historical events personifies in Holden the judge the violence and depravity of U.S. westward expansion. He mistakenly believes that war against Indians is the ultimate game, failing to see that the murder of Indians and the marketing of Indian scalps are neither a contest nor a game with rules that "are absolutely binding and allow no doubt." As Johan Huizinga remarked, war's cultural function ended in the twentieth century with the theory of "total war." See Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon, 1955), 11, 209–10.

21. It is also obvious that whether one types oneself as an "ethnic," a member of a "minority," or part of "mainstream society," in the United States, everyone is influenced by the work place, the automobile, schools, and the mass media, all of which have helped create mass values, attitudes, and habits. Herbert Marcuse asked, "Can one really distinguish between the mass media as instruments of information and entertainment, and as agents of manipulation and indoctrination?" See Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon, 1966), 8.

22. Robert Hughes, "America's Culture of Complaint," *Time*, no. 139 (Feb. 1992):44–49.



to this social history readily acknowledges that “depth and breadth of coverage on many topics has been dictated by the limitations of the sources” (p. xix).

Because of the scarcity of sources on the worldview held by the Pueblo Indians when the Spaniards arrived and the sparse documentary record for the seventeenth-century Spanish colony, various of Gutiérrez’s statements and conclusions may be questioned. Moreover, important differences existed among the autonomous villages, which spoke distinct languages. Gutiérrez’s portrait of Pueblo society as expressed in sexuality and marriage is thus less detailed than his fuller examination of “how marriage structured inequality” in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (p. 27).

Much that Gutiérrez says about the Pueblos is debatable, and in other instances, his “facts” claim more than the sources warrant. For example, his statement that all the Pueblos were matrilineal in the sixteenth century is not proved (pp. 14, 79). Nor do the sources he cites agree with his statement that Pueblo “erotic behavior in its myriad forms (heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality) knew no boundaries of sex or age” in a matriarchal earthy paradise peopled by “libidinous women” and by men who generally “left their genitals exposed” (pp. 17–18).

In particular, Gutiérrez’s citation of Pedro de Castañeda and Hernando de Alarcón in his discussion of Pueblo *berdaches* is unwarranted (p. 72).<sup>23</sup> These two reports dealt with the sexual practices of the cannibalistic Acaxes and the Yuman peoples of the Colorado River rather than the Pueblos. Further, citing Castañeda on the friars’ comments about the bestial and public copulation of the Indians misleads the reader who is unaware that Castañeda was not a friar and that the statement was made in reference to the Acaxes of Culiacán, some distance removed from Pueblo country (p. 72; n. 99, p. 360). Gutiérrez also takes great liberties with Castañeda’s account of the Coronado expedition, which reported that the monogamous Pueblo Indians were a chaste, modest, clean, hard-working people free of the vices of drunkenness, sodomy, cannibalism, theft, and human sacrifice.

Limitations of space preclude questioning other details of Gutiérrez’s version of the Pueblo Indian world prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. It seems evident, however, that his portrayal of the Pueblo world is, like all descriptions of Indian life before European contact, highly speculative given the divergencies that appear in the accounts and his use of them. Ever since Columbus arrived, non-Indian observers have clothed Indians in the light of European imagery. On the one hand stands the Noble Savage depicted by Castañeda and more recently by John Col-

23. *Berdaches* were males who dressed as women and acted as passive homosexual partners. See also Spanish *puto*, English *catamite*, and French *bardache*.

lier and Ruth Benedict.<sup>24</sup> On the other one finds a creature with an almost opposite set of traits that are viewed sympathetically by Gutiérrez but perceived as great faults or deficiencies by defenders of Western and Christian civilization. Thus the ambivalent and contradictory images of Indians that began with Columbus may still be found in current accounts of Indian ways. As Berkhofer has explained, when Indians are presented as counterimages of Europeans and white Americans, they become alien others who are viewed “as bad or good depending upon the observer’s feelings about his own society and the use to which he wanted [or wants] to put the image.”<sup>25</sup>

Various instances of Gutiérrez’s ample documentation may be questioned. Other comments concerning the eighteenth-century colony are not entirely clear. For example, his assertion that Don Diego de Vargas promised various things including slaves to potential colonizers of New Mexico is not supported by his source (p. 144; n. 6, p. 371). It is actually contradicted by J. M. Espinosa’s assertion that Vargas’s “policy of restoring Indian captives to their several pueblos gave great dissatisfaction to the settlers, who were thus deprived of slaves.”<sup>26</sup> Further, if it is true that “the settlers continued to demand labor and raw materials from the Pueblo Indians through the *repartimiento*, a rotational labor draft” (pp. 155, 159–60), then details concerning its definitive organization in law and practice should have been given to modify Oakah Jones’s finding that no standardized labor system replaced the *encomienda* in New Mexico.<sup>27</sup>

Gutiérrez might also have explained more fully why “after 1760 and into the beginning of the nineteenth century, race became the dominant way of defining social status” (p. 193). As Magnus Mörner has noted, miscegenation in New Spain became the leveler of the intricate hierarchical social order, tending to dissolve the so-called castes, especially on the frontier. Mörner asserts that intermarriage “always existed,” but “its frequency seems to have increased toward the end of the colonial period.”<sup>28</sup> Marriage between intermediate groups led to their increased culture and wealth and opened the possibility of rising from a lower category to a higher one within the social structure. Mörner concludes, “This explains the apparent contradiction during the eighteenth century between, on the one hand, increased prejudice among the white elite and, on the other, increasingly frequent intermarriage. In fact, it

24. Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian*, 178–79.

25. *Ibid.*, 27–28.

26. J. Manuel Espinosa, *Crusaders of the Río Grande: The Story of Don Diego de Vargas and the Reconquest and Refounding of New Mexico* (Chicago, Ill.: Institute of Jesuit History, 1942), 312.

27. Oakah L. Jones, Jr., *Los Paisanos, Spanish Settlers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 148.

28. Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, 1967), 66.

was the advance and expansion of the intermediate groups that essentially motivated the increased exclusivism displayed by the criollo elite."<sup>29</sup>

While Gutiérrez's assessment of eighteenth-century Spanish society recognizes the importance of miscegenation, whether licit or illicit, the hierarchical society of nobles, landed peasants, and slaves that he presents does not convey the racial and social mobility of eighteenth-century New Mexican society. He thus fails to stress that ethnic designation by the last half of the eighteenth century had largely become what Mörner terms "a social instead of a racial concept."<sup>30</sup> Moreover, in characterizing the detribalized Indians (*genízaros*) in Spanish households as slaves, Gutiérrez makes chattels of individuals who were primarily indentured servants. As Fray Angélico Chávez and Frances Swadesh have stated, whether they were "bought, rescued, or captured," these non-Pueblo Indians received Spanish names, were instructed in the Christian religion, soon "followed Spanish ways," received land grants, and "often shared the term *vecino* with the Spanish population."<sup>31</sup>

### *The Emergence of Southwestern Settlements*

Douglas Monroy's *Thrown among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* breaks no new ground but is a well-written synthesis shaped by the idea that history is neither "objective" nor "relative." In Monroy's view, history is instead "our relationship with the past. How a particular history is written or told can reveal as much about those producing it (and this one is probably no exception) as it does about the particular subject" (pp. 267–68).

Monroy has utilized the studies and insights of various writers ranging from Bancroft to Michel Foucault and examined a good number of primary sources in reinterpreting the history of California. Although I cannot agree with all of his interpretations, I appreciate his ability to tell a good story. *Thrown among Strangers* affirms the suspicion that the lot of the Indians deteriorated from bad to worse under Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. rule. As Monroy explains, "The Americanos, armed with a liberal world view as well as guns, swept away the traditions of reciprocal obligations, including those toward inferiors, which had characterized the mission and seigneurial periods" (p. 237).

Of the three institutions that enabled the Spaniards to dominate

29. *Ibid.*, 67.

30. *Ibid.*, 97–102.

31. See Fray Angélico Chávez, "José Gonzales, Genízaro Governor," *New Mexico Historical Review* 30 (July 1955):190–94; Chávez, "The Penitentes of New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 29 (Apr. 1954):97–123; and Frances Leon Swadesh, *Los Primeros Pobladores: Hispanic American of the Ute Frontier* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), 159, 231–32, n. 1. See also Russell M. Magnaghi, "Plains Indians in New Mexico: The Genízaro Experience," *Great Plains Quarterly* 10 (Spring 1990):86–95.

the borderlands, the mission and presidio have received more attention than the civil settlements. Addressing this imbalance, Gilberto Cruz's *Let There Be Towns: Spanish Municipal Origins in the American Southwest* provides a competent overview of the origins and contributions of Santa Fe and El Paso in colonial New Mexico, San Antonio and Laredo in Texas, and San Jose and Los Angeles in California. This general study of "the least-studied of the frontier institutions" (p. xiii) argues that the civil settlement was actually the most important of the three institutions in establishing Spanish control of the borderlands and preserving the distinctive cultural, social, and language patterns of the society encountered by nineteenth-century Anglo-Americans.

Focusing on a single settlement, Gerald Poyo's and Gilberto Hinojosa's *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-Century San Antonio*, written in collaboration with other students of Texas history, offers an excellent account of the first century of this city's history. Seven essays by various contributors examine the evolution of what began as a mission-presidio complex and the convergence of its different subgroups: soldiers, missionaries, Indians, Canary Islanders, and immigrants from the east Texas presidio of Los Adaes and elsewhere.

As in New Mexico and California, the idea of race in San Antonio "still contributed to the definition of social boundaries, but the fluidity of definition meant that designations of race were less a statement about one's actual racial background than an individual's overall status within the community" (Poyo, p. 87). Economic relationships and proximity facilitated intermarriage between the Canary Islanders and other settlers. By the end of the eighteenth century, according to Poyo, a Spaniard in San Antonio "was anybody with European features, relatively white skin, or economic or military status regardless of physical appearance" (p. 47).

The San Antonio community succeeded in negotiating peace and alliances with Apaches, eastern Comanches, and other nomadic Indian groups. Although the Mexican struggle for independence disrupted Indian relations, peace treaties with the *indios bárbaros* were renewed in 1822. Elizabeth John notes in *Views from the Apache Frontier* that "the restored Comanche alliance functioned reasonably well until the Texas Revolution began." Following that revolution, the Anglos "soon made San Antonio a place of terror for Indians, and one that was none too comfortable for most Hispanos as well" (p. 131).

Thomas Hall's *Social Change in the Southwest, 1350–1880* uses "history to develop theory" (p. 2). This useful and readable theoretical study is especially relevant in explaining how the Bourbon reforms, Mexican independence, and finally the U.S. conquest transformed the borderlands and created a polarized Hispanic heritage. Following the U.S. takeover, Indians were killed or settled on reservations, former Mexican citizens became a political minority, and an ethnic division of labor had emerged

by 1870. In New Mexico, for example, a small Hispano elite allied with U.S. immigrants began the territorial phase of empire building. According to Hall, prejudice “against Hispanos was rooted in economic competition for land, and to a lesser extent in the need for cheap labor on ranches” (pp. 216–17).

Hall is correct in stating that Hispanos who formed close economic links with the newcomers considered themselves to be Spanish, but his idea that this notion was “a view accepted by Americans” and that the Spanish-speaking elite “shared and expressed the same attitudes toward the New Mexico poor as the conquering Anglos” should be qualified (p. 216). To cite an example to the contrary, in the 1850s, W. W. H. Davis visited the town of Don Fernando de Taos, a settlement of some two thousand souls. During his visit, Davis attended a dance held at the home of one Señor Martínez, who as the brother of Father Antonio José Martínez ranked “among the *gente fina* of the town.” At the dance (a gathering where the better classes were wont to congregate), according to Davis’s account, he “found a large number assembled in the *sala*, many of whom were pointed out as the genuine upper crust of Don Fernández, being well baked for *upper crust*, as a large majority of them were done very brown.”<sup>32</sup>

Hall’s notion that upward-bound Hispanos in the nineteenth century viewed themselves as “pure-blooded” Spaniards and poorer Hispanos as “Mexicans” misplaces chronologically the attitude of a native-born buffer group toward twentieth-century Mexican immigrants and is thus an anachronism. Hall also fails to note that even today, when Hispanos speak Spanish, they call themselves “mexicanos.” Finally, it is difficult to believe that nineteenth-century *ricos* could view the poor (their relatives in many instances) as a racial group distinct from themselves. This is not to say that wealthier Hispanos were not highly pragmatic, extremely materialistic, and exploitive. Still, some of them combined ambition with integrity. Manuel Alvarez, for example, was critical of Mexico’s government but found Mexicans themselves guilty of only one fault: “They were too gullible, especially to the polished chicanery of American merchants.”<sup>33</sup>

Hall’s provocative inquiry into how the Southwest was incorporated into the European world system may be questioned on specifics, but it jibes with Monroy’s quotation from Max Weber: “The more the world of modern capitalist economy follows its own immanent laws, the less accessible it is to any imaginable relationship with a religious ethic of brotherliness” (Monroy, p. 241). Spain sought to incorporate the peoples con-

32. W. W. H. Davis, *El Gringo, or, New Mexico and Her People* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1857), 316.

33. Thomas E. Chávez, *Manuel Alvarez, 1794–1856: A Southwestern Biography* (Niwot, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 1990), 189.

quered by means of the mission, the presidio, and the civil settlement and used the ideal of the universal state as a rationale for extending Christianity and Spanish customs to sedentary and nomadic Indian groups. But as Hall notes, the Spanish loss of power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the ensuing Bourbon reforms "led to Spanish resurgence, then decline as a wave of independence movements swept through Latin America" (p. 238).

Once Mexico became independent, it was torn by strife between conservatives and liberals. Under Mexican rule, the missions were secularized, ties with the central state were loosened, and the northern frontier and other border areas were neglected and abused, all of which led to resentment. Commercial penetration by the United States into the Southwest was followed by U.S. expansion and acquisition of the region in 1848.

Under U.S. rule, Texas and California developed rapidly, but Anglo immigration was also significant in New Mexico and Arizona as well. Following the U.S. Civil War, railroad development linked the Southwest to the rest of the country and to Mexico. Thus the Southwest was being transformed economically while Latin America was experiencing foreign investment and the rise of neocolonialism.

### *Twentieth-Century Developments*

Domestic in-migration and foreign immigration to the Southwest checked ethnic fusion, promoted class exploitation, and created an artificial ethnic dualism between "Spaniards" (*pochos*) and "Mexicans" (*chicanos*). Hence although the twentieth-century predicament of Spanish-surnamed borderlanders is rooted in the nineteenth-century confrontation between Anglo-Americans on the one side and Hispanos, Tejanos, and Californios on the other, continual mass migration from Mexico, Central America, Asia, and other countries has also contributed to ethnic conflict and calls for resolution. A good example of this concern with ethnic conflict and the questions it raises is Jack Miles's recent cover article in *The Atlantic*, which examines the Los Angeles riot of spring 1992 in the context of immigration and its consequences.<sup>34</sup>

The modern predicament of the borderlands (or what Hall calls "anomalies" reflecting both continuity and change) and the consequences of the extent of U.S. influence in Mexico have received much attention from social scientists in recent years. Perhaps the best study of the mechanisms of power in Mexico is Pablo González Casanova's *Democracy in Mexico*, which deals with the economics of inequality and with past and

34. Jack Miles, "Immigration and the New American Dilemma: Blacks vs. Browns," *The Atlantic*, no. 270 (Oct. 1992):41-68.

present U.S. political and cultural effects on Mexico.<sup>35</sup> Of the many works that have reexamined the history of the Southwest from a Chicano perspective, Rodolfo Acuña's *Occupied America* has probably been the most influential. His account "of a group of people who collectively have been losers in a society that loves only winners" concludes that Mexicans (Chicanos) are an internally colonized people, outsiders who seek "collective liberation instead of individual co-optation."<sup>36</sup>

Defenders of the old regime before the French and U.S. revolutions had no difficulty justifying the hierarchical society transferred to the Spanish colonies and imposed on conquered Indians and imported Negro slaves. Class privilege and class oppression were rationalized by the theory that within classes or strata separated by function, equality must exist. As R. H. Tawney concluded, "Between classes, there must be inequality, for otherwise a class cannot perform its function, or—a strange thought to us—enjoy its rights."<sup>37</sup>

Destruction of the old regime was followed by the triumph of the middle class. Nineteenth-century concepts of individual freedom and the idea that preserving and expanding private property were synonymous with civilization rationalized the new order of society and capitalism. The concepts of progress, social evolutionism, social Darwinism, and racialism explained imperialism and intolerant nationalism by neatly defining higher and lower cultures in terms of higher and lower races.

The mood of the twentieth century was signaled by Oswald Spengler. By the 1940s, fascism was dead and most intellectuals had become increasingly skeptical of the promise of communism. But the end of ideology gave rise to new ideologies. As Robert Frost once pointed out, the "groundwork of all faith is human woe."<sup>38</sup>

Since the 1960s, the United States has experienced the civil rights movements, the war on poverty, race riots, New Left movements, growth of a counterculture, ethnic revival and militancy, rebirth of the women's rights movement, the gay rights movement, and a call for total emancipation from all restraints. These new conditions have fostered a new scholarship characterized by innovation in a world of fragmented values. The new social history has, at its best, yielded a better understanding of the issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and class. At its worst, the new scholarship has been marked by trendiness and what Roland Stromberg terms "a Modernist subjectivism which no longer sees one objective past in the

35. Pablo González Casanova, *Democracy in Mexico*, translated by Danielle Salti (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

36. Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle toward Liberation* (San Francisco, Calif.: Canfield, 1972), iii, 277.

37. R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Mentor, 1954), 27.

38. Robert Frost, "The Lesson for Today," in *The Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Modern Library, 1946), 403–8.

reconstruction of which each scholar submerges his personality, but rather as many subjective pasts as there are scholars to discern them."<sup>39</sup>

Regardless of the changes undergone with cycles of conquest and how one interprets the past, the most conspicuous factor retarding the equality of minority groups at present is the pattern of their employment. This aspect is examined closely in a Lower Rio Grande Valley settlement by Elizabeth Briody in *Household Labor Patterns among Mexican Americans in South Texas*. She finds that cheap Mexican labor maximizes U.S. employers' profits, but because public and private assistance increases following the overall decrease in work availability, relief "not only perpetuates the exploitation of this labor force by employers and labor's dependence on the state for subsistence, but helps explain rising income differentials and the uneven levels of development within Valley society" (p. 18).

Further confirmation of the dependency theory, or how the economy of this area of Mexico has been conditioned by the development of the U.S. economy, can be found in Josiah Heyman's *Life and Labor on the Border: Working People of Northeastern Sonora, Mexico, 1886–1986*. This study stresses the aspirations of hardworking individuals seeking to improve their lives, but it confirms the fact that the light assembly factories (*maquiladoras*) mostly owned by U. S. capital have created a largely female work force that is young and poorly paid. Yet long before this development, transformation of the Sonoran economy by U.S. capitalists had ended the vestiges of Spanish colonial society in this Mexican state.<sup>40</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In summary, clash of cultures has typified the Southwest since the sixteenth century. Exploitation under Spanish rule, however, was balanced by the blending of peoples and cultures and by incorporating the conquered. Mexican independence and the Anglo-American conquest began a new cycle of conquest and created the polarization of the Spanish and Indian parts of the Hispanic heritage still evident in 1810. Spanish citizens became Mexican citizens in 1821. But between 1850 and 1900, Mexicans as well as Indians became minority groups victimized by prejudice and discrimination. Mass immigration from Mexico in the twentieth century has created further conflict. The latest generation has witnessed some political, educational, and economic improvement among Southwestern minorities. Meanwhile, Indians as well as Mexican Americans have reinvented themselves and have been invoked by their supporters to make countercultural arguments for multiculturalism and a better understanding of the past. At present, nevertheless, pluralistic multiculturalism

39. Stromberg, *After Everything*, 127.

40. Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988).



must contend with other alleged supporters of various minority groups who “insist that no common culture is possible or desirable.”<sup>41</sup> Given the current state of the U.S. economy and the increase of particularism, the past viewed in the light of the present will continue to yield new works on the lifeways of pre-Columbian Native Americans as well as the contrasting views of the vanquished and those who identify with the long-term developments that began with the so-called discovery of America by Europeans.

41. Ravitch, “Multiculturalism,” 340.