

A NEW DAWN FOR THE BORDERLANDS

John F. Schwaller
University of Montana

- ANTIGUA CALIFORNIA: MISSION AND COLONY ON THE PENINSULAR FRONTIER, 1697–1768.* By Harry W. Crosby. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994. Pp. 556. \$37.50 cloth.)
- INDIAN POPULATION DECLINE: THE MISSIONS OF NORTHWESTERN NEW SPAIN, 1687–1840.* By Robert H. Jackson. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994. Pp. 229. \$29.95 cloth.)
- INDIANS, FRANCISCANS, AND SPANISH COLONIZATION: THE IMPACT OF THE MISSION SYSTEM ON CALIFORNIA INDIANS.* By Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994. Pp. 214. \$32.50 cloth.)
- THE PUEBLO REVOLT OF 1680: CONQUEST AND RESISTANCE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NEW MEXICO.* By Andrew L. Knaut. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. Pp. 248. \$29.95 cloth.)
- INDIANS AND INTRUDERS IN CENTRAL CALIFORNIA, 1769–1849.* By George Harwood Phillips. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993. Pp. 223. \$24.95 cloth.)
- COLUMBIAN CONSEQUENCES, VOLUME 3: THE SPANISH BORDERLANDS IN PAN-AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE.* Edited by David Hurst Thomas. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. Pp. 592. \$45.00 cloth.)
- THE SPANISH FRONTIER IN NORTH AMERICA.* By David J. Weber. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992. Pp. 579. \$40.00 cloth, \$16.00 paper.)

Over the past decade, serious scholarly study of the region called the Borderlands has increased significantly. Stretching from Florida to California, the region easily ranks as one of the most complex for historians. Its history was punctuated continuously by the arrival of newcomers and the conflict produced by encounters among differing cultures. Unfortunately, many scholars have viewed the history of the region as a stepchild of the history of a larger polity. Historians of the United States have tended to bring with them ideas and concepts forged on the Atlantic seaboard and the trans-Appalachian East, while historians of Latin America have viewed the region as distinct, marginal, and no more

than a footnote in the history of the larger Hispanic American world. But increasingly professional historians have emerged nevertheless, trained in the historiography of Latin America and the colonial United States and ready to tackle the complex and fascinating history of the border.

In general, the Borderlands region comprises two large areas, which in turn can be subdivided into several smaller ones. The Mississippi River serves as a natural boundary. To the east lay the colonies of Florida. This eastern region can be further subdivided into East Florida and Georgia, West Florida, and Louisiana. West of the Mississippi, one finds the border subregions of Texas, New Mexico, Sonora-Arizona, and the Californias. A parallel historical progression occurred in each of the two large areas, moving from east to west, with Florida having been formally founded in 1565, then later divided into two provinces, and Louisiana growing out of the far western portion of that subregion. Similarly, New Mexico experienced the initial European activity in the western region in 1598, followed by Sonora-Arizona and Texas, then Baja California, and finally Alta California. This combined topology and chronology was dictated by the changing interests of Spain, the initial colonizing power.

The seven works under review here focus principally on the activities of Spanish priests, friars, and soldiers to establish Spanish cultural and political hegemony among the native peoples of the region. These studies consider to a lesser degree the conflict between Spain and other European powers to control these regions and subsequent Spanish struggles with the United States. The books range from fairly detailed monographs dealing with specific questions confronting one region or subregion to large works of synthesis. The fact that major works of synthesis have begun to emerge, based on solid and cogently argued books and articles indicates the maturity of the field.

The massive work by David Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, truly signals the maturing of the field. Weber's tome encompasses the whole of the geographical region from initial Spanish efforts at exploration and discovery until the loss of the regions in the nineteenth century. This marvelous work of synthesis will stand for years as the standard reference work for historians of the Borderlands. Weber does a masterful job of balancing the need to recognize the unique features of each distinct region while telling a story that develops over time, in which each period has similar repercussions in each area. His bibliography is one of the most complete on the history of the Borderlands available to date. In short, Weber provides beginners as well as more advanced scholars with background and synthesis, an admirable point of departure for further investigations.

In *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, Weber clearly outlines the various controversies that have riven the study of the Borderlands. Perhaps none has been as long-lasting and central to the development of the

field as the controversy over the California missions. Dating from the late nineteenth century, this issue continues to bedevil historians today. In general terms, the controversy crystallized in the mammoth work undertaken by Hubert Howe Bancroft, his multivolume *History of California*. In those pages, scholars working for Bancroft in the "literary industries" criticized the efforts of the early Franciscan missionaries. The criticism stemmed from a profound schism running through California society from the earliest days of statehood, namely the conflict between Protestants and Catholics. The Protestants who represented the majority of the new Anglo settlers were deeply suspicious of the state's Catholic past. The first Anglo accounts of Hispanic California reported indolent settlers and domineering friars. This view slowly gave way by Bancroft's time to a slightly rosier one of an unhurried, gracious, and untroubled colony, although deep suspicions persisted of the Catholic Church in general and the friars in particular. The histories published by Bancroft were based on primary documentation that he had amassed. Unfortunately, most of these materials were destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, leaving only the syntheses and notes made by Bancroft and his hired pens.

In response to what he felt was Bancroft's ignorance and bigotry, Father Zephyrin Englehardt, OFM, composed equally mammoth studies of the missionaries and missions in colonial California. His effort resulted in four volumes on the missionaries and individual histories of most of the California missions. Where earlier authors had painted the Spanish friars as dark, menacing figures or at best superstitious and misguided fools, Englehardt extolled their virtues. These harbingers of European civilization in a turbulent frontier had suffered privations to improve the lives of the natives and martyrdom to spread the Gospel. Yet despite the contradictory interpretations, both Bancroft and Englehardt (as well as other writers of the period) tended to view California not as the far northern frontier of the Spanish Empire but as the western outpost of European society. Most of them came from a tradition grounded in the expansion of the United States rather than in the development of colonial Latin America.

Englehardt's vision was accepted only partially. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a whole group of popularizers of California's colonial past emerged. For them, Englehardt's vision was in many ways easier to accommodate to their own notions of the past than that of Bancroft. Anglo developers and boosters perceived in California's romantic past an easily marketable vision. Thus a hybrid of Bancroft's and Englehardt's versions carried the day, envisioning a warm, friendly colonial era populated by romantic Spaniards and self-sacrificing friars. Perhaps no work embodied this view more successfully than *Ramona*, a novel written by Helen Hunt Jackson.

Yet this romanticized vision could not withstand the scrutiny to

which it was soon subjected by scholars. In 1943 Sherburne Cook wrote *The Conflict between the California Indian and White Civilization*. It was published as part of the Ibero Americana series in which Cook, Woodrow Borah, Lesley Byrd Simpson, and others began to investigate the historical demography of colonial Mexico and many other landmark topics. Cook's hypothesis—based on demographic information on baptisms, marriages, and burials from the registers of the California missions—asserted that things had been far from idyllic in colonial California. In fact, mortality in the missions was unusually high, natives were forced to remain in the missions, and friars frequently resorted to corporal punishment of the neophytes. Cook also questioned the notion that the lot of the Indians had been improved through residence in the missions.

Cook's study sparked yet another polemic over the California missions. This time, Father Francis Weber, a diocesan priest, came to the defense of the Franciscan missions. Nor was he alone. A growing movement in the early 1960s had been seeking canonization of the first California Franciscan, Fray Junípero Serra. To secure canonization, historical evidence had to be presented verifying the sanctity of the individual. Consequently, all the traditional sources were consulted once more along with still others, this time to demonstrate the saintliness of Serra. But indigenous groups in California opposed his canonization because of questions about the friars' missionary tactics raised by Cook and elaborated by others. Father Antonine Tibesar, longtime Director of the Academy of American Franciscan History, was one of the outspoken supporters of canonization of Serra. By the 1980s, the issue of the Franciscan missions had become highly politicized. Preparations to commemorate the quincentenary of Columbus's voyage placed this local conflict into the context of a larger imperial enterprise.

In the most recent round of research on the California missions, important work has been accomplished by Robert Jackson. Using essentially the same data as previous scholars, augmented by additional primary sources and reinforced with new statistical methods, Jackson has written a general study of the demography of the northwestern missions, *Indian Population Decline: The Missions of Northwestern New Spain, 1687–1840*. This work covers three missionary areas: the Pimería Alta (what is now northern Sonora and southern Arizona), Baja California, and Alta California. His conclusions emerged from analyzing the available vital statistics data with a new computer program called "Populate," employing the inverse-projection methodology. As Jackson observes, better quality data should produce better results.

Vital registers for individual missions are notoriously inconsistent. Consequently, Jackson has sought to base his conclusions on data aggregated from several missions as a larger data set from which to project population trends for each region. This data set was then used to evaluate

the more fragmentary series provided by the individual missions. Under the best of situations, the registers of the missions are a difficult source to use. Baptismal registers include adult neophytes and newly converted individuals as well as infants born on the mission, along with others brought to the mission, the dying baptized in extremis, and many others. Burial records present similar difficulties. Moreover, the integrity of the data depends much on the friars who compiled them. Consequently, even with the most sophisticated manipulation of the data, serious difficulties remain in working with the colonial mission records.

In *Indian Population Decline*, Jackson draws on fifteen published articles and seven unpublished works of his own. Judging from the bibliography, Jackson is his own largest single source. One therefore assumes that this is old wine in new skins.

What Jackson has found is tremendous mortality in the missions in all regions under Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans. In the missions of the Pimería and Baja California, the demographic catastrophe described by Jackson was caused by epidemic disease. In Alta California, however, the picture is not so clear. In what is now the state of California, the natural birthrate was low, and thus the missions could not maintain a stable native population without constantly adding new converts. Once the natives in the areas closest to the missions were brought into mission life, it became necessary to go further afield to find more potential converts. Jackson concludes that the mortality on the Franciscan missions of California was "related to the living conditions on the missions, the degree of socio-cultural dislocation caused by the program of acculturation directed by the Franciscan missionaries, and the psychological impact of rapid social change and the high mortality rates" (p. 142).

Life on the missions was neither idyllic nor sheer torment. Unwittingly, the friars subjected the Indians to increased exposure to European diseases. Contact with Spanish colonists and soldiers was often lethal for the natives. Venereal diseases seem to have had a marked impact on them. Nor did the natives' diet necessarily improve on the mission. Moreover, their workday under the supposedly sedentary conditions of the mission was often longer than when they were hunting, gathering, and farming nomadically. In the end, however, Jackson's comparative argument must rest on data that are not quantifiable. He had to rely on other data to evaluate the degree to which natives were subjected to socio-cultural dislocation, the severity of the psychological impact of rapid social change, and the effect of increased mortality on the psyche of the natives (p. 142). Yet in the chapter in which he discusses these nonquantifiable causes of demographic collapse, Jackson devotes only one paragraph to the causes, citing no data, footnotes, or other sources. He perceives the demographic collapse, but his discussion of the psychosocial causes leaves much to be desired.

Jackson goes on to compare the situation at the missions in northwestern New Spain with other areas and times in order to place the demographic collapse in a comparative context. He chose to compare one region with another, then to contrast his findings for the entire zone with general data about sixteenth-century population declines in Mexico and Peru. Jackson then compares the demographics of the missions with various other groups: the non-Spanish population of the four presidios in Alta California, a French parish in the eighteenth century, an English parish from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, and lastly a Philippine parish in the nineteenth century. From these rather disparate and loosely linked case studies, Jackson concludes that the missions of northwestern New Spain represent a "worst-case scenario of the impact of colonialism on indigenous populations" (p. 160). He ends this chapter with the statement, "The following chapter outlines the growth of the non-Indian, soldier-settler population in northern Sonora and the Californias" (p. 162). Unfortunately, however, the reader finds only the concluding chapter. An entire chapter seems to have been dropped from the book or incorporated into another chapter. In fact, what is curious is that this chapter begins with a discussion of the non-Indian population in Alta California.

Jackson's conclusions tend to support Cook's arguments regarding the degree of the demographic collapse in Alta California, and his work suggests a distinct yet similar pattern in the Pimería and Baja California. Jackson has extracted as much information from the available data as possible. His relatively sophisticated techniques have gone a long way in making up for the fragmentary data. But one must remember that the mission registers remain fragmentary. The natives who were baptized, married, or buried represent only part of the whole picture. Analyzing registry data is akin to studying a river by scooping up water a glassful at a time. Consequently, historians must accept Jackson's conclusions as perhaps the best we can do given the limitations of the data. Of greater concern is his explanation of the differences among the regions by citing sociocultural and psychological impact. Unfortunately, his research simply does not provide strong evidence for these claims. Rather, it draws heavily on his previous publications and is thus a final compilation of his demographic findings on the missions of northwestern New Spain.

While working alone on the demographics of the missions, the Pimería, and Alta and Baja California, Jackson was also working with Edward Castillo on a general history of the missions in Alta California. In *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians*, Jackson and Castillo look into the broader context of the mission period and study many factors that made up life on the missions. Their introduction establishes that they seek to place the California missions in broader perspective, presumably linking them to the rest of Latin American history.

Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization consists of five chapters that analyze the political economy of the missions, aspects of social and cultural change, the demographic collapse, resistance and social control, and secularization and its impact. What Jackson and Castillo find corroborates much of what Jackson posits in his study on the demographics of all the missions: that nonbiological factors played an important role in the demographic decline in the Alta California missions.

In one sense, the missions were largely successful. They allowed the Spanish to control and settle the far northwestern frontier of the empire at a relatively low cost to the central government. The missions and presidios provided the nuclei around which communities could grow. The organized Spanish presence discouraged inroads from other imperial powers, particularly the Russians, but did not ward off incursions from the east by Anglo traders and trappers. The questions of why the Indians entered the missions is more complex. It is facile to claim that they were either forced by the friars and soldiers or attracted by the advantages of living in a Christian polity. While coercion played a role, it does not seem to have been central. Likewise, crediting the offer of a steady food supply is simplistic and ignores the relatively efficient food-gathering systems of the California Indians. More cogent reasons seem to have been the attraction of the Spanish as powerful allies in this world, as intermediaries in the spirit world, and as conquerors who offered marginalized native peoples a new social and political structure.

The native demographic collapse was not intended. Some government officials and other observers, however, recognized the adverse demographic impact of mission life. But the friars did not halt their efforts to congregate the natives, despite suggestions that this process was contributing mightily to native mortality. Yet it was the period of secularization, not congregation, that witnessed the greatest demographic collapse and virtual destruction of the missions and the mission Indians. Moreover, the Californios who had sought to dominate in the wake of secularization were slowly displaced by the new Anglo settlers.

Jackson and Castillo have surveyed much of the existing literature on the California missions and explored some less tangible areas of the European-native encounter. Yet they have not really placed the California missions in a larger context. Despite brief descriptions of similar conditions in other areas, such as the Yucatán Peninsula, one finds no overall consistent comparison of the California missions with other parts of the Americas. *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization* is a solid work in bringing together a large body of literature on the California missions and providing comprehensive coverage of the mission era from its inception to its decline. In this regard, the volume represents a useful survey. It provides little new information, however, and does not place the California experience in the larger historical context of the Spanish Empire or any other.

In *Indians and Intruders in Central California, 1769–1849*, George Harwood Phillips concentrates on one aspect of the missions of Alta California: the pressure caused by nonmission Indians and others who intruded on mission life. He focuses on the great Central Valley running south from modern Sacramento to north of Los Angeles and the mission areas influenced by the valley. Phillips traces the impact of intrusions from the founding of the Franciscan missions until the California Gold Rush began in 1849. His findings corroborate Jackson and Castillo's conclusions that the ebb and flow of Indians in and out of the missions operated as an important nonbiological factor in the population decline.

Raiders from the Central Valley saw the herds of mixed livestock at the missions as easy prey. Natives seeking to flee the mission system viewed the Indian villages of the hunters and gatherers of the Central Valley as an easy destination. Meanwhile, Spanish colonists and missionaries perceived in the native peoples of the valley both an opportunity and a threat: an opportunity to supplement the declining native population of the missions and a threat because of their raids on the settled regions nearer the coast. Eventually, the raiding natives were joined by foreign intruders from the east, who were seeking to tap into the wealth of California. Yet the breakup of the mission system via secularization gradually brought skilled natives into the Central Valley, as they drifted away from the declining missions. This new group was able to satisfy the demand for livestock from further east by organizing the Central Valley Indian communities into raiding parties who preyed on the herds of the Spanish settlements nearer the coast. The livestock (mostly horses) was sold outside the borders of California. This commercial venture was only one aspect of a long-distance trading network. Thus the idyllic rancho system was largely a myth—the ranchos were subject to continual raids. Yet the Californios also benefited from the introduction of goods that were part of the complex commercial venture that motivated the raids.

By the time of the U.S. intervention following the California Gold Rush, the livestock ranches were already on the verge of collapse. Reforms in landownership merely hastened their demise. Rather than being unable or unwilling to oppose the U.S. military with force of arms (as many have argued), the Californios actually viewed the presence of armed U.S. soldiers as reinforcements for protecting themselves from Indian raids. Yet the Anglos too were unable to protect the Californio ranchers. Only after U.S. troops forced the Indians onto reservations did the dynamic change forever.

Phillips's *Indians and Intruders in Central California* is well researched and offers an important new insight into the dynamics between the "civilized Indians" of the coast and the tribal peoples of the interior. His work will greatly assist scholars in understanding the pressures placed on the mission system, the development of ranching in California, and

the causes of the ranches' decline of following the secularization that led to U.S. intervention.

As noted earlier, the patterns of development found in Alta California were not repeated in other mission fields. It was an extreme case, isolated and subject to a unique set of influences. Alta California developed as a outgrowth of the earlier Jesuit missionary effort in Baja California. This earlier missionary field of operations is ably described by Harry Crosby in *Antigua California: Mission and Colony on the Peninsular Frontier*. Crosby's thorough study traces the entire history of the Jesuits in Baja California. This remarkable work is readable as well as impressive in its breadth and depth. Scholars unfamiliar with the history of the Jesuit missions in Baja California will want to read it, while those already familiar with the topic will find it essential for their reference libraries. Crosby's perspective is evenhanded and objective.

The creation, development, and end of the Jesuit mission experience in Baja California are treated chronologically. Crosby draws heavily on four contemporary Jesuit sources. For the period of foundation and development of the missions, he relies on Padre Miguel Venegas's "Empresas apostólicas," written in 1739. On the mature missions, leading up to and including the expulsion of the Jesuits, Crosby cites Padre Miguel del Barco's *Historia natural y crónica de la Antigua California* and Padre Jacobo Baegert's *Observations on Lower California*. Where possible, Crosby then compares these accounts with other firsthand observations. He also uses other secondary sources throughout to further illuminate the topic.

Unlike other Jesuit mission fields, the California missions were financed through an endowment created especially to support the missionary activity. Founded by pious Spanish laypersons, the endowment became known as the Fondo Píadoso de las Californias. Eventually, the fund amounted to several million pesos and lasted two centuries, even beyond the expulsion of the Jesuits.

An interesting companion piece to these works is the third volume of *Columbian Consequences*, subtitled *The Spanish Borderlands in Pan-American Perspective*. This volume edited by David Hurst Thomas brings together studies dealing with Native Americans as part of the natural history of the West as perceived by Anglos in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, general studies on Spanish colonialism in the American West, and an analysis of the significance of the novel *Ramona* in creating a sense of California. These studies are juxtaposed with fourteen pieces on Indian-Spanish interaction in colonial Central America. The last section features nine essays on the future of Borderlands scholarship that seek to develop some baselines for research in areas like demography, the confluence of archaeology and history, and other interdisciplinary approaches.

Several of these studies stand out. While all those in the first

section are admirable in tracing the uses to which the native peoples of the West have been put, editor Thomas's essay on the impact of Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* is especially significant in the light of the other works studied here. Jackson was hired by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1881 to study the plight of the California mission Indians. This assignment eventually led her to write *Ramona*, her famous novel populated by sympathetic Franciscans confronting dilemmas, elegant dons riding high-strung horses, and mission Indians in full decline. From this novel emerged the myth of the California missions, on which Bancroft and Englehardt later focused their differing historical perspectives. By the 1890s, *Ramona* had spurred the revival of mission architecture, which led in turn to reconstructing the actual missions, which by this time had been totally abandoned. This chain of events also led to the development of the missions as tourist attractions, which Thomas traces up to the current mission-mania. His fascinating study shows the impact that a novel can have even on current debates, like that in 1989 over the efforts of the Catholic Church to construct a parish hall on part of the original site of Mission San Diego.

The opening essay of the second section by Grant Jones and David Prendergast provides solid historical background for Spanish-Indian relations in Central America during the colonial period. This section contains excellent case studies on various places in Central America. Especially interesting for their insights into native survival techniques are essays by William Fowler, Gloria Lara Pinto, Wendy Kramer, George Lovell and Christopher Lutz, and Mary Helms. On reading these essays in the context of the first section, one is struck by the deep differences in Spanish colonization and native response in Central America versus the colonization and response in the northwestern frontier of the empire. One reason is that two centuries separated these endeavors. Moreover, the nomadic and seminomadic peoples of the northwest differed greatly from the sedentary peoples of Central America.

The third section of *The Spanish Borderlands in Pan-American Perspective* deals with the future of Borderlands scholarship. Three of the nine essays focus on the relationship between archaeology and history in furthering scholarly knowledge, while William Swagerty presents a case study using archaeology and ethnohistory to assess prehistoric trade in western North America. Five other essays deal with issues of demographics and biological response to colonization, attempting to link findings in demography to cultural change. These valuable contributions point out fruitful areas for future research.

Andrew Knaut's *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico* is an exceptionally well-written account of this important uprising. The topic is a familiar one to students of the Borderlands. The Pueblo Revolt represented a unique moment in the

history of Spanish colonization of North America, when the native peoples rose up and effectively drove out the colonists. The dramatic nature of the revolt also created the difficulty in studying it because most of the earlier documentation was destroyed and subsequent documents tended to be self-serving of Spanish colonial interests. Scholars consequently have tended to focus on one side or the other of the revolt, the native or the Spanish side, attempting to elicit from the documentation a clear picture of one or the other group. One extreme of this kind of effort can be found in the first two sections of the award-winning *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away* by Ramón Gutiérrez. Many scholars have rightly criticized Gutiérrez for having stretched the documentation too far, attempting to use anthropological reconstruction to create native societies that never existed, tensions that never boiled over, and visions that never moved anyone. Readers will find Knaut's treatment of the revolt much more solidly grounded in the contemporaneous documentation available.

Pueblo societies undoubtedly came to adopt some Spanish customs and thus became at least partially acculturated. Likewise, the Spanish gradually adopted or at least tolerated some Pueblo customs and cultural attributes. Knaut accepts these realities and uses them to portray a complex cultural exchange. He also details the shortcomings of both the colonial governors and the missionaries, creating a solid picture of what went wrong rather than attempting to determine who was to blame. *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680* does not focus solely on either the Spanish or the Indians but on the interaction between the two cultures. The existing documentation, however, forces Knaut to deal more with the Spanish version than with the Indian. Given the unreliability of the documentation detailing native societies, Knaut has tended to concentrate more on what can be determined with some degree of certainty. This approach resulted in a reliable piece of work. While *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680* does not answer all the questions raised by the event, this account provides a convincing picture of Spanish culture on the frontier.

Taken as whole, these seven works form a crucial corpus of new research on the Borderlands that proves that scholarly study of the region has truly come of age. Weber's excellent *Spanish Frontier in North America* is the major work of synthesis that will define the field for years to come. Jackson, Jackson and Castillo, Crosby, Phillips, and Knaut have all made central contributions to detailed understanding of the dynamics of the cultural and material history of the region. Each has confronted the limitations of the documentation, employed new methodologies, and created convincing images of life in the Borderlands. Finally, the Smithsonian's extensive collection of essays on the repercussions of the imperial system in these "fringe areas" assists admirably by offering insights into the complex processes that have served to forge these cultures. Thus scholars of the region now find ourselves on the eve of a new era in Borderlands studies.