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Book Reviews



Man-Hunters of the Old West. By Robert K. DeArment. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. xiv + 324 pp. Halftones, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth, ISBN 978-0-8061-5585-2.)

It was late October and the leaves of the yellowing cottonwood trees on Lawrence Street likely rustled in the breeze that was common to evenings in the mountain west. The three boys approached the one-story, three-room shanty in Denver, founded a mere twenty years earlier. Itinerant musicians that passed through often used the house as temporary housing, but in 1875 the house in the largely ignored Italian district of the new Colorado town had laid empty for the past few weeks. The first sensation to hit the boys as they ventured inside the presumably abandoned house was the smell of rotting flesh. Perhaps it was a rabbit or other animal that had succumbed somewhere in or under the house, which was the customary reason for a smell in such places. Nevertheless, the boys proceeded into the main section of the house. It was not a dead rabbit: “The place was an abattoir, with dried blood covering the floor and spattered across the walls and ceiling. . . . When they opened a trapdoor and descended into the cellar, they found four dead humans, horribly butchered, their bodies slashed, their throats cut so viciously that they were almost decapitated” (p. 66). A gloom remained over the house long after the bodies were removed. Later, a fire started in the dwelling from unknown causes and the local fire brigade let the structure burn.

The tale of the manhunt that followed the brutal quadruple homicide of Giuseppe Pecorra, his two young sons, and his nephew is colorfully, if sparsely,

recounted among other such tales of the nineteenth-century North American West in Robert DeArment's *Man-Hunters of the Old West*. This first volume (the second volume has been released with Oklahoma Press) profiles the lives of James B. Hume, Millard F. Leech, John R. Duncan, William S. Davis, William H. H. Llewellyn, Perry Mallon, Charles A. Siringo, and Sheriff David J. Cook, the man tasked with tracking down the Pecorra murder suspects. Sheriff Cook's Rocky Mountain Detective Agency—a type of “justice league” network of formal law enforcement officers and ordinary citizens spread out across the region—used both legal and extralegal tactics to corner the suspects six weeks later in the small New Mexican town of Taos. Frustrated with the inefficient American justice system in developing western towns, individuals like Cook, and other larger-than-life personalities profiled in *Man-Hunters*, created a workaround to the limited jurisdictional authority hobbling their efforts to track down suspects. These so-called “man-hunters,” (DeArment delineates them from “bounty hunters,” who were simply guns-for-hire seeking money rather than justice) operated in a unique period in American history. In DeArment's chapter on Jim Hume, for example, we find a sometime-pro prospector who headed west to find riches in the mines but instead became the town marshal of Placerville, and later sheriff of El Dorado County. His colorful background and connections to nefarious characters in the state prison allowed Hume and other law enforcement officers to ride the line between good and bad to uncover evidence, leading to the successful arrests of murder and robbery suspects. Describing the legal environment, DeArment explains, “[A]uthorities frequently ignored legal technicalities during the turbulent post-Civil War period in the belief that aiding the campaign against lawlessness was more important than legal niceties” (p. 52). It is these unique individuals, and their distinctive methods of skirting the law to protect it, which form the central theme of the book's often gripping narrative.

DeArment is a veteran writer—at last count, seventeen works on classic western outlaws and lawmen—who measures his ability to tell a story with his scholarly mettle. The educated public will enjoy the gunfights and chase scenes, while the scholarly audience will appreciate his rich source-base of Wells Fargo stage and train records, previously unpublished personal accounts, and other primary and secondary source material richly mined to produce a fine piece of western non-fiction.

Darren A. Raspa

Chief Historian, Air Force Research Laboratory, New Mexico

First Impressions: A Reader's Journey to Iconic Places of the American Southwest. By David J. Weber and William deBuys. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2017. xv + 339 pp. 49 halftones, 12 color plates, maps, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index, credits. \$30.00 cloth, ISBN 978-0-300-21504-5.)

In Octavia Butler's science-fiction series *Patternist*, telepaths gather "impressions" left behind by previous travelers on stones and paths to recreate the worlds that others witnessed. Early generations of Patternists call these interpretations "histories," but over time, they begin to call them art. David Weber and William deBuys have created a book that walks the same line.

The book began as an homage to Weber's favorite Southwestern sites and reached completion under deBuys's capable hand following Weber's death in 2010. It was published in cooperation with the William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University. Each of the chapters explores a different site of the Southwest: Acoma, Canyon de Chelly, Carlsbad Caverns, Casa Grande, Chaco Canyon, El Morro/Inscription Rock, the Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, the Mohave Villages, Rainbow Bridge, Santa Fe, San Xavier del Bac, Taos Valley, Tucson, and Zuni. In each chapter, Weber and deBuys provide an introduction, extensive quotation from the first Spanish and Anglo American writings about each place, and a conclusion about the present-day status of the site. The quotation is not so extensive as to make the book a mere collection of primary sources, but neither is it so slight that one fails to grasp the context that shaped each impression. Well-chosen images, some in color and several from the DeGolyer Library at Southern Methodist University, illustrate the chapter-length sketches.

One can easily imagine today's travelers carrying the book on their journeys. Many of the sites are national monuments or national parks, and several are UNESCO World Heritage sites. Travelers could create their own journeys with the book in hand. They might trace the steps of the "impressive trio" of mid-nineteenth-century surveyors—Lt. James H. Simpson of the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers and the civilian brothers Richard and Edward Kern—from Canyon de Chelly to Chaco Canyon to Zuni. One might also stop at El Morro, which Lieutenant Simpson and Richard Kern visited and Kern ably sketched in 1849. Such journeys are interwoven throughout the text so that one grasps not only the history of each place, but also how such histories found their way to Spanish, Mexican, and American audiences.

Scholars will appreciate how well each quotation and story is set within the wider significance of the Southwest's history. Most are probably familiar with Lt. Edward Fitzgerald Beale's camel expedition of 1857, but how often do we imagine the camels swimming across the Colorado River "laden with enough corn,

beans, pumpkins, watermelons, and cantaloupes to make it to Los Angeles” (p. 173)? Historians know how misleading the accounts of Spanish and American colonizers can be, and that point is never lost as Weber and deBuys navigate the challenges of telling the history of indigenous places with the words of Spanish and American newcomers. The authors comment when telling the story of García López de Cárdenas and his encounter with Hopi at the Grand Canyon in 1540: “This episode presents an excellent example of the one-sidedness of the historical record” (p. 113). That one-sidedness never takes over the volume, and instead the reader is left with a taste of each place and a desire for more. The book is an invitation to travelers and scholars both. Readers will thank David Weber for leaving us with a lasting impression.

Flannery Burke

St. Louis University

The Cross-Border Connection: Immigrants, Emigrants, and Their Homelands. By Roger Waldinger. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015. 231 pp. Charts, notes, references, index. \$22.95 paper, ISBN 978-0-674-97550-7.)

Has the concept of transnationalism outlived its usefulness? That is the question at the heart of this provocative study by the distinguished sociologist Roger Waldinger. Waldinger begins the book with an overview of the development of transnationalism as a concept. He credits pioneers such as Phillip Jessup, Raymond Aron, Karl Kaiser, Joseph Nye, and Robert Keohane with raising the possibility of a new way of thinking about migration and immigration. He also outlines how scholars, especially those associated with or inspired by the influential *Nations Unbound* project, attempted to put their ideas into practice. Transnationalism, Waldinger argues, provided an important corrective to the traditional approach to migration studies by expanding the focus beyond issues of assimilation or integration. It was no longer sufficient that scholars “stand with their back at the border, looking inward, their focus fixed on the new arrivals”; the continuing links between migrants and the places from which they came were at least as important (p. 11). Transnationalism also seemed to fit the mood of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. As people, goods, services, and information moved around the world more smoothly than ever before, it made sense that social scientific analysis should do the same.

In their eagerness to see beyond borders, Waldinger argues, transnationalism’s most enthusiastic proponents revealed their own blind spots. Movement across boundaries does not erase those boundaries, and many seemingly transnational phenomena in fact differed greatly according to the nation or territory

in which they found themselves. In chapter three, Waldinger suggests that borders still matter, and that concepts such as “place,” “space,” “nation,” and “state” are worth restoring to the discussion.

Beginning in chapter four, Waldinger enters the heart of the book, which engages with recent research in “cross-border connections.” First, he explores the role of technology, suggesting that transnational forces such as the internet can separate people as well as bring them together, particularly when wide economic differences exist between home and host countries. In chapters five, six, and seven, Waldinger suggests that cross-border political ties are much weaker than scholars might like to think. Chapter seven contains perhaps the most convincing set of case studies in the book, through which Waldinger demonstrates that Mexicans living in the United States after 9/11 enthusiastically embraced one form of cross-border connection while rejecting another. They welcomed the expansion of the *matrícula consular*, the consular identification card that provided a formal recognition of Mexican citizenship and could be used to open accounts in U.S. banks. However, they were notably unenthusiastic when the Mexican government extended voting rights to expatriates in the presidential election of 2006. Finally, in chapter eight, Waldinger demonstrates that even the most humble transnational organizations—hometown associations, or “HTAs”—also reveal the continuing power of national, economic, geographical, and societal divides.

The book has some flaws. Waldinger occasionally sacrifices depth for breadth, and is clearly more comfortable with some groups than others: while his conclusions about Central American border crossers are convincing, one wonders if they would apply as well to those of Israel, for instance. His wide-ranging analysis raises many questions it does not answer: the role of the “local,” for instance, plays a provocative but underdeveloped role in this book, and could be usefully followed up on in future work.

Criticisms aside, this is an important contribution to the literature of migration. Waldinger is too even-handed, too careful, and too gracious to the scholars who came before him to suggest this directly, but *The Cross-Border Connection* goes a long way towards making the case for a “post-transnational” turn.

Caleb Richardson
University of New Mexico

Equal under the Sky: Georgia O'Keeffe and Twentieth-Century Feminism. By Linda M. Grasso. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017. xv + 318 pp. 38 halftones, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 cloth, ISBN 978-0-8263-5881-3.)

The first part of Linda Grasso's title comes from a letter Georgia O'Keeffe wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt in 1944, asking her to support a Federal Equal Rights Amendment. This beautiful phrase, "equal under the sky," connects feminism's assertion of gender equality to O'Keeffe's aesthetic engagement with the natural world. There is no question that O'Keeffe's artwork attests to how much the natural world inspired her—her paintings of New Mexico's sculpted landscapes and layered skies now stand for an imaginative encounter with the American Southwest—yet the impact of feminism on her artwork is harder to discern. This is the challenge Grasso set out for herself: to trace how twentieth-century American feminism shaped O'Keeffe's life and art. With a generous understanding of feminism's complexities and the fraught position American modernism allotted women artists, Grasso met this challenge, and produced a rich, thoughtful study that contributes substantially to scholarship on O'Keeffe and reconfigures pervasive ideas about the relationships among women, visual art, and feminism.

Thought of most often as a political identity or stance, feminism is often assumed to be distinct from expressions of the visual imagination. Grasso does not entertain this assumption, and argues that O'Keeffe's artwork is a form of feminist activism: "Regardless of her intentions, her art is a gallery of feminist claims about women's right to revel in art making" (p. 232). The first chapter opens with a reading of a monotype O'Keeffe produced as a student. It is a portrait of a woman artist standing before an easel, and in it Grasso sees O'Keeffe claiming her vocation: "Her concealed eyes and averted body telegraph that she is oblivious to distraction. Sight is hers alone" (p. 21).

A large part of *Equal under the Sky* demonstrates that from the modernist feminism of the early twentieth century that sparked her ambitions, to the seventies feminism that claimed her as a foremother, feminism supported and sustained O'Keeffe's desires to be a great American artist. At the same time, Grasso does not hesitate to show that O'Keeffe often distanced herself from the category of the woman artist and the various iterations of feminism that buoyed her pursuits. As Grasso explains, "Feminism is the greatest unacknowledged factor in O'Keeffe's success story and it is O'Keeffe herself who is partly responsible for this historical erasure" (p. 73). O'Keeffe's ambivalence is not a reason to dismiss the artist or question feminism. Instead, Grasso takes this contradiction as an opportunity to make O'Keeffe part of twentieth-century American feminism's complicated and multi-faceted history, and

never loses sight of the limitations art's masculine-dominated histories and discourses place upon women artists.

This intellectual generosity pays off in what this reader found to be the most compelling part of *Equal under the Sky*: Grasso's readings of the fan letters that women wrote to O'Keefe to express their gratitude and admiration. Grasso makes these letters part of her argument that an artist's connection to feminism does not have to be verified by declarations of her intentions, but can be discovered in the artwork's effects. The fan letters irrefutably show that O'Keefe's artwork inspired women to transcend limitations and see themselves "equal under the sky." Grasso's book demonstrates all that is possible when scholars work from the premise that feminism can be an expression of—and not an impediment to—the imagination.

Kimberly Lamm
Duke University

Mestizos Come Home!: Making and Claiming Mexican American Identity.

By Robert Con Davis-Undiano. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017. xi + 312 pp. Color plates, works cited, index. \$29.95 cloth, ISBN 978-0-8061-5719-1.)

In his book *Mestizos Come Home!*, Robert Con Davis-Undiano demonstrates a need to better understand the hybrid or *mestizo* context of Mexican American cultural identity, with an emphasis on understanding Indigenous cultural roots. Overall, Davis-Undiano emphasizes the need to understand Mexican American cultural identity as a hybrid cultural construction: a product of a western hemispheric transnational context heavily dominated by the historical legacies of colonialism, and a representation of an ethical commitment to social justice and democracy at the community level, emanating from the historic legacy of the Chicana and Chicano Movement.

In part one, "Critiquing the Spanish Colonial Legacy," Davis-Undiano critiques the contemporary prevalence of social constructs of race dating back to the colonial era. Utilizing theories on racial constructs by Omi and Winant and Aníbal Quijano's "coloniality of power," Davis-Undiano reveals the prevalence of colonial logics that suppress the ideas and bodies of brown people in the Americas and relegates them to the lower social classes. Chapter two highlights how Mexican American intellectuals have critiqued these racial constructs. In this chapter, Davis-Undiano explains how Chicana/o writers challenge western notions of culture and identity, according to him, by demonstrating the four dimensions of being *mestizo*: *mestizo* individual identity; the hybrid nature of *mestizo*

culture; *mestizo* culture's hemispheric dimensions; and *mestizos* acting in advance of their communities. According to Davis-Undiano, Mexican American writers, such as Rodolfo Gonzales, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Rodolfo Anaya are part of the larger critique of western cultural hegemony in the Americas dating back to the nineteenth century, exemplified by the writings of intellectuals and revolutionaries like José Martí (Cuba), José Vasconcelos (Mexico), Victor Raúl Haha de la Torre (Peru), and José Carlos Mariátegui (Peru). Davis-Undiano contends all of these authors have helped erode a western biological argument of racial purity, even if many replicate colonial logics as they seek to challenge them.

In part two, "Remapping the Mestizo Community," Davis-Undiano delves into specific examples of Mexican American challenges to western cultural hegemony. In chapters 3–5, Davis-Undiano demonstrates how Mexican American writers, in particular Rodolfo Anaya, challenge the hegemony of western racial constructs by redefining homeland in literary works. He also explains that Mexican Americans in everyday community settings scrutinize and develop Mexican American culture through popular cultural practices like Cinco de Mayo celebrations, lowrider car culture, and Day of the Dead. Finally, in the final chapter of the section, he focuses on Chicana/o artists' depictions of the "brown body" to question the prevalence of western racism in the Americas. All these chapters follow counter-hegemonic cultural analysis trends long established within the field of Chicana/o Studies that seek to undo the racial legacy of colonialism in the Americas.

In part three, "The Literary Response," Davis-Undiano emphasizes Chicana/o challenges to colonial hegemony in the Americas through a chapter on the impact of Tomás Rivera as a writer and educator and another chapter on the overall impact of Chicana/o Literature and Chicana/o Studies. Although Rivera's work is influential, the larger impact of this section is Davis-Undiano's assessment on the impact of Chicana/o Studies as both a field for archiving and curating Mexican American culture and a field that theoretically critiques Mexican American cultural development. Overall, this chapter highlights how Chicana/o intellectuals challenge Eurocentrism. Chicana/o intellectuals demonstrate, according to Davis-Undiano, the value of hybrid knowledge, culture, and philosophy. As the author contends, an emphasis on *mestizo* culture demonstrates new ways of attaining knowledge that is in tune with the hybrid social and historical reality of all humans on earth. Moreover, Davis-Undiano demonstrates how a Chicana/o emphasis on transnational perspectives and social justice and democracy in community formation can provide others with positive models that take the place of Eurocentrism.

Overall, Davis-Undiano's focus on Mexican American homeland and identity is contemporarily significant in the twenty-first century and beyond, since

biological science, at least among competent practitioners, has finally put to rest absurd notions of racial purity and instead highlight biological diversity as the human norm. As a result, this book would benefit anyone interested in cultural analysis that probes the reality of social, political, and historic contexts that influence culture.

José Luis Serrano Nájera
California State University, Fullerton

Yellowstone and the Smithsonian: Centers of Wildlife Conservation. By Diane Smith. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2017. ix + 198 pp. 27 halftones, notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 paper, ISBN 978-0-7006-2389-1.)

In *Yellowstone and the Smithsonian*, Diane Smith looks at the close relationship between the Yellowstone Park and the Smithsonian Institution. To understand the importance of these two iconic American institutions to wildlife conservation, Smith focuses on specimen exchange and breeding programs from the 1870s to 1916, and examines these processes in the context of a disappearing U.S. Western frontier and the development of tourism and recreation.

The book is divided into three parts: “Center of New Knowledge”; “Centers of Conservation”; and “Animals and Artifacts.” The first part is dedicated to the early institutional histories. Smith discusses their roles as centers of knowledge for the nation and explores the concept of specimens as commodities. The Smithsonian established a nationwide network of amateur collectors who supplied thousands of specimens representing the nation’s diverse natural history. Duplicate specimens were treated as a commodity to be exchanged with other museums for missing examples.

For their part in the collecting network, Yellowstone administrators also agreed to supply specimens to the Smithsonian, which they did not see as conflicting with their efforts to protect the park’s vanishing wildlife from poachers and trophy hunters. Administrators created holding pens for the animals destined for the Smithsonian and established breeding programs to protect the bison population. The holding pens, unexpectedly, encouraged tourists to visit the park in the hope of seeing the West’s vanishing megafauna. Concerns for the vanishing wildlife led supporters and administrators to view the park as a refuge for megafauna and, as such, a de facto center for conservation.

Part two focuses on the emerging centers of conservation at the National Zoological Park in Washington D.C. and Yellowstone. Smith shows how wildlife became a commodity for both spaces when their administrators viewed wildlife as a source of entertainment and education for their visitors. Yellowstone

administrators, for example, added feeding programs for the free-roaming wildlife, thereby ensuring visitors would encounter the park's wildlife in a natural setting and away from the holding pens.

The passage of the Yellowstone Game Act in 1894, detailed in the final part, finally provided protection to all the park's animals, but by this time the landscape and the natural populations of bison were overtly managed. To show the similarities between the nation's emerging zoological parks and the managed landscape and wildlife of Yellowstone, Smith uses photographs of people recreating in zoological parks next to those of Yellowstone. The visual comparisons are compelling and provide further support for the book's themes. In the end, Smith states: "there was little wild left in the Yellowstone wildlife on display" (p. 6).

While the story of the Smithsonian Institution is familiar to students and scholars of museum studies, the specimen exchange program between the two institutions receives a new look. Smith is insightful and offers all readers an opportunity to see these two iconic national institutions as centers of wildlife conservation and knowledge production. Just as importantly, Smith reveals how wildlife became a commodity to be exchanged and studied by Smithsonian scientists, and viewed as a tourist attraction by the park-going public. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this book is the narrative around the early breeding programs and the conservation policies put into place prior to 1916. By focusing on this early history, Smith's research suggests that these were the antecedents to modern conservation policies and wildlife breeding programs.

The prose is well written and approachable for students and the general public interested in these two institutions. The book is particularly suited for undergraduate courses in environmental history and U.S. cultural history, introductory graduate courses in museum studies, and courses with a focus on national park history.

Karen Lloyd D'Onofrio
Arizona State University

Dirty Deeds: Land, Violence, and the 1856 San Francisco Vigilance Committee.

By Nancy J. Taniguchi (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. vii + 294 pp. 26 halftones, map, notes, bibliography, index, \$32.95 cloth. ISBN 978-0-8061-8.)

In *Dirty Deeds*, Nancy J. Taniguchi has provided an important narrative history of the San Francisco Vigilance Committee of 1856 based on a copy of the committee's minutes made by historian Theodore Hittell, a source that has remained unexamined in Hittell's papers at the Sutro Library for over a half-a-century.

Taniguchi gives a blow-by-blow account of the committee's actions in the summer of 1856, focusing especially on the self-styled executives who directed a populist army in a war to control San Francisco. The story itself is engaging and doubly so is Taniguchi's literary style. The felicity with which she narrates the complicated events of that summer ought to find a broad and diverse audience for *Dirty Deeds*. A master of the thumbnail biography, the author mostly mitigates the problem presented by the sheer number of characters and organizations in the story. However, if one misses or forgets why a character is important, the relentless chronological narrative offers the scrambling reader few signposts in their search for a refresher. That might not bother those reading this book cover-to-cover for its engaging narration of skullduggery, but it should give pause to anyone considering assigning it in an undergraduate or graduate course.

That is a shame, because the book uses an important and previously unexamined source to make an important revisionist argument about the relationship between land and power, and capital and violence in early San Francisco. The historiography and even much of the argument remain in the frontmatter, depriving readers of in-text examples of how the Executive Committee's minutes have changed the story. A short "Preface and Acknowledgments" (pp. xi-xix) and "Introduction" (pp. 3-11) advance a truly provocative revision to the history of the 1856 Committee of Vigilance: the wealthy executives secretly used their populist army to pursue their own economic interests. "It was actually land they were after," she boldly asserts (p. xvi). The executives mostly held deeds to the city's important waterfront as a result of the city's right to sell land as the successor to an old Mexican pueblo. They had a vested interest in securing documentary evidence to support the legitimacy of their city deeds and to undercut the legitimacy of other competing claims. Taniguchi does suggest a persuasive explanation for the otherwise irrational lengths to which the executives went in order to secure the "Pueblo papers." She never quite succeeds, however, in proving that the executives secretly and cynically manipulated a violent populist movement primarily to serve their own economic interests.

By demonstrating the previously unexplored link between well-known extra-legal violence and the contentious legal disputes over land claims that made and broke fortunes after the U.S.-Mexico War, Taniguchi has made an important contribution to the history of California and the Southwest. But the strong thesis presented at the outset of the book and the relentless chronicle of events from the summer of 1856 that follow mostly lay side by side, rarely intersecting. That undercuts her promising argument that dirty deeds were the secret impetus of so many dirty deeds that summer (p. xvi). She has laid out a plausible case that the executives went to great lengths and took serious risks in their

dangerous manipulation of a populist mob to serve certain capitalist interests. The story the book tells and the characters it develops are consistent with Tani-guchi's explanation, but it neglects to prove that case within the narrative.

Travis E. Ross
Yale University

Cosmopolitan Film Cultures in Latin America, 1896–1960. Edited by Rielle Navitski and Nicolas Poppe. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017. xi + 376 pp. 48 halftones, acknowledgments, index. \$38.00 paper, ISBN 978-0-253-02646-0.)

In *Cosmopolitan Film Cultures in Latin America, 1896–1960*, Rielle Navitski and Nicholas Poppe bring together work by eleven scholars that provide a fresh take on how diverse film cultures in Latin America developed in dynamic relationship with U.S. and European influences. The essays are complemented by a wonderful selection of primary sources drawn from those used by the authors in support of their arguments. Navitski and Poppe frame the volume as an antidote to a film historiography that has long opposed the cultural imperialism of Hollywood to the nationalist imperatives of Latin American film production. The time period covered underlines a move away from the New Latin American Cinema of the 1960s—an era to which the region's film cultures are too often reduced in general film histories. While the transnational turn in cultural studies informs their editorial work, Navitski and Poppe employ the term *cosmopolitan* to emphasize the “political, ethical, and even utopian dimensions of cultural exchange” with the particular goal of rethinking a model of cultural modernity that places Hollywood at its center (p. 5).

The eleven chapters accomplish this goal admirably, often by illuminating the irreconcilable tensions of nationalism with the realities of transnational flows of cultural commodities and individuals in pursuit of opportunities to assert their own understanding of the new world wrought by the rise of capitalism. There is little here on film industries per se; rather, the authors emphasize discursive aspects, although each piece is well grounded in archival research. Part one addresses the silent era with chapters on the arrival of the *Lumière Cinématographe* to Mexico (Aurelio de los Reyes), another on how Colombian film periodicals promoted the Italian cinema in support of local elite cultural tendencies (Juan Sebastián Ospina León), and a third on the reception of Rudolph Valentino in Argentina (Giorgio Bertellini). Part two moves to the interwar years and their attendant political polarization. This is reflected especially in essays by Sarah Wells, who details Latin Amer-

ican responses to Soviet cinema, and Andrea Cuarterolo, who examines the cinematic work in Argentina of modernist photographer Horacio Coppola. Navitski explores the ambiguous role played by Spanish-language film magazines published in the United States in mediating between Hollywood-as-hegemon and the local cultures of Latinos and Latin Americans.

Part three takes on the “Golden Age” of cinemas in Argentina and Mexico, with essays by Poppe on cinematographer John Alton’s work in Argentina, Ignacio Sánchez Prado on what the film offerings in Mexico City during a single week in 1950 might tell us, and Jason Borge on the “Bad Neighborism” of the hybrid and low-brow mambo films of the era (p. 271). Finally, Part four concludes the volume with two suggestive reflections on how developments of the 1950s would influence the rise of more radical cultural responses in the 1960s and later. Irene Rosza analyzes the significance of Cuban film journalist and pedagogue José Manuel Valdés-Rodríguez, especially the film course he developed at the University of Havana; and Colin Gunckel re-reads the so-called Mexploitation cycle of Aztec-themed horror and sci-fi films for their resonances with experimental film and with the centrality of Aztlán—the mythical homeland of the Aztecs—for the Chicana/o movement.

A compelling feature of this volume is the way in which the essays tend to reinforce each other. One finds, for instance, a recurrent theme of pedagogy across mentions of cine-clubs, critical debates, formal instruction, but also self-taught innovation. This constitutes a salutary reminder that film meaning is determined more by the spectator than by the author. If there are lacks here, they are no doubt due to the inherent eclecticism of edited volumes. One might wish for more material on Brazil or a better attention to Spain as a particularly important node of connection for the film industries of Spanish-speaking Latin America. The volume nevertheless succeeds in reorienting us towards a deeper understanding of Latin American modernity.

Lisa Jarvinen

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Sons of the Mexican Revolution: Miguel Alemán and His Generation. By Ryan M. Alexander. Dialogos series (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016. ix + 245 pp. 21 halftones, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper, ISBN 978-0-8263-5739-7.)

Miguel Alemán, President of Mexico from 1946 to 1952, gained at least two posthumous road prizes while cruising on the governmental power road to reach the presidency. One award he would flamboyantly applaud, the other he would

angrily disclaim: visionary and achiever of emergent industrialization and the other, godfather and organizer of public politics as a means for private enrichment. Ryan M. Alexander has chosen an important local figure who exemplified the global phenomena of developing countries that aspired to transcend their previously-set colonial horizons.

In two-hundred-plus pages, organized into five chapters and two concluding statements, Alexander ably organizes a narrative that maps the road Alemán and his circle of associates traveled from preparatory education and early employments, to state offices, then national appointments, and savvy politicking that led to the presidency and its policy choices, and administrative implementations. Rather than ending the narrative with Alemán's departure from office, given his influential post-presidency, Alexander follows the transitions of both Alemán and his circle, using their continued activities as evidence of their influences and achievements. Alexander successfully employs a generation scheme, cohesive players, and propitious shared circumstances, which makes for a substantive political and social analysis.

Alemán, a capable leader, and his circle of talented collaborators, acted as creative modernizers and astute *empresarios*. The book informs on a key twentieth-century transition from a developing nonwestern state and economy to a more advanced level of economic growth and social integration. Therefore, the story is a positive one, measured by certain achievements, in comparison to the travails of some African or Latin American countries.

Alexander uses materials by active participants prominent in the Alemán administration, and to some extent, refers to critical observers of its actions. Salient for the Alemán circle are the holdings of the Miguel Alemán Foundation and the *Archivo General de la Nación*, from which some oral history interviews and biographical writings are cited. Other materials are fairly diverse, particularly those from the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and the work of contemporary journalists. Alexander also inspected the files from the *Federal Directive of Intelligence*, some of which is now open to researchers. The author employs a contrasting set of sources, from government related ones, to materials that reflect popular culture. These sources are used deftly by Alexander to densify a narrative heavy on politics and administration.

In fact the reader may wish that Alexander wrote about the culture in the same way he wrote about Alemán and his circle. This evoked representations and judgments beyond those of supporters and nominal opponents; there are references throughout that reveal who the diverse voices and audiences were and what their opinions were on what was done and not done by the country's leadership during these six years. This scholar, like others, was bound by the materials at hand for his narrative. However, in this case, the generational circumstances

allow for scholarly advantage of informed and documented materials by many vocal collaborators, which the author utilizes properly.

The Alemán regime was a change-maker in the process of modern Mexico and this work competently delineates its attributes and failures. World War II generated income and created access to trade which stabilized the national economy. The global U.S.-Soviet standoff during the following three decades stimulated the Mexican government's access to U.S. hemispheric and even global financial and programmatic arrangements. These events created for the Mexican government possibilities unprecedented in the history of the republic; for example, there were significant rates of growth for nearly twenty consecutive years. Alexander explains that advantageous circumstances and a proactive president were not the only operative aspects. Alexander underscores that even in this presidential regime, there was a fairly extensive circle of linked players who shared in envisioning, deciding, and administrating the accomplishments.

Alemán and his collaborators shared in the regime's major faults equally: policy related to urban and rural needs and widespread corrupt practices. Arguably, these failings were the other side of the plenitude coin, and made it difficult to diagnose consequences and impacted future civic development. Building infrastructure is commendable, but it also requires workers. To his fault, Alemán did not facilitate organizational enrichment of either urban or rural workers. Supporting commercial agriculture and large water dam projects was important, but at a basic level, small scale local farming improved social and economic futures. A major updated central university complex was very important and the costs had to be subtracted from elsewhere in public education. For several social, cultural, and economic reasons, upgrading a selection of state universities could have brought needed balance and greater accessibility to higher education, thus distributing its benefits nationally. Alongside highly visible infrastructure accomplishments, the Alemán regime is associated with governmental corruption, a worldwide political phenomena. Corrupt practices involved members of the private sector and included members at more levels than the national leadership; it weakens civil society. To know its specifics historically, if possible, would tell us how regimes, such as the Alemán regime, truly operated and how such practices become systemic across sectarian and generational lines. Alexander takes up some of these issues and certainly is sensitive not only to their moral dimensions, but to their centrality to substantive development. In addition to their undercutting of the avowed, ostensibly pro-development policies, the regressive policies and social inattentiveness of the Alemán regime had consequences that lasted for generations.

This is a solid book that provides a basic narrative and an informed interpretation on the ways a regime underwent development in midcentury, and

its importance to the United States, in particular the southwestern states from Texas to California.

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