

United States without disrupting their relationships with their wife and children in Mexico” (p. 70) without considering that the infidelity might not well be an isolated incident that only occurs in the United States – the concluding sections of each chapter offer a series of critical, poignant, and keen observations.

Still, it must be noted that as interesting as this work is, it nonetheless lacks context. As I read *Divided by Borders*, I could not help asking myself why the author chose to focus on families that migrated to New Jersey. Would a study of families that had migrated to Los Angeles or Chicago not provide a more complete portrait of the impact migration has on Mexican children? Do migrations to these locales result in longer or shorter stays than do those to New Jersey? Do people from the Mixteca region of Mexico only migrate to New Jersey or can they also be found in other parts of the U.S. in greater numbers? I do not have the answer to these questions nor are they provided in the work. The author mentions why she chose to focus on families from New Jersey but fails to provide an adequate context for this decision in the Research Design section of the book. When describing Ofelia’s experience, for example, she writes that “She explained that her husband was the first to leave. He worked in Los Angeles for about a year, and Ofelia stayed with her own mother and newborn son in Las Cruces” (p. 39-40). Why did he go to Los Angeles? How did they come to be in New Jersey? These are questions that needed to be addressed in order to properly locate the impact of her analysis.

Lastly, the text would have been richer had it provided a deeper theoretical framework. Through the use of end notes, the author takes great care to point the reader to the sources where that framework can be found but I was left to wonder why she did not incorporate it into the fabric of her text. Ultimately, I found this work to be compelling in subject matter while at the same time frustrating because the material was not organically incorporated with other scholarship.

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ERICK D. LANGER: *Expecting Pears from an Elm Tree: Franciscan Missions on the Chiriguano Frontier in the Heart of South America, 1830-1949*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2009.

“[W]hoever undertakes to interpret the forces by which Spain extended her rule, her language, her law and her traditions, over the frontier of her vast American possessions, must give close attention to the missions, for in that work they constituted a primary agency.” Writing in 1917, Prof. Herbert Bolton was one of the first to point out the pivotal role that religious missions played

in the Spanish crown's imperial task of controlling and civilizing the boundless American frontier and its Indian inhabitants. While Bolton's work was path-breaking and shed new light on the mission's place within the larger context of state formation, he and his followers have been subjected to much criticism. In particular, it has been argued that their position is Eurocentric, concentrating on the missionaries themselves, state agents and settlers, while the Indian neophytes have been ignored or portrayed as passive. Therefore, in *Expecting Pears from an Elm Tree*, Erick Langer proposes a new approach to the study of religious missions, one that combines Bolton's insights concerning the importance of the missions in state formation policy with social history's study of demography and new ethno-historical information. In addition, rather than walking down the colonial path, as do most studies on this topic, Langer chooses to situate himself within the republican period focusing on the Franciscan missions to the Chiriguano Indians, in Bolivia's Chaco region, from the early years of the new republic to the middle of the 20th century.

The "Meta-Narrative" of the book is the mission's "Life cycle": "Both individual missions and mission systems are born, grow and mature, and then wither away or are converted into something else, such as town" (p. 6), argues Langer, setting a theoretical framework to study both the mission's evolution, its disparate tasks, and the distinct attitudes towards it, as they changed over time. The first chapters of the book are concerned primarily with the first stage of the "Life cycle," that of birth. Starting off by giving his readers a glimpse into life in the Chaco region during the first half of the 19th century, Langer demonstrates how the Chiriguano—who retained their independence through the entire colonial era—were gradually subjected to the control of the new Bolivian Republic, with credit largely due to the reestablishment of the missions. Then he turns to explore both the missionaries, mostly from Italy, and their potential native disciples' motivations to join the missions. While the religious wars and Italian *Resorgimento* played an important role for the Franciscan fathers, religion or an urge to convert to Christianity had little, if any, weight in the Chiriguano's decision to settle on the mission grounds. In fact it was earthly needs such as refuge from attack by other indigenous groups, rather than divine revelation, which led most Indians to enter the mission gates. In the long run, it was also earthly needs—demand for labor in the sugar plantations in Northern Argentina—that "pulled" many adults off the mission estate.

The middle chapters of the book coincide, more or less with the "maturing" stage of the missions. Throughout these pages, Langer explores the patterns of everyday life of the different groups of Chiriguanos in the mission (the neophytes, the non-converted Indians, the children, and so forth) and their interaction with the missionaries. He makes a strong case presenting the mission as an arena for

everlasting negotiations between the missionaries and the Chiriguano *cacique* in which the Indian leaders had “the upper hand during a large part of the mission’s existence” (p. 194). Thus, Langer attributes part of the weaknesses of earlier historiography to the missions, which tended to represent the Indians as passive. It is also in this section where Langer treats the economic function of the mission and shows not only how they changed over time but also how they impacted the rest of the frontier society. In fact, he reaches the conclusion that “The missions were superior to all other Chaco frontier institutions in economic importance.... Only the haciendas compared in economic importance, with their cattle ranching” (p. 213).

The final chapters deal with the missions’ decay, first by examining the relationship between the missions and other agencies, most notably state and local officials, but also the non-Indian settlers of the frontier. “Relationships with outsiders were crucial for understanding the rise and then demise of the mission system” (p. 255), Langer writes. When the missions were neglected or supported by the government, they flourished; however, when anticlerical sentiments rose, especially at the beginning of the 20th century, the mission began to dilapidate. For the Franciscans, the Chaco war represented the beginning of the end as they limped their way through the ‘30s and ‘40s until secularization in 1949.

In addition to its new approach towards the study of religious missions, the book is also distinctive in its comparative treatment of the issue. Comparing the Franciscan mission in the Chiriguanos with missions in other places and times (Colonial missions, missions in California or Mexico), Langer concludes that the main objective of the Franciscan fathers was to “transform the religion, culture and society of the Indians into a European or Creole version of themselves” and this was the reason that the mission “by its very nature, remained colonial at heart” (p. 283). *Expecting Pears from an Elm Tree* is a meticulous study focusing on a geographical area and a topic that have previously received little scholarly attention. Scholars interested in religious missions, questions of state formation, or European-Native encounters and relationships, will find this book a fascinating read.

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ANDREW B. FISCHER & MATTHEW D. O'HARA (eds.): *Imperial Subjects, Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2009.

Los españoles que pasan á aquellas partes y están en ellas mucho tiempo, con la mutación del cielo y del temperamento de la regiones aun no dejan de recibir alguna diferencia en la color y la calidad de su personas; pero los que nacen dellos, que se llaman criollos, y en todo son tenidos y habidos por españoles, conocidamente salen ya diferenciados en la color y tamaño, porque todos son grandes y la color algo baja declinando á la disposición de la tierra; de donde se toma argumento, que en muchos años, aunque los españoles no se hubiesen mezclado con los naturales, volverían á ser como ellos: y no solo en las calidades corporales se mudan, pero en las del ánimo suelen seguir las del cuerpo, y mudando él se alteran también.

Así describía Juan López de Velasco, a fines del siglo XVI, la metamorfosis en la identidad de los españoles y sus descendientes que se establecían en América. Una metamorfosis que inclusive influía sobre sus características morales y fisiológicas.

Los nueve artículos que forman el presente volumen, acompañados por una excelente bibliografía, son un importante experimento que hace uso de la noción de “identidad” como modelo alternativo para el análisis de la construcción de las relaciones entre los diversos grupos étnicos en la América colonial. Modelo alternativo, decimos, porque analiza el equilibrio de fuerzas entre los diversos grupos de la sociedad colonial, no basándose en la diversidad racial, social, ocupacional o religiosa, sino en el modo en el que cada uno de los miembros de dicha sociedad se autopercibía. La importancia de este volumen está en el hecho de que se concentra en el modo en el cual cada uno de los individuos que formaban los varios grupos étnicos veía su rol en la sociedad colonial. Los diversos artículos analizan una gama de puntos de contacto entre la autopercepción de la identidad propia y el modo en el que ésta era percibida por las autoridades y los otros grupos sociales en diferentes regiones y épocas. Estos puntos de contacto son los que nos permiten detectar la cristalización de nuevas identidades que debían necesariamente nacer a raíz del encuentro entre Europa y América.

Sobresale en todos los artículos lo fluida y perpetuamente mutante que era la noción de identidad y el relativamente simple modo de cambiar de identidad de acuerdo a las circunstancias. Así vistas, la “identidad” o la “raza” no deben ser consideradas como nociones, sino como procesos.