

UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Manifest Destinies and Indigenous Peoples. Edited by David Maybury-Lewis, Theodore Macdonald, and Biorn Maybury-Lewis.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9626b8tm>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 34(1)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne

Publication Date

2010

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

foreign languages where extensive classroom instruction, practice, and immersion in a speech community are part of a years-long educative experience, we know little about what pedagogical techniques, if any, will serve a population where most learners are adults, most teachers lack linguistic or even language training, immersion is improbable, and supportive materials such as texts are sparse. Those who accept the challenge are aware that pedagogical materials must also be authoritative linguistic references, because these materials are likely to be the only ones that will ever be produced. This charge is in clear evidence in *Let's Speak Chickasaw*, as the authors provide meticulous, though sometimes abbreviated, linguistic information in anticipation of questions about details of the Chickasaw language that in the future will be answered by consulting this book.

The accompanying CD contains precious examples of spoken Chickasaw. It is mysteriously underproduced, however, given that audio recording is an old technology. The CD is unnavigable because it was made without tracks. The learner must start at the beginning and make his or her way through with random jumps. The standard way to organize taped oral exercises is to tell listeners what the contents of any section are and what they are to focus on, but the authors do not introduce any of the nineteen sections, nor is there any expectation that students will imitate the Chickasaw pronunciation. Generally the recordings are clean and the Chickasaw speaker (I assume Mrs. Willmond) easy to understand, but in some of them her voice fades completely. Unfortunately the final story, "Rabbit and Buzzard" (by speaker Lizzie Frazier), is seriously compromised because of background noise. Nevertheless, certain phonological features are nicely brought out. Contrasts in vowel length and nasality, the glottal stop, rhythmic lengthening, and sentence prosody are quite clear, and one only wishes that the CD were much longer, much denser, and produced by technicians.

Because of its reliable scholarship, this book will be without a doubt the primary reference for Chickasaw language learners, and even linguists, who will have easy access to the work. Even the emerging preeminence of electronic materials is unlikely to diminish the importance of the authoritative reference book.

Marcia Haag

University of Oklahoma

Manifest Destinies and Indigenous Peoples. Edited by David Maybury-Lewis, Theodore Macdonald, and Biorn Maybury-Lewis. Cambridge, MA: The David Rockefeller Center Series on Latin American Studies, Harvard University, 2009. 300 pages. \$29.95 paper.

Throughout the past several decades of teaching Native American history, I have given a flash test to students, asking them to draw a rough outline of the United States at the time of independence. Invariably, nearly all come up with a version of the outline of the present continental United States, while others

draw a much larger outline than the thirteen original states clinging to the Atlantic coast, and everyone includes Florida. Those who imagine the present shape immediately know it is wrong and cannot explain what possessed them to do it. It is doubtful that Americans' famous lack of geographical knowledge can account for this result. I call it a Rorschach test of unconscious manifest destiny. That outline with the blank spaces to be filled in, filled up, also signifies a presumptive genocide.

That's the theme of *Manifest Destinies and Indigenous Peoples*, the imaginary borders of space not yet conquered to fill out the national destiny. This is a collection of seven essays by scholars from the United States, Canada, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, comparing and discussing the application of the idea of "manifest destiny," that is, national military conquests of indigenous-inhabited frontier territories, during the second half of the nineteenth century.

In April 2006, veteran anthropologist David Maybury-Lewis, founder of the organization Cultural Survival and its journal *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, convened an interdisciplinary seminar, and the papers in this volume are the result. The questions Maybury-Lewis posed to the scholars were concerned with the concept of manifest destiny as a nationalist, or nationalizing, ideology, not only in the United States but also in other countries of the Americas. Before publication, Maybury-Lewis died, and his son, Biorn Maybury-Lewis, a political scientist and one of the editors, recounts his father's impressive life and work in Brazil in the afterword.

Theodore Macdonald, former longtime projects director for Cultural Survival, introduces the collection, pointing out that the seminar participants had determined that although manifest destiny is a unique US concept, parallel frontier narratives during the same time period might be found in other parts of the Americas. The essays about Argentina, Chile, and Brazil are the most thought-provoking and original in the collection; in contrast to the North American essays, they are as concerned with indigenous peoples' resistance and survival as with the genocidal nation-building policies of manifest destiny.

Buenos Aires scholars Claudia N. Briones and Walter Delrio's "The 'Conquest of the Desert' as a Trope and Enactment of Argentina's Manifest Destiny" describes the 1879 invasion of previously unconquered Argentine-claimed territory under the guise of it being empty land, rationalizing that the indigenous Mapuches living there were "foreigners," long-ago migrants from Chile. The Argentine mantra was that it was a war of "recovery" rather than invasion of indigenous territory. Outside the Americas, this kind of colonialist justification may be found in the Dutch Boer aggressive settlement of Southern Africa as well as the French in Algeria.

Chilean historian José Bengoa's "Chile *Mestizo*; Chile *Indígena*" tells the story of nearly three hundred years of Mapuche resistance to Spanish, then Chilean, colonization until 1881, when the "white enclave" of Santiago moved into the southern indigenous space through settlement of German farmers and military extermination campaigns.

João Pacheco de Oliveira writes in "Wild Indians,' Tutelary Roles, and Moving Frontier in Amazonia: Images of Indians in the Birth of Brazil" that

the Amazon was another kind of desert, a “desert of history” (87). His stated goal is to “denaturalize” the historical representations of the peoples of Amazonia. The author usefully locates what transpired in Brazil in its invasion of Amazonia within the dramatic increase in European colonial/imperial control of the earth’s surface, from 35 percent in 1800 to 85 percent by 1914. But the unique contribution in this essay is the extended discussion of the exploitation of indigenous labor in the Amazon (90–94). This is a rarely raised aspect of colonialism in the Americas, except for the densely populated areas of Mesoamerica and the Andes.

The essays on North American expansion into the western territories are mixed in quality. Anders Stephanson’s “An American Story? Second Thoughts on Manifest Destiny” is a masterful overview by a specialist in US foreign relations. The author situates the post–Civil War US expansion into Indian country (manifest destiny) in the context of Anglo-American nationalistic colonization and settlement dating to the eighteenth-century French and Indian War, culminating in the Northwest Ordinance plan for a North American empire. He dates the ideology of exceptionalism to the initial Anglo-colony of the Massachusetts Bay and defines *manifest destiny* as a malleable political trope that remains fundamental to US foreign affairs.

J. Edward Chamberlin’s “Homeland and Frontier” brings a cultural lens and brilliant insights to the workings of manifest destiny in the United States and Canada in a kind of meditation on the loaded perception of “homeland,” using the nineteenth-century popular song “Home on the Range” to tease out the apparent contradiction of *home* and *roam*, formulating the manifest destiny definition of *freedom*. The author focuses on the taming of wild rivers and building of dams in Canada and the United States, flooding and surrounding indigenous peoples and their homelands, thereby advancing manifest destiny into the New Deal period. Here, he calls on the “Roll On, Columbia” lyrics of left-wing troubadour Woody Guthrie in order to illustrate the populist nature of manifest destiny in the twentieth century.

The book ends with essays by two US historians. Unfortunately, the essay by Roger L. Nichols, “National Expansion and Native Peoples of the United States and Canada,” reads like a chapter from a US history survey text, and the collection would have been better without it. Richard White’s essay, “The American West and the American Empire” makes the important point that “the larger context of American expansionism and its place in world affairs, the expansion across the western United States and the subordination of Indian peoples is not a parochial story. Western expansion was about empire, as much as the American people and many historians would like to treat it as a purely domestic development” (218–19). However, the author does not expand upon that theme; rather he focuses on the role of corporations, particularly railroads, in making the western United States available for settlement and commerce.

Although White states that “Indian peoples have become an integral part of the story,” they aren’t visible in his essay, and the passive voice of that statement masks the role of indigenous social movements in the revisions that are evident in White’s work, as well as in all the essays in this volume. Except for

a couple of tips of the hat to the late Vine Deloria Jr., the work of indigenous scholars is missing in the references (204). The style of this book remains old-school—all Euro-American scholars, and all male except for one lone female coauthor—but the content reveals the changes that have been wrought by indigenous activism and indigenous scholarship.

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

California State University, East Bay

Missions, Missionaries, and Native Americans: Long-Term Processes and Daily Practices. By Maria F. Wade. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008. 302 pages. \$69.95 cloth.

Maria F. Wade's *Missions, Missionaries, and Native Americans* sits at the intersection of several fields: Native American studies; colonial and imperial history; religious studies; anthropology; and southern, western, Mexican, and Spanish history. This disciplinary and topical breadth is the book's greatest strength and, ultimately, the root of its weaknesses. Sweeping but uneven, Wade's work attempts no less than a holistic understanding of Native American responses to Spanish missionization from Florida to California during the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries.

The book is not driven by a single overriding thesis but by several intertwining themes. Wade asserts the importance of understanding the cultural worldviews of the Spanish missionaries, especially how Old World conceptions of good and evil, heresy, and witchcraft shaped Franciscan and Jesuit priests' conceptions of Native American religious beliefs. She emphasizes similarities between Native American and European folk practices, such as "vows, pilgrimages, processions, prayers, and exorcisms" as well as a belief in fortune-tellers and sorcerers, which were overlooked by missionaries who with "destructive rage, contempt, and pity" literally demonized Indians' ways (24, 20). She tracks processes of conversion, syncretism, and ethnogenesis at the daily and long-term level, focusing mostly on hunter-gatherer groups in southern Florida, northeastern Mexico, Texas, Baja California, and Alta California. The Calusa of Florida, for example, were at first happy to add some Christian beliefs and practices to their existing cosmology, taking a "best-fit" approach until more aggressive evangelism by the Franciscans ultimately led them to reject Christian theology altogether (54).

To make sense of such an array of Spanish mission campaigns during four centuries, Wade divides missionaries' strategies into three types. In the wilderness-based model, priests traveled with Indians as they followed their subsistence schedules, an approach that the Spaniards eventually rejected as untenable because it did not encourage agriculture or settlement, nor did it create an exploitable labor pool. In the more commonly employed urban-rural model, Spanish troops rounded up local Indian groups into settlements, either urban households or rural haciendas, where they were taught Christianity while constituting an "unfree labor force" (66). By the time the