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Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis:  
Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850  
(review)

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ecutors, judges, and juries, all with biases of their own involving not only the usual academic trio of race, class, and gender but also in this context mental competency, the four subjects of the chapters to follow.

As a guide to the history of murder jurisprudence, the opening essay is a model of concision and clarity. But its very comprehensiveness makes it a little misleading as an introduction to this particular collection, in that only two of the nine individual chapters reach past this geographical bound and/or the nineteenth century. But, with this caveat, the volume as a whole should be useful to students in criminal-justice programs. Five of the contributions, by Elizabeth De Wolfe, Lawrence Goodheart, Dave Lindorff, Alan Rogers, and Nancy Steenburg, build on, or are taken from, full-length books already published or nearly published. If, accordingly, the versions published in this collection are not the most authoritative now available, and the other pieces, by less established authors, are not truly pathbreaking in themselves, they all serve as useful guides to a number of relevant and interdisciplinary topics. Taken together, they sketch, either as case studies or short surveys, the differences among English, colonial, and Native American systems of justice; the conflict among legal, medical, and popular definitions of insanity; the question of *mens rea* in minors; and the impacts, positive and negative, of race, class, and gender in determining the outcomes of murder trials.

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*Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769–1850.* By Steven W. Hackel (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2005) 476 pp. \$59.95 cloth \$24.95 paper

Alta California was a colony of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, founded in 1769 to keep Russian and British traders from claiming that part of the Pacific coast. Although missions were on the decline in Latin America, opposed by regalists and reformers alike, mercantilist theory required that this late-coming colony pay for itself. José de Gálvez revived the mission reduction as an economical way to occupy territory and support presidios. Without conquerors to demand *encomiendas* of tributary Indians, chronic wars to supply a stream of captives, or a *repartimiento* system to draft and allocate minimum-wage laborers, California's economy rested on the missions, which sold the neophytes' products at low prices and retained half of their wages when they were hired out.

The Franciscans had a low opinion of their "rude" converts, who chanted the "*Rezo*" in all too many languages and in foraging season looked longingly at the hills and seashores. As time passed, and the Indians of California met and exceeded European norms—becoming productive farmers, pastoralists, and craftsmen; establishing town governments on the Spanish model; learning to play musical instruments;

and converting the missions into general stores—the missionaries continued to marginalize them as unfit for communion. Father Junípero Serra (about whom Hackel has little to say) in fourteen years of ministry at Mission San Carlos de Borromeo, near the presidio of Monterey, never once administered the Viaticum to a native (173).

In a significant reinterpretation of North American colonial history, Hackel concludes that the conquest of Alta California was ecological. California's 300,000 native inhabitants were not subdued by the seasoned *gobernantes*, by the 1,000 settlers and soldiers from upper New Spain, nor by the spiritual power of the Spanish-born Franciscans. From seacoast to hinterland, they were conquered by European pathogens, animals, and plants. Epidemics devastated the villages and drove the survivors to take refuge in the reductions, where endemic diseases like syphilis lay waiting to reduce them further. Escaped livestock caused an "ungulate irruption," degrading the environment and allowing European weeds and grasses to replace the native species. Under this double onslaught, hunting-gathering-fishing peoples could no longer sustain their families nor pass along their ancient skills. The "dual revolutions" answer, at last, the vexing questions of why wave after wave of Indians continued to enter the confines of the reductions, and why, despite mistreatment, they stayed in them instead of returning to the freedom of their valleys and villages.

The first to apply the technique of family reconstitution, developed for the study of early modern communities in England and France, to an Indian community in colonial Latin America, Hackel has mined the exhaustive nominal records of Mission San Carlos, covering about 3,000 Indians who lived there between 1770 and 1850 (see the methodological comments in Appendix A). His findings, presented in dozens of tables, are poignant. Less than a quarter of mission-born infants lived to be fifteen, the average age at first marriage for mission-born females. The average length of a union was only eight years; a majority of couples were infertile; and fewer than one in ten mission-married women reached the age of fifty (106–113, 215–216). Recognizing that a single mission could be anomalous, Hackel has applied the same technique to the populations of Missions San Diego and San Gabriel, using data compiled under his direction by the staff at the Early California Population Project at the Huntington Library, with similar preliminary results. He has also checked his conclusions against existing research for all twenty-one California missions. Everywhere, Indian population was in free fall.

In his last chapter, Hackel shows that a remnant of Christian Indians survived the secularization of the missions—which in California, unlike Florida or Mexico, became *doctrinas* only after they were secularized—to take up lands and employment as citizens of the Republic of Mexico. But there is an epilogue. Early Americanists expanding the canon to include all colonies within the bounds of the present United States will note that the California Constitutional Convention and the U.S. Con-

gress, not Spaniards or Mexicans, denied California Indians the rights to vote and to appear in court.

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*Notorious in the Neighborhood: Sex and Families across the Color Line in Virginia, 1787–1861.* By Joshua D. Rothman (Durham, Duke University Press, 2005) 360 pp. \$49.95 cloth \$19.95 paper

Rothman's work examines the dynamics of interracial sex in Virginia prior to the Civil War. The foundation of Rothman's argument rests on three consistent themes. First, prior to the Civil War, white Virginians largely ignored interracial liaisons so long as the relationships remained informal and relatively inconspicuous. Rothman cites a myriad of examples of blacks and whites traversing the sexual color line with relative impunity. For white Virginians, interracial relationships that lacked legitimacy and existed mostly beyond the radar of polite society posed little threat to the slavery system or notions of white hegemony.

A second theme suggested by Rothman was that whites in Virginia designed the legal framework and social norms to protect the prerogatives of white men. The desire to promote white male privileges also afforded interracial sexual liaisons involving white males/black females certain immunity from social attitudes and even the laws that opposed them. This fact helps in our understanding of how white men like Thomas Jefferson and David Isaacs could live for decades in the same households with women of color without receiving much interference from their neighbors. Even when others protested, as in the case of Isaacs, courts generally ruled in such a way as to protect the reputation and property of the accused white men.

A third theme promoted by Rothman centers around the complexity of interracial relationships involving white men and black women. Rothman gives agency to black women implicated in interracial relationships. He depicts these women responding in a variety of ways to the sexual demands of white men. Rothman explains that "the power dynamics between slave owners and enslaved women were never as simple as choices between submission, compromise, or resistance. In most cases, black women and white men constantly battled over who controlled the bodies of female slaves. Slave women capitulated when they believed they had no choice" (155).

Probably the most intriguing, yet controversial, part of Rothman's work is his treatment of the Thomas Jefferson/Sally Hemings affair. In Chapter 1, Rothman attempts to present a balanced account of the relationship, interspersing historical fact with speculation. However, at times his statements are cloudy and contradictory. For example, Rothman intimates that the Jefferson/Hemings liaison was probably