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*La frontera que vino del norte* (review)

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*La frontera que vino del norte.* By Carlos González Herrera. (Mexico City: Editorial Taurus/El Colegio de Chihuahua, 2008. Pp. 295, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9789705804885, 179 pesos, paper.)

The title of Carlos González Herrera's book can be translated as *The Frontier that Came from the North*. His overarching thesis can be summed up as the U.S.-Mexico border served as a way for the United States, which was in the process of becoming a nation-empire at the end of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, to define itself, culturally, racially, and hygienically against the Mexican "other."

The first chapter examines the historiography of both the frontier and the border in American history, particularly dealing with Frederick Jackson Turner. The second chapter, "the slow construction of the border," examines how the U.S. attitude toward the border developed at the turn of the century, and how this project was aimed first not at Mexicans but at other "undesirable" ethnicities who used Mexico as an entry point into the United States. Other chapters describe the use of the theories of eugenics, the concept of public health, and the construction of a legal apparatus along the border, all with the end of defining the cultural and social boundary of the United States as well as its physical border. The fifth chapter, "the indispensable enemy," details the duality of U.S. immigration policy, alternating between "big economic interests (railroad companies, mines, agribusiness) [and] big ideological-cultural projects (nativist, racist, eugenicist)" (120).

The last two chapters are particularly noteworthy. Chapter seven, "an Anglo society on the border," analyzes a process what the author calls "the racialization of El Paso" (202). By the beginning of the twentieth century, "the Anglo population in El Paso ceased being a white enclave in the area and became a majority, not only demographically, but also as the masters, almost absolute, of the means of obtaining wealth" (167). Chapter eight examines the impact of the Mexican Revolution on both the Mexican population in El Paso and of the treatment of Mexicans there. Returning to the theme of the medicalization of the border, it makes good use of oral history sources to describe the humiliation of being subjected to "sanitation" while crossing the border. This chapter deals with nationalism born out of the tragic explosion of March 6, 1916, at an El Paso jail. As the mainly Mexican inmates were being deloused with gasoline, somebody lit a match and at least two dozen people, mainly Mexican inmates, burned alive. Three days later, Pancho Villa's forces invaded Columbus, New Mexico. Residents of El Paso "saw a cause and effect relationship between the explosion and the attack" that was "read in nationalist terms by both groups" (243).

Despite the author's pleas for the centrality of the Mexican border in the construction of U.S. imperial-national identity, the book often depicts El Paso as much more marginal. For example, the reader is informed that "the political establishment in Washington continued to conceive immigration as a phenomenon taking place in the ports of San Francisco and New York," while the Southwest "remained a marginal region peripheral to political and cultural center of the nation" (148). The medicalization and ethnic discrimination aimed at

Mexicans, though real, were also directed against various other immigrant groups. And much of the reforms of the Progressive Era were arguably directed against these other ethnic groups. González Herrera does not deny this, but he does not connect the discrimination against Mexican immigrants to the broader trends in the United States as a whole.

Overall, this book is interesting and useful, especially considering that it has aimed to tell a particular story (of Mexicans in El Paso) to a particular audience (in Mexico) with the implicit goal of shedding light on the current issues of Mexican migration and the treatment of Mexicans in the United States. At the same time, it is weaker in addressing issues in United States, as well as Mexican, history and historiography.

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*Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Southern Children Learned Race.* By Jennifer Ritterhouse. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. Pp. 320. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 080783016X, \$49.94 cloth; ISBN 0807856843, \$19.95 paper.)

In *Growing Up Jim Crow* Jennifer Ritterhouse explores how black and white southern children developed a sense of racial identity and learned to carry out their expected roles in southern society. She grounds her analysis in the familiar concept of “racial etiquette,” which she defines as “the unwritten rules that governed day-to-day interactions across race lines not only as a form of social control but also as a script for the performative creation of culture and of ‘race’ itself” (4). Ritterhouse moves beyond the conventional focus on legal segregation in the public realm by concentrating on behavior in the private sphere, including southern households and intermediary spaces such as kitchens, yards, and street edges. She suggests that by looking at how race must be “learned” (or as other historians might say “socially constructed”) in childhood, from both parents and other children, we can find ample evidence of “forgotten alternatives.” Much like C. Vann Woodward, Ritterhouse makes the case for a process that was not necessarily foreordained, although in the end the Jim Crow South schooled its children in the art of forgetfulness.

The first two chapters of the book assess adult patterns of “racial etiquette” and the racial lessons parents taught their children. Ritterhouse explains how white middle-class mothers in particular embraced new ideals of child-rearing, such as the idea of the “sheltered childhood,” which reflected the ideology of maternalism found in white women’s organizations. Mothers played a pivotal role in maintaining white supremacy by training their sons and daughters to follow such customs as avoiding intimacy with blacks and addressing them as inferiors. Citing the work of Kevin Gaines and Evelyn Brooks-Higginbotham, Ritterhouse argues that middle-class black parents’ efforts to instruct their children were far more self-conscious and intentional. Black mothers and fathers labored to instill a sense of respectability in their children and encouraged them to “maintain their dignity and rise above the racism they faced” (83). The diffi-