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**Review of Amada's Blessings from the Peyote Garden of South Texas. By Stacy B. Schaefer. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015.)**

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fictional depictions of Valley towns in his KCDT. He also shows how the presence of Texas Anglos has almost disappeared, compared to their dominating presence during the period captured by most of Hinojosa's novels.

The last essay by Klaus Zilles is exceptional in providing a historical and political analysis of Hinojosa's detective novel, *Ask a Policeman*. As Hinojosa's second to last novel, this work allows Zilles to cast a remarkable perspective about how Hinojosa critiques the most recent nefarious realities plaguing the Valley. Zilles details aspects of these realities which resonate even more today than when he composed his essay. Drug cartels, their ability to use banks on the U.S. side to launder illicit money, and the growing presence of exploitable labor on both sides represent realities captured in this detective novel. Zilles shows how this contemporary transformative dynamic continues growing and how, on the Mexican side, has mushroomed. Today, attempts by governments on both sides to create order have become more unmanageable, even as more money is brought in to maintain law and order. Zilles lays out how Hinojosa's novel foresaw how the cross-purposes of different government agencies existent along the border lead to chaos. Zilles' analysis leaves us with a great deal to think about, even as realities have grown considerably worse.

This collection of critical essays gathered here thus presents a remarkable contribution to Hinojosa's Valley project and merits all our attention, as the importance of the Valley continues growing.

*Jaime Armin Mejía*  
*Texas State University*

*Amada's Blessings from the Peyote Garden of South Texas*. By Stacy B. Schaefer. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015.)

*Amada's Blessings* is a richly descriptive biography of Amada Cardena, a key figure in the Native American Church, the indigenous community of South Texas, and the role of peyote in native religiosity and trade. Through a detailed ethnographic portrait of Amada, anthropologist Stacy B. Schaefer illuminates the cultural and ecological history of peyote religion and the sacramental use of the peyote plant for its psychotropic and medicinal properties (31). She argues that Amada, a Mexican American woman who other scholars have interviewed and mentioned, is a pivotal figure in the peyote trade and offers a chronological and thematic examination of Amada and the peyote trade as well as her evolution in the Native American Church (NAC).

The book is divided into two parts; the first provides a detailed account of the author's meeting with Amanda and her birthday celebration. A eulogy written by Amada's loved ones in her passing is also offered. In doing so, Schaefer can connect her readers to a sweet woman who they find difficult to part with. The second part revolves around the historical evolution Native Americans undergone to use and practice peyote religion which often includes using the peyote plant for its psychotropic and medical qualities (31).

The author's admiration for this fascinating figure is evident. The opening pages exude excitement about the author's journey and veneration of her subject. This close relationship between the author and her subject may help explain the romantic and rather uncritical tone of the account. Schaefer does not question Amada's difficulties as a woman in the 1960s in the movement to make peyote legal in Texas or her experience as a female licensed peyote dealer. These experiences are explained minimally; at best.

One of the book's strength lies in the author's ability to bring together multiple sources to recount the untold story of one woman's contribution to the peyote trade and culture. The author utilizes the Special

Collections at the Laredo Public Library; the Dr. George R. Morgan Memorial Archive at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska; and various legal documents, as well as multiple interviews she conducted. Schaefer not only successfully provides a personal examination of Amada Cardena but of religious and cultural freedoms for Native Americans as well.

Schaefer expands the scholarship of peyote trade, religious freedom, and the culture Amada helped nurture throughout her life. The book adds to the literature by focusing on the evolution of peyote religion and trade through the personal examination of a key figure in peyote culture, that others have only mentioned briefly in their writings. This book is a multi-disciplinary book which will interest oral historians and scholars focused on peyote and Native American Church.

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*Colonial Spanish Texas and Other Essays.* By Lino García, Jr. (Monterrey: LA & GO Ediciones, 2014).

An eighth-generation Tejano, Lino García, Jr., Professor Emeritus of Spanish Literature at The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, methodically incorporates a series of essays related to the Tejano experience up to 1836 and beyond. Writing with great ebullience for the subject matter, his purpose is to put forth a narrative that, at times, was overlooked by scholars of Texas History. García declared, “Unfortunately for most of the decades after the Battle of the Alamo of 1836, mainstream Texas History failed to accurately portray the vast contributions, sacrifices, triumphs, the daily lives of the Hispanics/Tejanos, who first landed on Texas soil.” (vii) Some of the essays that were highlighted in García’s book focus attention on the sacrifices of Tejanos at the Battle of the Alamo and the role of Hispanics during the American Revolution. García credits the influence of Padre Hidalgo’s “El Grito” along with Tejano participation at the Battle of Medina in 1813 with fostering a revolutionary spirit that eventually led to the notorious Battle of the Alamo in 1836; of the recorded 189 who died at the Alamo, eight were Tejanos. The author also acknowledges the significant contributions made by Col. Juan Sequin, Lorenzo de Zavala, and José Antonio Navarre during the Texas Revolution. Lorenzo de Zavala, one of the Tejano signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence and patriots, designed the Texas Lone Star flag. Other essays concentrate attention on Hispanic recipients of the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor, Ranching and Cattle Drives in Spanish South Texas, the Spanish Jewish (Sephardic) Heritage of South Texas and Hispanic legacies of the United States. The author revealed that there have been 44 Hispanic recipients, including 10 Tejanos (David Barkley of WWI among them), of the distinguished Congressional Medal of Honor. García adequately discussed as well the laws governing land and water rights still intact that were first introduced by the Spanish. The author’s inclusion of his genealogical report is fascinating and adds a personal touch. Drawing on his expertise, the author added a fascinating essay on Spanish etymology; “Zurdo” (“left handed” is of Basque origin. “sábado” (Saturday) is of Hebrew origin. “Aguacate” (avocado) has its origins in the Náhuatl language. (121,123)

While the author’s passion for the subject is admirable, he seems to imply that all Tejanos were in favor of independence from Mexico in 1836. García stated, “Tejanos initiated their own Texas Revolution as an attempt to liberate themselves from a government in México that was unresponsive to their needs, and that was too far away.” (77) Some Tejanos kept their ties with the Centralists and were uncertain for their future

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