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**Stealing the Gila: The Pima Agricultural Economy and Water Deprivation, 1848–1921.** By David H. DeJong. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009. 272 pages. \$49.95 cloth.

For Native Americans of the American West, the onset of the mid-nineteenth century into the first three decades of the twentieth century represents a dramatic period of economic, political, and cultural change. After centuries of interactions, adaptations, and (for some western tribes) conflicts with various European nations, by the mid-nineteenth century most indigenous societies began to lose their political independence along with the majority of their lands and resources. Many Native American tribes faced new struggles for survival. Focusing on the American Southwest, *Stealing the Gila* traces the dynamic interplay between the regional economic development of the American Southwest and the efforts by the Akimel O’odham, or River Pima, to retain their lands, resources, and distinct ethnic identity.

Framing the narrative in the era from 1848 to 1921, DeJong examines the efforts by the Akimel O’odham to participate in the national economy through the development of agriculture-based enterprises. In the end, however, federal land and resource policies in association with Native American policies that favored non-Indian economic development would ensure the Pima’s economic demise. Deprived of water, a critical resource, Akimel O’odham agriculture eroded and collapsed, leaving the Pima an impoverished community, participating in the periphery of the regional and national economies.

The author, in the first chapter, sets the stage by providing an overview of Akimel O’odham postcontact cultural and ecological adaptations. Following the natural hydraulic regime of the Gila River, the Pima developed and sustained a stable economy, centered on agriculture, supplemented with hunting and gathering. After the Spanish *entrada*, the incorporation of introduced crops (especially winter wheat), and the adoption of select Spanish technologies, by the mid-eighteenth century the Pima had expanded their irrigation systems and were cultivating surplus foods for exportation. The development of intensive agriculture and participation in the Spanish mercantile economy led to a growing affluence and demographic expansion along the riverine systems. Throughout the Spanish era and through the Mexican era, Akimel O’odham economic and political successes continued unabated. Spanish and Mexican authorities recognized not only the Akimel O’odham’s economic importance but also their significance as an ally against Apache raids and as potential protection against the intrusion of other European colonial powers. Akimel O’odham villages were centrally located along a major communication route, linking California to Nuevo Mexico and beyond. As long as the Gila River flowed unimpeded, the Pima would remain a regional economic and geopolitical force.

Although American trappers sporadically visited the Pima villages as early as 1826 and 1827, the advent of the 1846 Mexican-American War effectively altered their political economic position on the landscape. Following the war's conclusion, as detailed in chapter 2, the 1848 discovery of gold in California prompted a flood of emigrants, traveling over four major southern trails that converged at the Pima villages. Between 1846 and 1852, an estimated forty thousand soldiers and emigrants trekked through Akimel O'odham villages, finding food, water, and protection from surrounding hostile tribes. During this period, the Pima economy, trading and selling with the emigrants, enjoyed unprecedented growth and prosperity and gradually moved toward a market economy.

With the Gadsden Purchase, the Akimel O'odham were annexed into the territorial jurisdiction of the United States. Although the Pima continued to maintain a successful economy and increasingly involved themselves in the evolving regional market economy, federal surveys for the rail routes and overland mail lines, which either crossed Pima lands or entered the villages directly, led Akimel O'odham leaders to assert their ownership and sovereignty over their land and resources. Needing Pima wheat to develop the region, in 1859 federal authorities established the first Pima Reservation. Although the initial land base was entirely inadequate, federal officials, as the author recounts in chapter 3, assured Pima leaders of the protection of their rights to additional lands. However, the post-Civil War years, as detailed in the next three chapters, would result in the continual erosion of Akimel O'odham political and economic sovereignty.

Initially, the onset of the Civil War found Pima wheat as well as the geopolitical location of their villages critical to the war effort in Arizona. But the end of the war marked the intrusion of mining interests and the influx of non-Indian settlers into the fertile valleys surrounding the Akimel O'odham villages and agricultural lands. In 1869, the non-Indian settlers in Florence purposely diverted and wasted water in order to deprive the Akimel O'odham of their most precious resource. Despite involving themselves increasingly in the regional market economy and openly assisting non-Indians since the Spanish *entrada*, the Pima were now considered an impediment to the non-Indian appropriation of water, land, and other natural resources.

Although additional lands were incorporated into the Gila River Reservation, the surrounding non-Indian settlers, who were supported by federal policies encouraging the development of the West, the Akimel O'odham economy collapsed, which led to famine and starvation. No longer self-sufficient, many Pima sought off-reservation wage labor. Others deforested the reservation by cutting mesquite for market, thus destroying the reservation ecology even more. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Akimel

O'odham economy was nearly destroyed. They became a dependent, impoverished people who were unable to provide subsistence for themselves or participate in the developing off-reservation political economy.

In chapter 7, the author reviews the impact of the 1887 General Allotment Act on the reservation. Originally conceived as an instrument of "civilization," aimed at destroying tribal authority, eliminating indigenous religious practices, and attempting to transform Indian people into yeomen farmers, allotment also was used as a pawn in order to appropriate and further integrate indigenous resources and labor. The 1921 allotment of reservation lands among the Akimel O'odham achieved its purposes, forcing many families into minimum subsistence farming while opening up substantial tracts of reservation lands to large non-Indian agricultural interests.

The period from 1900 to the early 1920s is discussed in the next two chapters. Across the American West, regional leaders, in cooperation with federal authorities, sought to develop western states economically and with little opposition. With natural and extractive resources dominating the western economy, Native American lands remained a target for continued exploitation. To accomplish this task, western congressional leaders continued to shape Indian policy toward maximizing non-Indian ownership or use of Native resources at the direct expense of Native political economic sovereignty. Of particular significance for the Akimel O'odham is water. The author brilliantly illustrates how regional dam and water-diversion projects, in conjunction with the failure of Congress to protect and restore Pima water rights, created a climate of rapid development that continued to call on indigenous lands and water for non-Indian regional development. In the final chapter, appropriately titled "The Pima Economy, Water, and Federal Policy," DeJong correctly observes that although the Akimel O'odham actively sought to engage in the regional evolving market economy, their efforts were crushed by "federal actions that promoted the interests of non-Indian settlers over those of the Pima. The tragic result was that the reservation economy was reduced to a subsistence status" (181).

*Stealing the Gila* draws attention to the intimate relationship between the crafting of Native American policies and realities, between 1900 and the early 1920s, and the developing regional political economy of Arizona. Drawing on a wide array of primary and secondary historical resources, DeJong skillfully lays bare Akimel O'odham political economic transition from an economic force to a society that experienced complete economic privation while weaving the Pima experience into the wider political and economic climate of the region. As this work continually points out, the control of Indian affairs is rooted directly in the evolving political economic infrastructure of the American West. Unlike many previous studies that focus exclusively on Bureau of Indian Affairs and

Native American relations, this work graphically illustrates that federal Indian policy formed a cornerstone in the evolution of western economic development. Powerful industries and western congressional leaders shaped Native American affairs, often at the expense of their indigenous citizens. Herein is the value of this work.

Despite Native American protests, lobbying efforts, and key court decisions since the late 1960s that resulted in significant developments in civil rights, religious freedom, and economic independence as tribes move toward greater indigenous self-determination, as long as the American West experiences “boom and bust” economic cycles and continues a dependency on extractive natural resource industries, Native American lands and resources, including Pima resources and lands, will continually come under attack for future non-Indian regional economic development. It is at this juncture that DeJong’s historical treatise is a powerful commentary on current issues. DeJong should not only be commended for his scholarly endeavor but also for applying his research in assisting the Gila River Pima in their efforts to deliver water to the reservation.

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**Troubling Tricksters: Revisioning Critical Conversations.** Edited by Deanna Reder and Linda M. Morra. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010. 348 pages. \$34.95 paper.

An uncomfortable scene too often unfolds whenever discussing my own work within Native American literature among those outside or unfamiliar with the area. The cliché, or rather too-often-asked, question in response to my reading of a Native text or to a particular character within a Native text resembles the following: “Is she/he/it the trickster?” A pronounced frown or blank stare follows when I reply, “No. This is not about the trickster.” Although some of my work does involve trickster criticism with a series of references to Gerald Vizenor, among others, the majority of it does not. This does not suggest that trickster criticism is obsolete, but rather that this line of reasoning is just one among many ways that critics can and do approach Native texts. The problem, and one that Deanna Reder and Linda M. Morra confront in their collection of critical essays, is that “trickster criticism” was not only misused but also overused by non-Native critics during the 1990s in order to define and stabilize Native texts. Trickster criticism by primarily non-Native critics was used as a trope and used to lump all Native literature within one exclusive and isolated perspective. Following this overindulgence in this line criticism, discussions regarding the trickster were