

Ana Laura Alvarado

Instructor Andrade

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Chapter's Analysis

The first chapter of the book "Mexicanos" written by Manuel Gonzales talks about the Spaniards and introduces them. To begin with, the first people that were powerful and influential to get here were the Romans. The Spaniards basically came after the fall of the Roman Empire becoming the next most powerful group of people in history. It informs us about the importance the Spaniards had in wanting to spread christianity and wanting to discover new places. The author writes about how the Spaniards eventually defeated the Moors, and then continued on clearing Spain from the Jews and the Muslims. This happened because of controversies with the different beliefs each group of people had. For Spain it was not good to have these differential beliefs so their best bet was to get rid of them. When the thirteenth century came around religion was a very important part of life for the people in Spain, it was extremely important that they would get aggressive if someone's beliefs were not the same as theirs, and they would not be accepting of the other person or their beliefs. It tells readers about Christopher Columbus and his arrive to America asking the Royals, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella for support financially in search for the New World in 1492. When Columbus came back he had with him a few Natives and gold good enough to convince his people that he had succeeded. Christopher Columbus baptized the Native Americans with the term "Indios" because he had though his arrival was in India. It touches on the conquest of the Aztecs by Hernan Cortes, gaining the Aztecs trust and

then having them as hostage. This led to La Noche Triste when Cortes lost against the Aztecs, and sadly Moctezuma II was killed. Mexicans and Mexican Americans for the most part condemn Spanish past. Having in effect that Spanish left religion and language behind making Mexico the largest Catholic and Spanish Speaking population of the world. My first impression of this chapter was that there was a lot of important historical information in this chapter that helped me fill in some of the blanks I had doubt about. For example I never really understood how the conquest of the Aztecs happened until I read about it. My attention was drawn when the author starts writing about how Jose de Acosta guesses that he thinks that Native Americans are descendants from Asians. I felt like that was really interesting because I have never had that thought or imagined that. It was a really impressive thought that brought a lot of questions to mind. As well as when he said towards the end of the chapter that Mexican Americans deny their Spanish past. This I found fascinating because it does become true. Some things that I already had knowledge of before reading this chapter was how Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492 in search for more territory to claim. As well as, his misleading arrival to the “New World”. Another fact I knew before this chapter is how Spain wanted to spread the Christianity and how they only wanted people to believe in what they believed, nothing else. This chapter helped me learn more about La Noche Triste in 1520 and how Hernan Cortez wanted to trick the Aztecs. This I did not know about and felt surprised because even though he tried tricking them by gaining their trust and then holding them as hostage, the Aztecs defeated Hernan Cortes and his people. Cortes and his people had to leave escaping from them for survival purposes. I also learned in this chapter of how the theory of the first Nomads in America are “supposedly” through an ice or land bridge of the last Ice Age era. This chapter taught me

how Mexicans and the Indian culture are the same in terms of values in life like family, love, and friendships. I personally like the portrayal of Manuel Gonzales in history because it paints a clear picture for me and I felt it detailed and precise in the writing of how it all began. He for the most part put everything in chronological order making it easier for the reader to understand without jumping back and forth in time creating a blurry picture of the past. The author Manuel Gonzales was in my opinion accurate and legitimate in this chapter because he writes the whole story of how it actually was without showing any preference or any hidden details in comparison to other textbooks.

The second chapter in this book “The Spanish Frontier” talks about how the settlement came about and the exploration of the New World. This chapter informs the readers of how the Spaniards eventually began marrying the Natives and their children were the beginning of a whole new generation. This generation classifies these children as Mestizos, and Mestizas. Then soon the Spanish conquest was to happen having the Spaniards in search for gold and silver in the east, as well as the want for the spread of Christian faith and glory. The conquistadores failed and they were not able to find silver until the next century, which was in the mid 1540s. The silver was found in the northern part of Mexico. The French forced the Spaniards to focus one more time on east Texas. They made it to Texas, Arizona, Alta California, and New Mexico. The settlement of the northern frontier was in New Mexico. In the sixteenth century there were sedentary and nomadic tribes where competing lifestyles in the Indian tribes. Settlers even fought Hostile Indians and then in a different world of settlers. When the eighteenth century came around it was good for women because they gained more freedom and towards the end of the century the Spanish expansion to the north was brought to a hold. Junipero Serra and others

where historical small role to the finding of the missions. Some of the great big cities that are popularly known today in California were found at the time as well. The last settlement in the coastal region was in Alta California when the Spanish Empire was slowly losing their throne. Settlers found life to be a bit hard for them, some with old laws still with them. Some of the major trends were that gender roles were more of a blurred out and so were social classes. The upper and the lower classes were connected by *compadrazgo*. Towards the end of the Spanish period the frontier was technically dominated by three keys which were the Indian problems, *Mestizaje*, and the American contact. In the end the family life kept being the center of the existence, marriages were fixed, and the average life expectancy was at a fairly young age, at forty years old. My first impressions of this chapter was that I had known for the most part what the author was talking about, I felt it like a review, but it helped me out in refreshing something in my head and having things a bit more clear and in detail of the continuation of Mexicans.

What was impressive to me and stood out in this chapter was that the big known cities in California were discovered during this time period which we now know today as the great cities to be at in California. Some of the information that I had already known of this particular chapter where that the offspring of the Native Americans and the Spaniards were the new generation at the time of *Mestizos* and *Mestizas*. Also, that it was not as easy for the conquistadores to find silver in their first intent. From this chapter I learned that the average life expectancy was at a young age of forty, and also that for the settlers it was not easy having to settle. Furthermore, that women in the eighteenth century gained freedom in being able to have their own land, business, drink, and gamble. They had it rough in the beginning in adapting to a new place and making a living in an unknown area. The portrayal of the author Manuel Gonzales made me feel

comfortable in this reading and I enjoyed the reading as well because the author provides a writing style without any preference as mentioned before. I feel that this author is precise and accurate in his writing of the historical portrayal. The Spanish contact with Mesoamerican society was legitimate and accurate in the interpretation of Manuel Gonzales because he is very straight forward in the events, and in my opinion he did not show any kind of bias towards any side, he was equally in both sides saying both of their wins and their losses. In conclusion, both of these chapters were helpful for my understanding and academically because it helped me put some of the missing pieces of knowledge I had as well as refreshing my memory in things I had remembered learning about in the past. I enjoyed reading these chapters because I felt like if the whole story was actually said rather than only having heard one part of the story.