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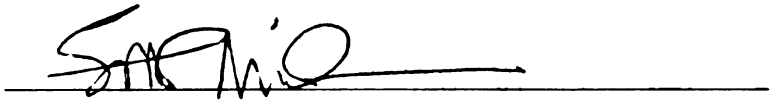

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By

John Philip Miller-Purrenhage

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ABSTRACT

NATIVE AMERICAN, CHICANO, AND WESTERN AMERICAN LITERATURES: FINDING COMMON GROUND

By

John Philip Miller-Purrenhage

This dissertation examines texts by authors of Native American, Chicano, and white backgrounds written from the socio-political space of the contemporary American West. The 1960s marked a renaissance in writing from all three groups, a rebirth and outpouring of writing that helped found Native American, Chicano, and Western American literatures as sub-disciplines of literary studies at large. Many writers and critics from these groups sought to shore up a specific group identity against what they saw as the encroachment of (white, eastern) American culture. They engaged in polemics against the main thrust of American literature, including most prominently the story of "the West as America," the nationalist narrative underpinning much of American culture that found the United States' roots in the conquest of the West. Despite many writers' shared concern with resisting these narratives, most critics within these disciplines treat the literatures as separate, using rubrics developed within each discipline. My first chapter presents the concerns of these fields. I analyze major developments in each field and introduce my method, which might be called critical genealogy. A critical genealogy (according to Russ Castronovo) disturbs the foundations of national legacies like the story of the U.S. West and searches for signs of erasure. I argue that these fields too often discard valuable contexts in favor of exclusionary identity formation.

In the other chapters, I both highlight the genealogical methods and themes of five major authors from these groups and perform my own critical genealogy on their

constitution of group identities, legacies, and bloodlines. Rudolfo Anaya's Alburquerque promises to explore the legacy of inter-cultural contact between Native American, Chicanos, and whites in New Mexico, particularly through its crossblood protagonist. However, he avoids any real exploration of hybrid identity, retreating to an idyllic Chicano identity that is essentially Native American. Larry McMurtry's Lonesome Dove performs both as stereotypical Western and as anti-Western, questioning the project of westward expansion. Most importantly, McMurtry troubles the very notion of a shared American identity that might be gleaned from western literature.

In Love Medicine, Louise Erdrich features extended families separating and reforming. Lipsha Morrissey's archetypal quest for his father, like most searches for origins, presents no easy versions of home, ethnic, or national identity. Nash Candelaria presents in Memories of the Alhambra a misguided Chicano protagonist who searches for his roots in Spain instead of the New World, suggesting the problems of establishing a basis for any kind of identity. Finally, Leslie Marmon Silko in Gardens in the Dunes presents a narrative of a different search for origins. Silko sends her Native American protagonist to a 19th century Europe that is trying to erase or contain vestiges of old religions that resemble those of her New Mexican Indians. Yet despite the cross-cultural contact among her many ethnic and national groups, these groups ultimately retrench their identities.

In analyzing these novels and critical works, placing them on a common ground so to speak, I show how the groups have isolated themselves within certain identities, performing only partial genealogies on their own origins; I hope to suggest through this project the value of questioning the foundations of identity and these disciplines.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Laura. Your devotion to your work has guided and inspired me, and your love has given meaning to everything I do. Thank you for everything.

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CHAPTER ONE

Finding Common Ground: Introduction

Lone Ranger: "Look out, Tonto! We're surrounded!"
Tonto: "What do you mean 'we,' white man?"
--Eddie Murphy

What do we mean when we say "we?" On what grounds do we attempt to group ourselves with others, to the exclusion of still others, and for what reasons? What affiliations, be they national, filial, or relational, do we claim as crucial to our identities? And how have creative writers attempted to dramatize such struggles over national, ethnic, and regional identifications in ways that illuminate the issues for readers? These are among the central questions that motivate Native American, Chicano, and Western American Literatures: Finding Common Ground. I hope to interrogate the ways in which some rather recently constituted literary disciplines have formed their "we," including both those who practice literary scholarship and the inside group of primary authors they study, and how they have excluded. I contend that while there have been reasons for the fields of Native American, Chicano, and western American literatures to hold themselves apart as discrete disciplines, there are also compelling reasons to read these literatures together.

Why Study "The West"?

Why does the rubric of the "American West" continue to be useful and compelling to writers and scholars, even in an age of globalization, interdisciplinarity, and pan-American studies?

One approach to answering this question comes locally, one might say, by examining the literature of the West closely for evidence that it is somehow exceptional enough to merit its being singled out for study. I will delve into this explanation below, but the opposite approach also bears fruit. I believe examining the West not just on the local level, but also from the angle of its place in global or hemispheric studies (or literatures of the Americas, etc.) shows it to be a deserving rubric for study. In a recent collection on literature in an inter-American context, editors Monika Kaup and Debra J. Rosenthal comment, "Our theme is framed within the method of hemispheric New World Studies, which compares the treatment of racial and cultural mixture in distinct *regional*, ethnic and national literatures of the Americas."[1] Far from eliminating the need for regional studies, the recent move towards inter-American studies has re-energized region—among other rubrics—as a productive context in which to compare different literary works. Yet the American West is also more than just another region in the matrix of possible comparisons.

The West and the mythology of the "western" continue to be very important for public life in the United States and, inasmuch as U.S. policies and attitudes affect other nations and peoples, the rest of the world, too. Patricia Nelson Limerick writes, "The conquest of Western America shapes the present as dramatically—and sometimes as perilously—as the old mines shape the mountainsides"(18). "We" have inherited The Legacy of Conquest, as Limerick explains (without specifying what "American"

[1] Monika Kaup and Debra J. Rosenthal, Mixing Race, Mixing Culture: Inter-American Literary Dialogues (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), xi; emphasis mine. See also Paul Jay's attempt (which in many ways parallels that of western critics) to emphasize location, especially transnational locations like border, over abstract ideas like "nation," in analyzing the literatures of America, "The Myth of 'America' and the Politics of Location: Modernity, Border Studies, and the Literature of the Americas," Arizona Quarterly 54.2 (Summer 1998), 165-92.

incorporates for her): "To live with that legacy, contemporary Americans ought to be well informed and well warned about the connections between past and present"(18), particularly since "conquest tested the ideals of the United States"(18). In his books, Richard Slotkin traces the importance of western themes and imagery for U.S. political leaders.[2] John Cawelti has noted, "there has always been an observable similarity between the pattern of justifying rhetoric used to defend American military policy and the Western drama"(Cawelti 112).[3]

Though Cawelti and Slotkin first drew these connections in the 1970s, seemingly every generation of cultural studies scholars has drawn attention to the prevalence of Western mythology in contemporary political rhetoric. President Ronald Reagan declared genre western writer Louis L'Amour his favorite author. President George W. Bush used the western cliché "wanted: dead or alive" to describe U.S. policy towards terrorists in 2001. As the nation continues to base part of its identity on mistaken ideas and imperfectly grounded ideals taken from the settling/conquest of the continent and subsequent expansion of the American empire, critical analysis of the development and deployment of western myth will continue to be crucial.

The history of the west and the genre of the western story have given many U.S. citizens their most fundamental ideas about how the United States was founded and

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[2] Richard Slotkin traces the connections between the United States's politics and western themes in three books, with Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993) perhaps the most explicit in arguing how U.S. leaders relied on citizen familiarity with and acceptance of tropes of westward expansion in explaining foreign, domestic, and even extra-planetary policies; see also Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier 1600-1860 (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973) and The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization 1800-1890 (New York: Atheneum, 1985).

[3] One could keep adding to the list, for instance citing Harold P. Simonson, who sees the theme of the closed frontier as signaling "the kind of American tragedy that destroyed illusions fostered on the open frontier and forced the nation to come of age" (Beyond the Frontier: Writers, Western Regionalism, and a Sense of Place (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1989), 3.

developed and, therefore, what it must stand for. Like most nations, the United States glorifies its own past to itself, romanticizing individual leaders and types. Most significantly, in my view, the cowboy and the pioneer (with its somewhat less romantic latter-day representative, the farmer) have been raised to the status of American heroes. However, as studying the roles of cowboys and settlers in the context of the conquest and displacement of Native Americans and Mexican-Americans shows, individuals from these groups often acted in ways contrary to the ideals (such as rugged independence, manly courage, or love of freedom) now ascribed to them. While pulp fiction westerns have built up the romantic image of these forefathers, a counter-tradition in fiction and history (called variously the "New Western History," "anti-western," "New West," or just revisionism) has challenged this hegemonic view. A better public understanding of the use and abuse of western myths and images would kill "the West" as many Americans know it, but perhaps would result in better policy and engagement with those groups on the other side of the so-called frontier (and, indeed, a better understanding of the flexibility of U.S. borders and national identities).

Another recent example of a rhetoric-laden attempt to call on history to shore up current identity and justify current U.S. actions gives one pause. In reaction to the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City in September 2001, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni published a report—more a blacklist, really—of leftist reactions to the attack. Because those named on the list failed to demonize broad groups of people as terrorists, they were accused of being anti-American. Upon what basis does this group decide what is properly American? Apparently, they base their understanding of proper Americanism on history; at least, that is what the quotation on the cover of the

pamphlet implies. It comes from Lynne Cheney, Wyoming-born literature Ph.D., cultural commentator, and wife of current Vice President Dick Cheney:

> At a time of national crisis, I think it is particularly apparent that we need to encourage the study of our past. Our children and grandchildren—indeed, all of us—need to know the idea and ideals on which our nation has been built. We need to understand how fortunate we are to live in freedom. We need to understand that living in liberty is such a precious thing that generations of men and women have been willing to sacrifice everything for it. We need to know, in a war, exactly what is at stake.[4]

I would argue that Cheney's words invoke not just the "war on terror," but also the culture wars of the past three decades. Who is this "us" and who gets to decide? What are these ideals? The appeal to family strikes a sentimental chord, but also implies that inclusion in America is limited to its current families and their descendents ("our" past and future belong only to them). Combined with the appeal to the past, the rhetoric of family invokes a sense that America is a family affair, an organic unit that reproduces itself biologically rather than a political confederation artificially constructed and maintained.[5]

While the West as an object of study has informally been "raced" as White (or Anglo), the conquest of the West was anything but. As Limerick explains, "Happily or not, minorities and majorities occupied a common ground"(27). Though studying the

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[4] From Jerry L. Martin and Anne D. Neal, "Defending civilization: How Our Universities are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It," (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 2001), n.p.

[5] Michael Rogin has written of this connection between family ties and politics from a more Freudian perspective than I will utilize. See Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian (New York: Knopf, 1975) and Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman

West through Frederick Jackson Turner's old rubric of the frontier may exclude those on the other side of the frontier, as Limerick argues it does, conceiving of the West as a place—"a common ground"—emphasizes and preserves the struggle for and negotiation over land, language, and liberties that took place there.[6] It also prevents readers from isolating white writing about the West from Chicano or Native writing treating similar themes and geographies. Recent theorizing about borders and borderlands seems to support Limerick's point. As Jesús Benito and Ana María Manzanas explain, a "borderlands approach" to literature and culture would be "a revisionist position which sees literatures and cultures not as finished and self-contained projects isolated from other influences, but as constructs based on interaction and dialogue, and which evolve and unfold relative to each other."[7]

Why Not "The West"?

What are the possible objections to considering alongside western American literature (read for so long as "white" or Anglo) literatures of people of color (in this case, Native Americans and Mexican-Americans) who were killed, displaced, cheated, devalued, and defrauded during and after the period of Manifest Destiny (Frederick Jackson Turner's period of the "open frontier")?

Melville (New York: Knopf, 1983). In addition, Russ Castronovo has worked on metaphors of genealogy used politically, on which more below.

[6] Though used to describe different geography, Richard White's "the middle ground" (The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991)) operates similarly to describe the give and take of groups meeting and identifying themselves and the other in the context of the encounter: "the middle ground is the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages"(x). White's main purpose is very similar to mine: "a search for accommodation and common meaning"(ix).

[7] Jesús Benito and Ana María Manzanas, "Border(lands) and Border Writing: Introductory Essay," from Literature and Ethnicity in the Cultural Borderlands, Eds. Jesús Benito and Ana María Manzanas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 2-3.

Like ethnic descriptors, the term "the West" does not travel well. Conceivably, as the western United States continues to change, it may be difficult to fix the identity of books, authors, or citizens as "western." Competing discourses of Native American and Mexican-American literature and culture would claim either the irrelevance or even the offensiveness of such a rubric as a means of studying the works of their ethnically grouped constituents. Indeed, Mexican-Americans have seen the western United States as el norte, positioned opposite Mexico on a north-south axis rather than recapitulating Anglo east-west figurations.[8] In this sense, the U.S. West doubles as el norte, and one might most accurately, if clumsily, refer to this geopolitical space as the west/north.[9] Since this study attempts to point out that the West has never been and cannot now be considered a term only important to Anglo Americans, to capitulate the term and use another in its place would be to give up the point before even arguing it, on one hand, and on the other to lose the residual linguistic suggestiveness of "the West." The West has been used to name a historical place from the vantage point of white settlers; for better and worse, it names the place where Native Americans lost so much, where Spanish-speaking colonists fought, won, and lost a series of imperial wars of positioning both with various Native Americans and with English-speaking counterparts.

The rise to prominence in the 1990s of a border studies centered on Mexican-American identity has to some extent displaced the region of the West as an important analytical category, but the use of "border" and its many connotations continues to re-

[8] See Richard Rodriguez, "Go North, Young Man," Mother Jones July/August 1995, 31-35.

[9] To use an alternate term like North America, by which scholars usually attempt to designate non-Latin America (i.e. Canada and the United States), would be both to elide differences between Canada and the U.S. (since I don't discuss Canadian works, I do not wish to suggest that I am speaking for North America) and to suggest (erroneously) that the Latin influence had been less significant in those more northerly countries. Given the body of Mexican-American literature, to draw such an absolute distinction between

emphasize the tropes of previous studies of the West as border country, common ground, and the meeting place for the major groups that have contributed to the formation of United States identity.[10] Combining study of the border with that of the west forces us to remember that neither frontier nor border (neither in their historical manifestations nor their theoretical refigurings) have ever been so airtight as their common usage suggests. As Edward Watts and David Rachels suggest, "the study of twentieth-century borders has shown that an identifiable 'line' between one culture and another oversimplifies the complexities of frontier and border experiences. On the one hand, it connotes an intrinsic asymmetry between the conquering culture and the conquered and assumes that, east of the frontier, indigenous culture is erased."[11] The continuing work of Chicano and Native scholars, particularly during the respective literary renaissances of these groups which form the historical parameters of this study, testifies that indigenous culture has not been erased, east or west, even if that work tends to overemphasize the purity of groups on both sides of the border.

Finally, if preconceived ideas of the West—stereotypes about cowboy life, rhetoric about the American character as found in the (conquering) pioneers, the lingering American belief in Manifest Destiny—have served as a useful "straw man" for groups critiquing U.S. triumphalism, including those on both sides of the border (as I will suggest below), a continued (and preferably more accurate) examination of the West as the region where these groups clash will sharpen that critique more than shoring up ethnic

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North and South America would be to deny that the U.S. West has been a distinct meeting place for multiple racial-national-ethnic groups over the last 500+ years.

[10] I am referring to Native Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Anglo-Americans, the subjects of this study, but much the same could be said of Asian-Americans as a broadly conceived group, though there is not space here to discuss the latter group's interaction with the West.

[11] Edward Watts and David Rachels, "Introduction," The First West: Writing from the American Frontier, 1776-1860, Edward Watts and David Rachels, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), xiv.

or regional identity will. For literary fields, centering so narrowly on chosen ethnic subjects (including the case of white writing from the West) not only delimits the possibilities of those subjects, but also threatens to ignore historical conflict in the interest of establishing zones of purity around the subjects. When confronted by a privileged white, male subject who deterministically forswears the very possibility of speaking on the Other, Gayatri Spivak suggests, "Why not develop a certain degree of rage against the history that has written such an abject script for you that you are silenced?"[12] The alternative involves not just remaining silent on issues related to Other groups but which affect one's own group, but remaining willfully ignorant of how "cultures" are formed in conflict among different groups.

The advice works for Chicano/a, Anglo and Native American writers alike because they share the common ground of the frontier (in its geopolitical sense). As Spivak writes, "I say that you have to take a certain risk: to say 'I won't criticize' is saving your conscience.... [If] you criticize having earned the right to do so, then you are indeed taking a risk and you will probably be made welcome, and can hope to be judged with respect"(62-3). In Spivak's scenario, then, one earns the right to speak through "specific programmes of study" (including learning the language of the other) and "a *historical* critique of your position as the investigating person"(62), and thereby earns the respect of members of the other group. Furthermore, while scholars of ethnic literature have done well to criticize the racism inherent in U.S. imperialism, there is also

[12] Gayatri Spivak, from The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, Ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 62. Spivak goes on to argue that even when faced with the group one "used to dominate," one must take risks in learning about the other rather than "not doing your homework"(62). I would argue that a lack of risk has characterized U.S. consideration of its colonial past, including literary treatments, and add that in a critical atmosphere where ethnic minority issues are no longer under erasure, Chicano and Native American writers and critics can risk placing their fields in western contexts without threat of assimilation.

merit for scholars and teachers in recognizing that white allies writing about the west have criticized it as well, creating a body of white western literature that resists the same influences as, say, Chicano or Native American literature do.[13] So while the "west" as a regional descriptor may carry a lot of cultural baggage anathema to non-Anglos, I envision that the comparative study undertaken in this dissertation, with the West as the ground common to the groups to be studied, will lead to the mutual respect Spivak advocates; it may be idealistic or even unrealistic, but it is a worthy goal of scholarship.

Genealogy and Origins

One common strain of these literatures, which can perhaps be found in all literatures, is the theme of the establishment of myths of origins or beginnings. Origins seem to bolster the establishment of a "tradition" which is usually seen as fundamental to proving that any field is, in fact, an object of study. The search for a lost origin often bolsters the identity of a nation or people even when the cohesiveness of these groups is questionable, transitory or illusory. Benedict Anderson has famously called nations "imagined communities" (I think the term can easily include Chicanos) to stress that people in these communities can only imagine they have identity in common.[14] Nationalists like to imagine their communities are ancient, with distant origins, though the concept of "nation" is relatively young: "the new imagined communities... always regarded themselves as somehow ancient"(Anderson 109). Once imagined, narratives

[13] In his book on how high school history textbooks under-represent white antiracism, James Loewen makes a parallel point: "In this struggle, our history textbooks offer little help.... [T]hey neglect racial idealism. In so doing, they deprive students of potential role models to call upon as they try to bridge the new fault lines that will spread out in the future from the great rift in our past." Loewen, Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 172.
[14] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (New York: Verso, 1991), 6.

about genealogy help cement the community's togetherness and conceal the contingency of the nation's formation.[15] I have chosen several novels that feature either centrally or peripherally a search for origins similar (and in some cases identical) to that described by Anderson, whether they be family or personal origins, large regional or ethnic group origins, or more broadly, "American" origins.

I critique these authors' depiction of the establishment of and/or the search for origins under the rubric of "genealogy." Genealogy works for my purposes for two main reasons: one, a genealogy is the study of the descent of a person, family or group, and my own study features novels concerned with these kinds of descent; and two, as a critical method, genealogy "opposes itself to the search for 'origins,'" as Michel Foucault writes in his description of the method (Foucault 77), and thus provides a useful hermeneutic for analyzing any search for origins. In the "culture wars" of the 1980s and 1990s, proponents of identity concepts organized around "culture" (including Hispanic, Native American, and (Anglo) American) perpetuated their respective groups' myths of origins as a means of shoring up identity. As José Aranda has argued of this period, formerly culturally invisible groups had to identify their differences from the larger (white) culture as the very grounds for constituting their groups. As a result, "true literary integration" and "renarration of American literature" were postponed: "The governing literary metanarrative of Plymouth Rock, and Puritan immigration to the New World, thus

[15] Don Pease sees national formations as the operations of states, not peoples, and therefore political creations, not mythical or natural ones. For him, national narratives of the type I will analyze below hide the operations of states exercising power. While I don't analyze my chosen texts in quite the same way, Pease's description of how narratives mystify a true genealogy (as described by Foucault, below) of a people is apt: "national narratives established their narrativity at the site where the state concealed the sovereign power in between itself and the "national people." Recharacterizing this display of state power as the national people's desire to recover a lost origin, national narratives have enchained a series of events as the unfolding of this collectively shared desire." Donald E. Pease, "National Narratives, Postnational Narration," Modern Fiction Studies 43.1 (1997), 7.

remained unchanged... the Puritan mythology of a Christian brave new world found new life as the Cold War came to an end."[16] In such a context, minority groups searched for various origins myths divergent from the dominant Anglo/Puritan ones.

The search for origins in narratives of family and communal life can represent a nation or group's attempt to legitimize, glorify and defend itself. Doris Sommer explains that while such allegories of family for nation can be misleading, their power is undeniable: "Allegory is a vexed term, but unavoidable to describe how one discourse consistently represents the other and invites a double reading of narrative events"(Sommer 41). William Handley links western stories in particular to the narrating of nation, noting the troubled relationship between childless American Adams and the need to generate American identity: "the American was 'made' out West, both satisfying a nation's sense of its exceptionalist difference from the inherited history of the Old World and simultaneously generating anxiety about how this exceptionalism might be perpetuated through a continuing national genealogy"(Handley 25). Handley analyzes important white western writers like Wallace Stegner and Willa Cather, showing the difficulty their characters have in generating and sustaining a family that can do the work of national allegory in the uncertain century following the close of the frontier.[17] My chapter on Larry McMurtry follows along these lines, but I find significantly less anxiety

[16] José F. Aranda, Jr., When We Arrive: A New Literary History of Mexican America (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 45.

[17] William Handley, Marriage, Violence and The Nation in the American Literary West (Cambridge: U of Cambridge Press, 2002). Handley's effort parallels my own attempt to read twentieth century western literature, particularly works other than genre westerns, as allegorical of national struggles over identity. Bonnie TuSmith has used the genealogical metaphor in a different way to apply to similarities among multicultural works. I am sympathetic to her use of the symbol and her integrationist stance: "if we continue to overlook the relationships and connections among American cultures and persist in separatism, we scholars are guilty of perpetuating misunderstandings that even now have serious repercussions in educational institutions and in the larger society"(ix). TuSmith, All My Relatives: Community in Contemporary Ethnic American Literatures (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

about generating or perpetuating tradition in the Chicano and Native American authors I consider, even though the cause for such misgivings may exist. In their cases, the attempt to depict family cohesion performs the work of national narrative to the extent that their genealogies allegorically prop up a vision of the ethnic group that can then be used as the basis for ethnic pride, self-determination, and resistance to assimilation and oppression. As I will attempt to prove in the chapters that follow, however, their allegories of family and race are also shot through with ambiguity and uncertainty. I argue that the very contingency or inconsistency of national/ethnic groups and narrative genealogies of them open up the fields of Native American, Chicano and western literatures to analysis by and of one another because these groupings are not so natural, ancient, or inevitable as often supposed by critics in these fields.

The methodology of this dissertation is first to provide a general introduction to the three literary fields under consideration and then to analyze some representative works from each field. The remainder of this chapter analyzes some of the assumptions and gestures of literary criticism from each field. Of necessity, I do not provide a complete history of any one field, each of which could supply material enough for several books. While this is not a formalist study, each of the other chapters gives an extended close reading of one novel, with special attention given to how the quest to establish or discover the genealogical origins of individuals or families serves to define the larger ethnic group or nation. I have chosen novels that can be said without controversy to represent each of the three fields to the extent that no one would deny, for example, that Lonesome Dove is an example of western literature, or that Memories of the Alhambra is

a Chicano novel. Their relative representative quality is not meant to exclude other texts that help define these fields, but rather to establish how works that definitely belong in each field work to define that field. Their failures to contain all that is "Chicano," for example, about "Chicano literature" or culture are taken as a given, for representation is never so absolute as literary critics too often treat it.

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The bodies of literature designated Native American, Chicano, and Western Literature have featured some of the most compelling and important works of fiction since the 1960s. The works in these fields have taken on the task of revising American history and mythology, particularly the history and mythology of Westward Expansion, and of opening up American culture to long neglected experiences. Despite their shared interests, not to mention their shared geographical space, few comparisons have been made among them. Instead of focusing on their common ground—not simply shared values or history, but the place where the fields can be identified one against the other—the critics within these fields have maintained disciplinary boundaries and ignored a realm of possibilities.[18] While one cannot deny that important differences exist, this dissertation will unearth a network of commonalities among Chicano, Native American, and Western American literatures.

[18] Books that do attempt this exist, but differ from my project in their focus. Robert Gish's Beyond Bounds: Cross-Cultural Essays on Anglo, American Indian, and Chicano Literature. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996) and Krista Comer's work on feminist regionalist writers, Landscapes of the New West: Gender and Geography in Contemporary Women's Writing (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), both combine study of white and non-white (Native, Mexican-American, African-American) authors. Gish seems to position his works as already on a common ground (and on a level playing field, we might add) with too little attention paid to the critical debates over their respective literary traditions; in other words, he compares the works as if the debates I discuss had already been resolved. Comer's focus is on re-establishing a politically progressive feminist literary criticism based on new regional women's writing that questions old ideas of region, gender, and nation. I share her

Given that the three fields share so much history, it is surprising that so little comparative work has been done among them. Each field has developed and maintained certain critical boundaries that exclude the other, though these boundaries, it has become increasingly clear, have always been permeable. This dissertation will explore those areas where the fields overlap, particularly as relates to how depictions of genealogy—the search for family ties—relate allegorically to depictions of the larger national or ethnic group. That the fields of Chicano and Native American literature have ignored or dismissed the possibility of commonalities with the other field (Western American literature, though the same holds true for Anglo-American literature in general) is partly explained by the logic underlying each field, by what Donald Pease might call their "field-Imaginary," the "common sense"("New Americanists"15) underlying their organization. Pease writes that the field-Imaginary contains "the field's fundamental syntax—its tacit assumptions, convictions, primal words, and the charged relations binding them together"("New Americanists" 11). In the case of the ethnic literatures under consideration, one of many tacit assumptions is that the fields include works based on the authors' descent (some combination of blood and culture, over which there is understandable debate). Critics in these fields organize a canon of works based on identity, and the aim of the fields would seem to be the elucidation of that identity.

Thus, to begin with one of the three fields, Chicano critics study "Chicano literature," centering their attention on some fact of identity, whether it be an author's treatment of Chicano families or individuals, or Chicano society's relationship to Anglo

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concern with changing the field of western literature, but also wish to shed light on the fields of ethnic literature; I do not attempt a feminist analysis like hers.

society, or to the environment.[19] Since Chicano Studies is founded on a primal scene of resistance to the dominant Anglo-American paradigm, the field has tended to exclude study of non-Chicano authors whose work, while by definition not springing from some primal Chicano identity, bears on Chicano interests. The resistance paradigm underlying Chicano Studies since the late 1960s reflects years of Anglo dominance in academia and in society in general and promotes further resistance to the damaging effects of that dominance.

In "Canon Formation and Chicano Literature," Maria Herrera-Sobek illustrates some of the challenges of constructing Chicano Studies as a discipline when she details the ongoing repositioning of the start of the field. She writes that it was once thought Chicano Studies became legitimate in the 1960s (a parallel to Native American and Western literary studies), then scholars traced the tradition back to 1848, the end of the Mexican-American War, then argued that the tradition must have already been in place by 1848, leading to the inclusion in the Chicano canon of works less "Mexican-American" than "imperialist and Spanish"(211). Spanish imperialist works are included because while they would seem to resemble more the exclusionary Anglo imperialist canon than most Mexican-American textual productions, the aim of a Chicano canon is not to exclude: "The task of reconstructing the Chicanos/as' literary heritage and the establishment of an inclusive as opposed to an exclusive canon is important because the

[19] There is the additional analytic category of the "Hispanic," meaning texts written partly or wholly in Spanish within a North or South American context, and Chicano literature belongs to that grouping as well. I have chosen to focus on Mexican-American literature largely because Chicano claims to U.S. citizenship have placed them squarely at odds with whites and Native Americans of the United States.

literary history (and indeed social and political status) of Mexican Americans in the United States has been one of marginalization and outright exclusion"(211).[20]

Here, Herrera-Sobek encounters (but does not resolve) one of the central paradoxes of creating an enclosed field called Chicano literature: to oppose the exclusionary and marginalizing tendencies of the mainstream, which in this context is the Anglo-American literary establishment, the field must not only exclude works somehow defined as non-Chicano, it must also include works from the Spanish imperialist past which are themselves exclusionary and marginalizing. She tries to argue that Chicano literature will not use Euro-American practices because Chicano literature must resist the mainstream: "The Chicanos/as' literary voice will be different from and value a different set of aesthetic parameters than that of the hegemonic voice"(216). Yet how different is that voice from the Spanish imperialist tradition on which it is founded (as Herrera-Sobek argues earlier)? And what literary connections between Chicano and Anglo or Native American authors are jettisoned in the exclusionary practice of canon formation? Of course, all canons are exclusionary by definition, so Herrera-Sobek's attempts to make an exclusionary practice into an inclusionary one are mere obfuscation, designed to hide critical sameness (for example, the "American" qualities of Chicano writing) and gloss over inconsistency within the field.[21] In the name of "cultural recovery" (the vexing

[20] In a similar exercise from the same volume of essays, Raymund Paredes points out a trend of Mexican-American authors trying "to establish a distinctly Mexican-American mode of expression whose dominant characteristic would seem to be the rejection of Anglo influences." Paredes, "Mexican-American Literature: An Overview," Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage, Eds. Ramon Gutierriez and Genaro Padilla (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1993), 34. Like Herrera-Sobek, he traces the tradition back to Spanish colonial days, though he seems to emphasize its hybrid character more openly: "Mexican-American literature took shape in the context of a hybrid (Spanish, Mexican, Indian and Anglo) frontier environment marked by episodes of intense cultural conflict"(31).

[21] José Aranda addresses these in his article revising criticism of Chicana forebear Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, "Contradictory Impulses: Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies," American Literature 70.3: 551-79.

question of what constitutes that culture seems to have been solved here), she states, "We need to rescue those texts that have been marginalized, neglected or disdained by previous literary canons"(218). She calls for a narrow focus on uncovering and establishing "Chicano culture" without addressing the porous boundaries of all cultures or the common ground where those groups meet.

Such close attention to the threads of tradition as Herrera-Sobek's has produced important work, and without it, American and Western literature would be much poorer. As Raymund Paredes reports in the Literary History of the West, "Mexican-American literature grew dramatically in the 1960s, fueled largely by an unprecedented surge of ethnic pride and a renewed awareness that literary works could be political and cultural instruments of great power." This field has been conceived of as a useful way of organizing, critiquing, and preserving the experience of millions of Mexican-Americans (mostly in the borderlands), often with political goals in mind (like Herrera-Sobek's "cultural recovery," as if cultures became lost or disabled).[22] Although most critics have recognized that the primal site of Chicano literature is the borderlands and that the very foundation of Border literature is the mixed or "hybrid" identity of these border subjects, Chicano literature has been studied as a coherent field rather than as the meeting place of multiple fields. The ways in which its own disciplinary borders are of necessity dissolving will become apparent below. First, I will compare the possible benefits of Chicano literature as a separate, coherent field of study to the loss of potentially interesting comparisons this separation entails.

[22] On the slippery elision of cultures and peoples, see Walter Benn Michaels, Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), especially 181 n. 242.

Gloria Anzaldua has become one of the most cited writers on the topic of Chicano identity, with some critics noting that she has opened up the possibilities of Chicano/a identity with her "New Mestiza" concept. Alfred Arteaga has tried to shore up a reading of Anzaldúa that emphasizes openness over the limitations of a racially based identity. He writes that her Borderlands/La Frontera is concerned "with producing new consciousness" more than with "reproducing the body"(34). Arteaga attempts to distinguish Anzaldúa's language from the merely biological in an attempt to broaden its political effectiveness, to make it more than a way of describing Chicano genealogy. Disassociating her language of the body from her creation of a new consciousness, he notes, "It [consciousness] is not inherited from sexual intercourse like race but is taken on in response to the ambient forces of repression. When she considers the scope of that repression Anzaldúa embraces nearly everyone as potential subject of the new consciousness"(35). Nearly everyone, but not everyone: Arteaga offers a quick gloss on Anzaldúa's programmatic exclusion: "Not quite everyone is included, however; she rejects the purest incarnation of patriarchy, the white male heterosexual"(35). Since Arteaga's Chicano Poetics centers on the title subject, he does not offer any comparative analysis of this exclusion. The field-Imaginary of Chicano literature, we might say, prevents him from questioning the problems inherent in this exclusion; thereby he limits the utility of his and Anzaldúa's analyses to Chicano writing, however defined. His use of the word "quite" here is particularly curious, as if "white male heterosexuals" weren't actually a rather large grouping, as if Anzaldúa came *really* close to including everyone, but "not quite everyone," when clearly she does not. Arteaga tries to twist Anzaldúa's creation of a new consciousness in the direction of symbolic inclusion, and away from an

identity that excludes others on the basis of race. His failure to do so illustrates a structural problem with the field.[23]

In their discussion of border discourses like Anzaldúa's, Scott Michaelsen and David Johnson ask, "Of what use, finally, are concepts like 'culture' and 'identity' if their invocation, even in so-called multicultural contexts, is also exclusive, colonial, intolerant?"(Border Theory 29) We might suggest, with Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield, that forming such an identity would ensure "communities of color a position of independence and strength" since "white preeminence" could no longer be presumed (Mapping Multiculturalism 4). We might invoke Gayatri Spivak, who has argued in favor of essentialized identity as "a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest"(In Other Worlds 205).[24] Clearly Spivak focuses more attention on her own finessing of the issue than Anzaldúa or Arteaga do, despite Arteaga's insistence that Anzaldúa knows her moves are political: "What marks [her] work is that [her] building of texts and subjectivity is always self-conscious and not merely ironic; it is dialogic"(153).

Yet two important tensions in her work remain unresolved (by Anzaldúa or Arteaga): the tension between inclusion and exclusion (which for Michaelsen and Johnson makes the creation of a usable cultural identity suspicious at best), and between the Hispanic (white) and Indian portions of Chicano identity. By insisting that the New Mestiza is truly new, Anzaldúa runs into a problem. If her formulation is largely one of

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[23] One might read Arteaga differently were he not trying to claim a broader usefulness for Anzaldúa's work, were he not trying to recast the world with the new mestiza at its center and others pushed to the periphery, but that is precisely how his reading of Anzaldúa functions. I will analyze José Aranda's somewhat different tactical use of Anzaldúa in my discussion of his book, below.

[24] Spivak's position, as usual given her concerns with positionality, is a complicated one. As I noted earlier, Spivak also argues that everyone is concerned with group inter-relations, so the majority and

consciousness, not race (Arteaga's reading), the new consciousness depends on free will: "the new consciousness is elected by choice"(Arteaga 35); there is no guarantee anyone will make the choice, nor any grounds for making it.[25] If her formulation is ultimately racial, she errs in ignoring the importance of that whiteness (figured as the conquistador father), of removing it as constituent element of Chicano identity. Arteaga is correct about her self-consciousness only superficially; she traces a sort of history of colonial relations, but only to create mestiza consciousness as an indigenous one, innocent of the taint of Spanish colonialism. (Michaelsen and Johnson have handled this territory, as has Krista Comer with reference to the poetry in Anzaldúa's book: "The final investment here is in universalist and feminist mysticism, in the power of revolutionary praxis and insurrection, and in—yes, here it comes—Indianness"(Comer 223)). This is not to say that Chicano identity should be open to all, but that further attention to the Spanish or white elements of that identity, in addition to escaping the traps of indigenism, would open up Chicano studies to the broader stories of southwestern conflict (such will the theme of my chapters on books by Rudolfo Anaya and Nash Candelaria). The "dream of purity," as David Johnson and Scott Michaelsen term the separation of indigenous elements from colonial ones (Border Theory 18), must be abandoned in favor of more balanced contextual study, including studying how Chicano literature may fit into the

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minority alike must concern themselves with their "others." See Spivak, The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, Ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 62-3 especially.

[25] I will address what I see as a parallel situation, in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine in my chapter on that text; in brief, some readers of that book have assumed that her characters will benefit from returning home to the reservation and re-establishing family and tribal ties when there is nothing in the book to suggest that such homecomings guarantee success. In the case of the new mestiza, making identity a choice opens up by definition the possibility that the chooser will choose other than to be the new mestiza. What happens then? Can a Chicana become un-Chicana or inauthentic by virtue of her choices? See Michaelsen and Johnson on Richard Rodriguez as a test case of a similar refusal, in "Border Secrets: An Introduction," Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics, Scott Michaelsen and David E. Johnson, eds. (Minneapolis:

story of the American West. The genealogy of Chicano literature is not so streamlined as Anzaldúa and Arteaga present it.

Two attempts to reframe the study of Chicano/a literature shed further light on the shortcomings of a racial-ethnic approach like Anzaldúa's. José Aranda's When We Arrive positions Mexican-American literature as a participant in an American literature profoundly influenced by Puritanism. Aranda also attempts to reclaim Chicano/a studies from the less political leanings of recent border theorists by appealing to a Chicano/a tradition of "social and political dissent"(xvii). Rather than trace strands of Chicano/a literature through history (like Herrera-Sobek) and establish an insular tradition, he looks "to integrate Chicano/a literature with mainstream writers in a single but complex and fluid narrative"(x). Most importantly, then, he places Chicano/a inside the literature of the Americas and of the United States, arguing not just about resistance evinced by Chicano/a authors, but by a network of commonalities. For example, he claims Tomás Rivera's classic And the Earth Did Not Devour Him demonstrates that the future is full of promises that come "from a spirituality that Rivera would later identify as the basis for all migrant narratives in the Americas"(xv), seeing Rivera as within a larger tradition, not just resisting outside influence.

Like myself, Aranda considers the separation between Chicano and Anglo groups (and their respective studies and interests) a "paradoxical distance"(xvi) given their geographical and historical shared ground. He accounts for the difference by appealing to "the complicated roles played by origins myths in the evolution of both Chicano/a and Anglo American cultural and literary histories"(xvi). Aranda argues for seeing different

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University of Minnesota Press, 1997.), 18. I will also apply Walter Benn Michaels' analysis of this issue in Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism in some of the chapters to follow.

groups as creating shared contexts through origins stories, and thus he avoids what he calls "the romanticizing of mythologies that pit the unjustly persecuted against the unholy persecutor"(xvii). Aranda thus sees a common ground for potential analysis of Chicano/a and Anglo works between the extremes of the Puritan myth of origins "with a literary history in which American literature is heralded as the product and producer of social and political dissent"(xvii) and scholars advocating a "separatist literary history"(xix) with its own, unrelated tradition of dissent.[26]

Aranda compares Chicano works to eastern Anglo texts, but as I have argued above, much western literature also has contributed to the tradition of dissent in American letters and could strengthen his argument.[27] Aranda makes an important and convincing point that much of Chicano criticism has been blind to similarities between Chicano and Anglo cultural production. The separatist approach fails to recover a Chicano tradition correctly because "it relies on a myth of origins that narrowly frames Mexican descendants in the United States as the ideal inheritors of Aztlán but also as the colonized subjects of Anglo 'manifest destiny' and racism" while ignoring "writers and histories that portray Spanish and Mexican people as colonizers, imperialists, and elitists"(xxiv). On the charge of this willful ignorance, one thinks again of Arteaga's gloss on Anzaldúa's attitude towards white male heterosexuals: "Not quite everyone is included"(Arteaga 35), indeed. Aranda thus performs a genealogy similar to that offered

[26] He goes so far as to say that "scholarship with a political cause in mind"(xxiv) tends to produce "an untenable orthodoxy of ideas that forecloses scholarship"(xxiv).

[27] Aranda relates stories of his time studying in the East (at Yale and Brown Universities), which experience lead him to view all of American culture as still deeply affected by Puritan culture (his best examples are Thanksgiving and Fourth of July) and thus to compare Puritan and Chicano cultural production. I grant that this influence has been important and still is to some degree, but can't help but wonder whether he would have drawn the same conclusions had he gone to college in the Midwest.

in my subsequent chapters, not searching for a myth of pure origins, but uncovering the accidents of history.[28]

Manuel M. Martín-Rodríguez suggests a less traditionally literary-historical approach to Chicano literature, one based on readership as much as textual production of Chicano works. He begins "A Net Made of Holes: Toward a Cultural History of Chicano Literature" by analyzing how shortcomings in literary history as a methodology have mis-served Chicano cultural studies.[29] For example, while theoreticians debated the value of a chronological ordering of authors, ethnic minorities were calling "for rewriting traditional literary histories by including previously ignored or silenced voices in the canon"(Martín-Rodríguez 1). He sees in Chicano/a literary critics' revisionist use of traditional materials[30] a paradox, for how can one change the canon by using the canon's familiar ordering techniques? He offers instead "parameters beyond chronology" to "reconstruct the history of Chicano letters as a borderlands, (trans)national, multilingual field"(2). Yet Martín-Rodríguez's own work does not stray far from chronological ordering, even if he does prefer to focus on comparing key moments in Chicano cultural history (1998, 1848, 1898) instead of tracing lines between dates. His attempt to differentiate chronological history from "a cultural, nonchronological history"(4) is compelling if at times inconsistent. He argues that Chicano culture is characterized by

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[28] If one could wish for improvement or extension of Aranda's excellent work, it would be for him to take up the comparative task of treating Chicano and Anglo visions of the conquest/settling of the West, not just notions of the barrio/city on a hill.

[29] His comments on the recent critiquing of literary history apply to all literatures, but they also force the question of the effectiveness of that critique. He states, "reception theorist, among others, have questioned the conventional approach to the subject (i.e., the chronological listing of authors, movements, and works) for over three decades"(1). Why then has traditional literary history persisted in the face of 30 years of such questioning? Martín-Rodríguez doesn't have an answer, but one would venture to guess that the cause-and-effect logic underlying literary history is still compelling to many readers.

[30] Here one thinks of the efforts of the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project, now helmed by José Aranda, from which the articles by Paredes and Herrera-Sobek cited above come.

"continuity and disappearance, permanence and erasure"(6), like a "net-made-of-holes"(6). Unlike the history of the victors (Spanish over the Aztecs, Americans over the Mexicans), which might be called continuous, the history of Mexican-Americans is fraught with abrupt upheavals and discontinuities, he argues. For example, though recent attempts to reconstruct a Hispanic literary history (he references the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project, to which he has contributed) recover and make connections to 19th century writing, these attempts also appeal to a desire for completion and integrity to literary history that, he argues, are not there. Southwest intellectuals knew of Mexican and Hispanic literature from outside the U.S., but "seemed unaware of the creative contributions of Mexican American intellectuals beyond their immediate communities"(9). Treating this body of works as unified—the literary historical approach he challenges—misses the details in the name of a bigger picture (presumably of ethnic-racial unity).

Furthermore, one must not study the aggregate output of Chicano/a writers and label it a tradition; one must study readership and audiences as well. Martín-Rodríguez considers the case of María Amparao Ruiz de Burton, whose novel The Squatter and the Don (1885), about a rich Californian who loses her land, was "written in English and addressed to a potentially sympathetic Anglo readership"(11). Her authorship is unquestionably Chicana (or Californiana, as she is also called), but her reception by readers sympathetic to her claims of land dispossession shows that Ruiz de Burton can not easily be made to serve the interests of a resistance model of Chicano/a literature.[31] Rather, as Martín-Rodríguez advocates, we must look at her "internal differences"(11) to see that she spoke from both a "historically situated hegemonic class position" and "the

contestatory space opened up by her recent social displacement"(11). This comparative approach to texts should avoid the traps of "cultural essentialism"(12) by complicating how they are produced and received. Another useful contribution Martín-Rodríguez makes is in noting how the concepts of "national unity and the rather novel idea of a national literature"(15) for Mexican-Americans had to develop over time out of and in response to historical events. His approach constantly reminds us of the traps of criticism that treats Chicano/a identity a priori as a known and stable referent (even an essence). Now that "a booming literary movement since the 1960s"(16) has made the denial of Chicano/a tradition impossible, we can perform a critical genealogy of the field, including placing it in the context of other, competing canons without the danger of undoing it.[32] Martín-Rodríguez makes gestures towards a comparative approach without mentioning specifics: "Chicano literary history must be informed by knowledge of Chicano literature's ties with other literary traditions"(18); I would argue that Native American and white western writers confront the same issues of positionality and complicated reception as his authors and would be ideal beneficiaries of his approach.

In his attempts to open up the field of American Studies, José David Saldívar has addressed the place of "Border Studies" vis-à-vis American Studies that have been figured as white, with Chicanos and Native Americans the voiceless Other. However, he still focuses on establishing the shape of Chicano identity more than indicating its relationship to other identities (as Martín-Rodríguez suggests, albeit without doing it). An important aim of Saldívar's Border Matters is to enlarge the field of American

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[31] Aranda has handled the challenge of how to place Ruiz de Burton as well; see note above.
[32] His language sounds much like Foucault's on the true purpose of genealogy in avoiding the search for pure origins, though he doesn't cite Foucault, but rather Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand

Studies, as in the subtitle, "remapping American cultural studies." Saldívar seeks to inform the general field of American Studies with perspectives on the borderlands (Border Matters ix) without replacing one dominant, central paradigm with another. Writing from the opposite perspective (from the old "center" of American Studies), Janice Radway wants to broaden the field of study without ignoring local specificities or work done by groups with a marked difference from "American" culture; she writes, "such a gesture could easily be seen as another imperial act of containment, erasure, or even co-optation"(Radway 22). Arguably, Saldívar runs the same risk. Because he is writing to revise American Studies from the vantage point of Border Studies, Saldivar's work (in Border Matters and The Dialectics of Our America) has emphasized Chicano works, not Anglo ones.

Saldívar places his work in the context of the American West: "Border Matters begins by mapping a discourse about the U.S.-Mexico borderlands that has emerged from the historical experience of the American West"(xiii). Since Anglo voices have dominated the discourse of the West, he argues, creating an "uneven discursive terrain of the border in the American western field-Imaginary of the American West"(xiii-xiv), a focus on the borderlands will provide a needed deconstruction. In part, his project contributes to the growing critical work on western history (the new western history of White, Slotkin and Limerick), which includes new voices. At least in academic terms, the literature of the American West, while never the subject of much academic attention, has long since been surpassed by Chicano and Border literature as a subjects of critical inquiry. However much one may agree with Saldívar's call for a remapping of this

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Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) and their concept of the rhizomatic.

territory, though, given the paucity of attention to Western literature, one might have expected something more from him in that regard. Significantly, in charting out who will help his project, he mentions "new western American historians, new Americanists, and cultural studies workers"(xiv), but not experts on Western literature. In theory, Western literature written by people of all ethnicities should figure centrally in his project; in practice, his remapping mainly focuses on Chicano singers, anthropologists, and creative writers. To account for the western white writers who must stand in for "the American western field-Imaginary of the American West" we get only John Gregory Bourke, a soldier and sometime anthropologist whose contributions to the field-Imaginary are hardly commensurate to the weight he must bear in Saldívar's analysis, and hardly representative of the field.[33]

Again, we see that this remapping of American studies, while bringing welcome insights from Chicano artists of the borderlands, fails to see the promise in aligning the Chicano artists with white artists who have tackled the same issues. Despite his superficial gestures towards analyzing the West, we are forced to assume that Saldívar has left one part of the old fashioned American Studies program he learned in Eastern schools unscathed: its contempt for (or ignorance of) a tradition of western writing as highly critical of American Empire as Chicano literature has been.[34] His mapping of

[33] Nonetheless, the writings of Bourke, a semi-educated soldier/anthropologist, have received major attention from critics doing contextual analysis of authors writing on the U.S.-Mexico border; see Maria-Eugenia Cotera, "Refiguring 'The American Congo': Jovita Gonzalez, John Gregory Bourke, and the Battle over Ethno-Historical Representations of the Texas Mexican Border," Western American Literature 35.1: 75-94 and José Limon's chapter on Bourke in Dancing With the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994). Both authors have presented their work on Bourke at meetings of the Western Literature Association.

[34] José Aranda presents a similar story about heading East (in his case, to Brown University) and learning about the West.

what critics of the west should be interested in erases valuable contributions already made by western creative writers.

This criticism is not intended to deny the importance or undo the accomplishments of thirty years of Chicano scholarship. It is not intended to say somehow that the field has acted in bad faith, when the field has fed off an understandable logic, insuring that the people upon whose identity it is founded can speak (and creating some much needed positions in the academy and culture industry for the historically under-represented). However, this scholarship has not developed in isolation any more than Chicano/as themselves have (for better and worse), and this dissertation argues that it is time for those with an interest in Chicano/a works to broaden the scope of their inquiry to include their field's relationship to Western writing in general. Both fields can lend insight to each other.

In a speech given at Michigan State University on February 26, 1999, Brian Swann told an anecdote relating that when he told someone he was working on Native American literature, the listener asked, "Oh, you mean Western Literature?" Swann went on to sort out the confusion, which results from the perspective of some that the fields of Western American literature and Native American literature constitute each other, that one equals the other, whether one believes all Western literature is by Native Americans or all Native American literature is western. A more common, opposite perspective places these fields in deep contention: Western literature tells the story of white settlers' westward expansion and conquering of native peoples, while Native American literature largely tells the story of native resistance to Anglo encroachment. Given this history,

critics of Native American literature have understandably paid more attention to colonial history—the big picture of the conquest of America—and almost no attention to white western writers who criticize Anglo history in much the same way as Native Americans themselves. Like Chicano scholars, Native American scholars have concerned themselves with establishing the very fact of a literary tradition, elucidating differing Native identities, and combining academics with political activism. As with Chicano literature, I take no issue with the gains made; this dissertation will advocate, rather, that linking the three literatures will produce better understandings of the three groups and their works.

As I have indicated, Native American literature as a discipline has tried to distinguish itself from Euro-American literature, and as the Swann anecdote indicates, to separate itself from any idea of "the West." In her contribution to the Literary History of the West,[35] Paula Gunn Allen differentiates Native American literature from Euro-American: "Essentially, Indians don't think the way non-Indians do: this distinction is partly one of tribal consciousness as opposed to the consciousness of urbanized, industrial cultures, but it is also a distinction between new world and old world thought, between systems based on wholeness and those based on division and separation." Clearly Gunn Allen finds it useful to establish and study a core and *essential* "Indianness" to help understand Native American literature. White readers might understand this difference from reading Gunn Allen, her words imply, but are essentially prevented from understanding it alone. Furthermore, this reserving the right to define

[35] The Western Literature Association's broad literary histories, the Literary History of the West and Updating the Literary West, are at least attempts, albeit incomplete ones, to achieve the cross-field comparisons I'm suggesting.

one's group works, like Chicano literature, to overcome centuries of white stereotyping of Indians.

In her reading of M. Scott Momaday, Gunn Allen polices the borders of her discipline, acknowledging that there are Native and White readings of Momaday and insisting on seemingly non-negotiable differences. She writes that House Made of Dawn can be read as a late modernist novel of social problems by white readers, while most Native American readers read it (because of their training and understanding of the culture) much differently. Indeed, while we should ask whether Gunn Allen's insistence on this difference betrays her anxiety about Momaday's appropriation, given the history of colonialism, we can't doubt that she seeks to retain something of Momaday's production just for Indians. She writes, "Contemporary American Indian fiction usually gives attention to cultural conflict, but every novel and short story deals with Indian-white relations only in addition to other [read: Indian] themes." To state that Indians write for Indians first and only secondarily for whites is to establish boundaries; in this disciplinary mode of thinking, intercultural conflict will always come second to issues within Indian life.

M. Annette Jaimes Guerrero has addressed the issue of whether Native American cultural production should be placed in a "multicultural" context (to read it for the inter-cultural themes Gunn Allen sees as secondary). Like Vine Deloria, she fears that multiculturalism (and perhaps the inter-cultural type of studies this dissertation proposes) will re-enact cultural imperialism; she demands a de-colonization first. She believes that the creation of ethnic studies disciplines ("ethnocentrism") has turned into "a form of *academic apartheid* that marginalizes"(Mapping Multiculturalism 58) those programs.

While I agree with her diagnoses of "apartheid" and "cultural imperialism," her solutions are puzzling. She calls for an interdisciplinarity and a "global reconceptualization"(59) of the discipline of American Indian Studies, but also appeals to an essential Indianness to be found in the movement of Indigenism (60). While seeming to call for a type of global and postcolonial studies that would not depend on the idea of individual cultures or disciplines, she continues to insist, with Deloria, on the need for "not merely the inclusion of Indians and Indian programs in academia, but a fully interdisciplinary approach to American Indian studies as a discipline"(60). If we are to make this "discipline" interdisciplinary, the discipline should by definition practically disappear. It is difficult to imagine the shape her discipline would have. Her call for a global understanding of other indigenous peoples that "respects our differences"(61) still contains the desire to keep what is unique about Native Americans (including "our universal holism"(61)), a move that seeks to cement essential differences among groups permanently.

A related example of Native American literary nationalism comes from the oft-cited Elizabeth Cook-Lynn and her Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner and Other Essays. In the collection's title essay, she makes the case that in far too many works, one of the leading Anglo western writers writes as if Indians were extinct. Worse, she finds in his work a willingness to claim indigenousness in the West for himself, a move copied by other whites.[36] She writes, "In his misunderstanding and dismissal of indigenousness and his belief in the theory that American Indians were 'vanishing' he was much like writers everywhere who offer only a narrowness of vision and a confused history"(32). In this

much, her critique foreshadows my own critiques of these fields, that they are too narrowly constructed to see truly. When critics of authors like Stegner restrict their purview to western stories by whites, their critical faculties are dulled, and in this instance, "the American Indian's literary, historical, and cultural presence in America is repeatedly falsified or denied"(38). The problems with Cook-Lynn's analysis—her own short sightedness and willful misreadings, in effect—have been handled elsewhere.[37] I will instead turn to the way her essay on Native writers and nationalism virtually precludes the possibility or value of the comparative perspective she offers in "Why I Can't Read Wallace Stegner."

In "The American Indian Fiction Writers: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, the Third World, and First Nation Sovereignty," Cook-Lynn criticizes the pressure on Third World writers to appeal to audiences outside their group in order to be published. She quotes editors' suggestions to Indian writers that "suggest that there is, in reality, an existing methodology which imposes a Euro-American cast upon the literary works of American Indian writers"(80). In light of this colonial silencing of postcolonial or obscure native expression, performed in the name of enabling "cross-cultural dialogue"(80), Cook-Lynn wonders whether successful Indian writers like Erdrich, Welch and Silko "have moved away from nationalistic concerns in order to gain the interest of mainstream readers"(80). For Cook-Lynn, the confusion over whether the

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[36] The move is made in a different manner by Chicano writers like Anaya and Candelaria, on whom more below. On the fetishizing of being from a place as part of western studies, see Matt Herman, "Literature, Growth, and Criticism in the New West," Western American Literature 38.1, 49-76.

[37] Though they did not constitute one of his main interests in his novels, Stegner was not unaware of the continued existence or condition of Native Americans. In a tribute to Stegner, Patricia Limerick writes of his dedication to anti-racism, arguing that his work on the book One Nation, a multicultural portrait of the United States from 1945, shows him to be "remarkable and inspirational"(22) on the issue; "He is, in fact," Limerick writes, "still ahead of *our* time, in 1993"(25). Limerick, "Precedents to Wisdom," The

popular American Indian authors speak in a nationalistic voice, or in a more generalized cosmopolitan one has detrimental effects, such as obscuring the need for decolonization (based on the idea that the tribes represented by these authors are nations).

Thus she advocates more clearly nationalistic writing and continued discussion in literary studies of nationalistic and postcolonial elements, and the ways in which these can be obscured in the global marketplace. She worries that "American Indian writers will accept the notion that they can, and perhaps should, with impunity become cosmopolitans, serving as translators of materials into an already existing mode, or that they can and should legitimize 'hybridity,' or that they can and should transcend national affiliations, or that they can and should simply serve as 'exotica'"(83). She posits that native writers have their own "set of unique aims," including "establishing the myths and metaphors of sovereign nationalism"(84) and the like. Cook-Lynn's call for more significant nationalistic work from American Indian writers is not shared by all critics in Native American literature, but does reveal a willingness by some in the field to jettison comparative work (Cook-Lynn questions the value of even including Native Americans in multicultural anthologies (84)).

Connecting American Indian nationalism to nationalist movements in eastern Europe and the Third World, she calls for "modern thinkers and critics to find out what these nativist ideals mean in terms of the function of literature"(87). I believe this concern forces the question of whether nations can find satisfactory answers to questions about native ideals without the input (and even occasionally challenges) of other "national" groups (or groups otherwise defined as different). Clearly, creative and

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Geography of Hope: A Tribute to Wallace Stegner, ed. Page Stegner and Mary Stegner (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996), 21-8.

critical work in Native American literatures has performed this function in challenging nationalist narratives of the U.S.A., many of them dealing with the West. The usual assumption in the fields of ethnic literatures, one Cook-Lynn almost takes beyond the level of assumption and stereotype in her chapter on Stegner, is that when white majority literature speaks to minority audiences, it does so from a position of hegemony, and therefore must be challenged (as when the "empire writes back") or ignored (the "why I can't read X" strategy). For her, a nationalism derived from "the indigenous view of the world," including the idea that peoples are "rooted in a specific geography"(88) allows Native people the firmest foundation to wrestle with domination.[38] Weakening the absolutist position she takes, she ignores the question of tribes removed from that specific geography—and here one could question the rootedness of many of the Native American groups living in Oklahoma and compare it to that of Chicanos in the Southwest or Anglos anywhere in the hemisphere.

I am certainly not denying Indian nations the right to political self-definition, and where insisting on nationhood will help Indians materially, it seems cruel to criticize Cook-Lynn for not advocating a postmodern, postnational status for American Indians. I am also not claiming that the nationalist narratives of Indian nations have been fully explored, for as Donald Pease has argued, "antinational nationalism," that type which opposes the dominant national story from within an emergent "Third World" nation, can be "a strategic weapon in the struggle against cultural imperialism"("National Narratives,

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[38] Chadwick Allen has written on the issue of geography, combined with blood, as a basis for Native power to resist ongoing colonization; adapting N. Scott Momaday's "blood memory," he focuses on the "blood/land/memory" trope. Though he admits there is some danger in discussing "indigenous 'blood'" and "indigenous 'land'"(15) because of the specter of racial essentialism in the former and the potential for colonial appropriation of the latter, he argues that we must "contextualize the discursive appeal and

Postnational Narration" 12).[39] I am arguing for a form of contextual criticism which compares (for example) Native American writers—nationalists and those with "little use for nationalistic/tribal resistance"(Cook-Lynn 85)—to those writers working within but often also challenging the dominant discourse, in this case the "national meta-narrative of westering"(Other Destinies 17), to use mixedblood Native writer Louis Owens' words. In addition, analysis even of those majority works that are not subversive can be productive in illuminating discourses of race and nation, for example, issues also important to ethnic minority literatures.

Craig Womack invites similar criticisms for his book Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism, which advocates a very tribally specific approach to Creek cultural production at the expense of comparing Creek literature to literatures handling similar issues from different perspectives. His goals in calling for "American Indian Literary Self-Determination" (the title of his Introduction) include fostering "an increasingly important role in evaluating tribal literatures"(1); indeed, he calls it his "responsibility" as a Creek-Cherokee to help garner more determination over tribal literature for tribal readers, "especially given the wealth of Creek wisdom on the subject"(1). In using vocabulary like "wisdom," Womack can seem close to fetishizing the native, to over-emphasize given, blooded identity at the expense of factors like education or outside perspectives. Womack rebuffs such skeptical challenges to the integrity of Native identity by declaring it "way too premature for Native scholars to deconstruct history when we haven't yet constructed it"(3). Rather than take up the issue of Native identity critically, then, he assumes Native identity as a given, a starting point:

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symbolic power of these emblematic figures"(16). Allen, Blood Narrative: Indigenous Identity in American Indian and Maori Literary and Activist Texts (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

"I do not subscribe, in other words, to the notion that a Native perspective is, at best, problematic, if not impossible"(4). He acknowledges that the past several decades of interest in Native writing and simultaneous explosion of Native writing (both new and recovered), much of it fostered by the non-Native academy, has helped establish and stabilize the field, "legitimizing tribal experience as an appropriate subject for writing" and making it clear that "tribal life will continue in the future"(6). The uncertainty of previous generations with regard to the status of Native writing (which he considers parallel to the "ambiguity" and "tendency to decenter everything" of our current postmodern moment) has resolved into new certitude for Womack. Thus, he feels it necessary to emphasize Native political goals, including Native literary self-determination, instead of continuing to analyze Native works from within the framework of recent non-Native literary theory: "No matter how slick the literary strategy that gets us there, this seems the wrong political move to me"(6).

Throughout his Introduction, Womack makes a case not just for taking politically pragmatic positions on literature (in his case, anti-colonial, sovereignty affirming ones), but also for asserting the primacy of Native American literature as the sine qua non of American literature. Strangely, given his literary separatist politics ("I see them as two separate canons"(7), he says), he gestures towards affirming a vital connection between the Native American and the American: "We *are* the canon.... Without Native American literature, *there is no American canon*"(7). This implies a common, "American" ground for comparison of the two literatures (granting for the moment that they may be considered separate); indeed, it invites the kind of criticism I am attempting: how do the origins of a body of literature affect our readings? How do competing ideas of

[39] Craig Womack, discussed below, will make a similar point.

homeland, family and heritage complicate our understanding of the relationships among Native, Mexican-American and white American literatures? The connector "American" might be seen as the larger instance of my use of the West as the contested meeting place of these literatures. And Womack makes other gestures towards the interconnectedness of all writing that would seem to encourage this approach. He defends the specificity of Indian writing by comparing it to regional writing: "Does a description of Faulkner as a Southern writer make him any less an important figure?"(7) He even invokes Flannery O'Connor's "well-known argument that the deeper an author delves into her own home country, the more universal and powerful her writing becomes"(7).

All of this wrangling over making Native writing the basis, even the necessary first element for an American canon seems to invite critical arguments over how these bodies of literature are constituted (including what makes Native literature "Native," a vexed question in the hands of some critics). However, because his political aim is to combat the "colonized" state of Native literature[40] by establishing some distance between Native writing and non-Native criticism, Womack does not take his interest in the universal (much less regionally significant) qualities of writing any further.[41] Rather, he highlights differences and even makes aggressive claims against comparative literature

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[40] One example of this is the fact that canonizers try to make Native literature a minor part of a larger American canon; another is the existence of "ethnic literature" positions at universities. He also complains about "the way Native literary specialists must present their work at Modern Language Association conferences"(7), though it is unclear why this should be so.

[41] He thus seems to be closer to Gayatri Spivak's "strategic essentialism" than to the Vine Deloria of Custer. He doesn't so much claim that Native knowledge is inaccessible to non-Natives as privilege insider knowledge, granting tribal wisdom a key role in treating literature about Natives as a political tool. His political-cultural aims also seem ill-defined in places, as when he writes, "I reject... the supremacist notion that assimilation can only go in one direction"(12). Richard White's notion of the middle ground also takes in this idea, but while Europeans in America have been dramatically affected by the encounter with Native Americans, politically, their structures have dominated Native Americans. Indeed, this is one of Womack's complaints; his feisty insistence on the power of Native culture to assimilate European culture thus seems politically naïve.

and multiculturalism. Unimaginatively, he argues that hiring ethnic literature comparatists and reading non-white authors within the English department "is demeaning and destructive to Asian American studies, African American studies, Native American studies"(8). For Womack, despite his belief in universals that writing can evoke, there can be no experts in "multicultural literature" since these topics are both limitlessly broad and irreducibly different from each other. While I would not argue that "a core program of Indian literature courses" with an expert who teaches only Native literature may indeed be a good thing, precluding that person from having critical conversations about commonalities between Native literature and (to use his examples) Asian American or African American literature is retrograde and even "destructive" of potential alliances and productive debates. His insistence on Native criticism that bolsters the health of the tribe (focusing on works that "argue that Native cultures continue to survive and evolve"(10) serves a dual cause of preserving identities imagined as original and timeless (remember that Womack rejects all "postmodern" skepticism questioning the Nativeness of Native Americans) and tribal nationhood.[42] Finally, while his critical focus on Creek culture (again, the nomenclature is problematic for everyone but Womack) generates a better picture of one tribal group's self-imaginings and illustrates the value of asking "how do Indians view Indians"(13), what is lost (even with his chapter on one Muskogee poet who deals with Creek and "national, and international, indigenous perspectives"(19)) is any sense of the location of that culture in a useful context. Though

[42] He refers to pre-contact notions of tribal "nationhood" that "are not European constructs"(17), but his definitions seem straight out of Benedict Anderson: "a key component of nationhood is a people's ideas of themselves, their imaginings of who they are"(14). While one can still grant Womack that this may be a Native concept of nation, it is also European, and insisting on its native origins when the similarities could generate useful discussion of how historical contact with the other may have changed each group's definitions seems foolish.

Womack may gesture towards the value of "beginning global alliances and awareness among indigenous populations worldwide"(18), including pan-tribalism, his methodology works to preclude this at every step.

The field of Western Literature, while founded to highlight western writers neglected by the Eastern establishment, has only recently begun to challenge its own disciplinary boundaries by examining the work of Chicano and Native American writers as "western." There are early examples of this crossover, such as western novelist and critic Gerald Haslam's 1970 multicultural anthology Forgotten Pages of American Literature and, in a different vein, Wallace Stegner's multicultural project One Nation. However, from its beginnings the field has purposefully focused on what has until recently been considered "western literature," namely the works of Euro-Americans (mostly men, though more articles on Willa Cather have appeared in Western American Literature than on any other writer). This exclusion was largely based on identity: the field was created in 1966 by white, western, mostly male professors and writers, and was belligerent towards the Eastern establishment, but more importantly, was proudly self-protective. Its earliest critics, like those working separately in Chicano and Native American literatures, were focused on creating a canon based on standards they were best suited to judge (including, in all three fields, standards of authenticity). They programmatically devoted themselves to one idea of western literature. J. Golden Taylor, as the first editor of the field's journal, exclaimed, "While appreciating a wide variety of world literatures, we may with good-humored inflexibility insist upon the legitimacy of

studying our own."[43] Others in the field have alternated between seeking to amend the "eastern" canon, ignoring it altogether, and questioning the standards of canonization.

Many attempts to establish the field of western literature have indeed set up narrow parameters for its study. Too many studies have focused on the genre western rather than less generic texts, devaluing all things western in minds of readers.[44] In part because of its own marginal status as a field (Comer writes that "Before the 1970s western literature *has* no reputation"(2), and arguably it still has a very low profile), Western Literature begins to realize in the 1980s and 90s that minority discourses including Chicano and Native American are also challenging the national myths associated with the West—that these other bodies of literature generate unique perspectives not available in white discourses. Much about the field changed between 1987's The Literature of the American West, in which Native American and Chicano authors are mentioned, but scarcely integrated into general essays on the field, and 1997's Updating the Literary West, with more essays devoted to minority writers, and self-critical essays on the field like Robert Gish's "Reperceiving Ethnicity in Western American Literature."

Individual authors of full-length studies have also drawn attention to Western Literature's closed borders, with differing results. In Ten Most Wanted: The New Western Literature, Blake Allmendinger tries to enlarge the comparatively small canon of

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[43] Taylor wrote this in the first issue of Western American Literature; quoted in Kathleen Boardman, "Western American Literature and the Canon," Updating the Literary West, The Western Literature Association (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1997), 50.

[44] Major examples are two books which garnered greater attention than almost any books on literary western writing from the past twenty years, Lee Clark Mitchell's Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) and Jane Tompkins' West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Jeffrey Wallman's The Western: Parables of the American Dream (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1999) similarly focuses on the genre

Western Literature. Allmendinger's "Introduction" displays a self-conscious anxiety about the fact that these fields have isolated themselves previously, and the difficulty of claiming connections between western and ethnic literatures, the latter of which have "developed into their own separate fields in the last several decades, having outgrown western literature"(Allmendinger 4). Yet "growth" in the other fields hardly precludes the appropriateness of the comparisons I am suggesting; rather, it contributes to the fields' continued isolation since Chicano and Native American literature scholars can hardly be said to "need" to study Western literature.

Allmendinger achieves mixed results in his attempt to enlarge what people think of as western studies. He calls for Westernists to resist the "temptation" to leave ethnic literatures to specialists (Womack's wish), since it is necessary to attempt "to understand the complex interactive roles ethnic traditions have played within a larger group western history"(4). Yet he analyzes no Chicano authors, just one Native American (John Rollin Ridge writing on the Chicano Joaquín Murietta), and does not theorize the choices he includes, so there is little sense of what Chicano and Native American authors can offer to Western literature, or vice-versa. His enlargement of the field extends to the work of Mormons (Chapter 3) and continues the tradition in Western Studies of attention to the environment (Chapter 10) (even while he mocks western literature stalwart Edward Abbey). He seeks "to cover as much ground as possible"(13), but does not go so far as to analyze comparatively the fields of Chicano and Native American literature and their respective texts.

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western, though from a more theoretically conservative viewpoint that argues westerns reflect the times in which they were written.

In his Marriage, Violence and The Nation in the American Literary West, William Handley reads a series of mostly twentieth century western works about family as allegories of the nation complicated by internal violence.[45] The concern with family and marriage in western writing, Handley argues, derives from the way it can symbolize the West's "national significance"(2), i.e. the part the West plays in defining the United States. And because "the nation we find epitomized in so much literature of the West resembles what we might call (to put it mildly) a dysfunctional family"(2), this body of literature steers away from the triumphalist myth of the West and towards trenchant social and political criticism (like that demanded by many non-white critics). Though his claims about family allegories could have great traction in handling non-Anglo authors such as those in my study, he chooses not to discuss them. Handley argues that western stories about family and marriage have special significance for defining white America: "In literature of the American West, the preoccupation with marriage is especially fraught with questions about the identity of American whiteness and the meaning of western history"(4). He seems to take for granted that this literature is white literature. His concentration on this group produces some excellent work by Handley on a very traditional grouping of western authors (Frederick Jackson Turner, Owen Wister, Willa Cather, Zane Grey, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Joan Didion and Wallace Stegner). Yet it also disables his work to the extent that his attempts to define "America" and to criticize the racial insularity of previous such attempts seem quite one-sided.[46] When he speaks of

[45] Handley's other main goal, about which I will say little, is to connect literary and historical readings of the West by reading the literary in the historical and vice-versa. His desire to bridge those disciplines by emphasizing their common ground parallels my attempt to draw together literature about the west from different ethnic groups.

[46] His first chapter, "Western Unions," talks about Native Americans but only in their relationship to how Manifest Destiny and imperialism affected white American identity. Like Allmendinger, Handley seems aware of the potential significance of comparative study of western literature, but does nothing about it.

supporting "progressive politics"(6), one expects that he will open up his critique to non-white texts rather than imply by their exclusion that white western texts alone depict "violent relationships that carry the burden of the western past"(7). As I will argue in the chapters to follow, family relationships and genealogies inform the national and ethnic identities of multiple groups as well as how those groups wrangle over the varying legacies of migration and colonization.

Krista Comer's Landcapes of the New West: Gender and Geography in Contemporary Women's Writing seeks to expand notions of what constitutes regional (specifically western) writing and why we should care. She sees a shift in western writing by all groups during the Vietnam War era, when western and other regional literatures would no longer perform the "traditional cultural task" of shoring up national ideals: "It will not symbolically clean up the mess of Watergate, of Cambodia, of a new globalizing economy that restructures and disempowers the workplace at home"(Comer 6). Her argument differs from mine in its focus (she claims that new female regionalists, including women of color, revitalize regionalism as a mode of writing), but she asks many of the questions central to this dissertation. Like Janice Radway, she confronts the issue of whether including Chicano and Native American writers (among the other groups she studies) in western literature "constitutes a kind of colonizing act," especially given the prevailing attitude that "western regionalism is a 'white thing'" that "offers little relevance to the literature and concerns of contemporary people of color"(Comer 9). Her response helps undergird my argument: "Exposing the racial and gendered assumptions that comprise the discourse [of western regionalism] and make it politically meaningful and oppressive may be relevant not least, but rather most of all, to women

and/or peoples of color"(9). Her work on the importance of Indian myths in Gloria Anzaldúa's reformulation of Chicana identity in La Frontera/Borderlands, in particular, illustrates the potential for comparative study of western writing.

Like the broader field of American literature, Western literature has changed, as even a brief genealogy shows. However, there is still much to be done to analyze the ways in which peoples of all ethnic, national, and racial backgrounds met, fought, joined, and described their conflicts on the common ground or contact zone of what is now the United States. In this dissertation, I argue that an examination of the concerns of the three fields in question and their respective literatures will contribute to all three fields. The chapters that follow will explore challenges to and affirmations of group identity formation, the role of genealogy, and their contribution to the Chicano, Native American and western literary traditions. To the extent that it succeeds, a comparison of these writers in this light will reveal their common project of critiquing past group relations (including the legacy of conquest) while imagining a more perfect future.

CHAPTER 2

Critical Genealogy in Rudolfo Anaya's Alburquerque

From the very beginning of Rudolfo Anaya's Alburquerque (indeed, even from the very spelling of its title), Anaya evinces his interest in performing what Russ Castronovo has called (using Michel Foucault) "critical genealogy." Opposite his novel's copyright information, Anaya tells the story of the renaming of the village of Albuquerque: "*In April of 1880 the railroad reached la Villa de Alburquerque in New Mexico. Legend says the Anglo stationmaster couldn't pronounce the first 'r' in "Albur," so he dropped it as he painted the station sign for the city. This novel restores the original spelling, Alburquerque*"(Alburquerque n.p.). In this short proclamation, Anaya attempts the extraordinary act of correcting an historical misunderstanding through fiction. He forces his novel into the discourse of history, placing it side by side with the politicized language act of the 1880 Albuquerque stationmaster and with the historical naming conventions that have prevailed in New Mexico since then. This preface suggests that the novel itself will perform an act of historical recovery, bringing back the Hispanic influence over the region and resisting one hundred years of Anglo influence.

Anaya thus begins his critical genealogy of America, which method Castronovo describes: "In its search for what has been repressed, a genealogy of America returns to the site of national legacies and asks what has been erased in the writing of national narrative"(Castronovo 9). As I have argued in the Introduction, Chicano and Native American literatures have troubled the well-known national narratives of the western United States which themselves have often stood in for the nation's narrative at large.

Narratives like Alburquerque not only help describe and perpetuate a Chicano literary tradition, but also explicitly question a larger tradition—Castronovo's "site of national legacies"—which has traditionally elided the presence and influence of Chicanos (and Native Americans). In his short preface, Anaya points to a literal erasure of Hispanic influence as the Anglo stationmaster changes a city's sign—one need hardly add that he thereby changes history—to erase the influence of the Spanish language and by extension its speakers and to establish the authority of English and Anglo-Americans. When his readers see Albuquerque both in this novel and in real life, Anaya wants them to see his Alburquerque and all its elision contains, too. There is another history, however, not told in this novel, though Anaya leaves himself some openings through which he could have addressed it: namely, the history of Native American New Mexico before the arrival of Spanish-speaking peoples who named this city for the Duke of Alburquerque. In the first part of this chapter, I will analyze Anaya's use and thematization of genealogy through his characters' search for their bloodlines and traditions; in the second part, I will perform my own critical genealogy on Anaya's erasures, gaps, and elisions, for despite the plot line of the Native American character Joe Calabasa, Anaya's genealogy limits itself greatly and stops short of analyzing its own limits. An analysis of the bounds of Anaya's genealogy will reveal much about his politics and the politics of the three literary fields under consideration.

Bloodlines

Anaya makes Abrán's search for his bloodlines central to the plot of Alburquerque. He also makes bloodlines different from mere tradition, environment, or

upbringing, since Abrán does not consider himself to be an orphan or without an identity. Abrán has been raised by adoptive parents Sara and the late Ramiro Gonzalez. Having had no reason to think otherwise, he has always considered himself to be of Mexican-American heritage. Then he receives a letter from his birth mother, Cynthia Johnson, who is Anglo-American. Now Anaya places bloodlines next to upbringing, forcing Abrán to wonder how his actual genealogy might compare to the way the Gonzalez family raised him, and allowing Anaya to ask the same questions: what is the value of actual blood or genetic connections? How do these connections stack up against years of ingrained traditions, lessons, values, and other environmental factors? In answering some of these questions, we begin to compare a literary critical approach based on commonality of blood with one based on commonality of environment or political geography.

Since Abrán's bloodlines remain a mystery that he unravels for most of the novel's duration, I will begin by considering the value Anaya assigns to Abrán's adoptive culture. In an early scene where Abrán considers the death of his friend Junior and of his (adoptive) father Ramiro, he recalls, "He was six when the old man died, and that memory was not as poignant. Yet there were times when he remembered things Ramiro had told him, and the warmth and earth smell of the old man"(Alburquerque 15). Anaya introduces two factors here: one, as adoptive father Ramiro educated his son (a teacher and student-like relationship that could obtain between any two unrelated people); and two, Ramiro had a connection to the earth that implies humanity's vital connection to a living planet (but does not necessarily imply a genetic connection to Abrán).

His adoptive mother Sara has raised Abrán as her own, and they are very close (she is the only person he has any contact with when he leaves Albuquerque after Junior's death). But Anaya implies that her lack of physical connection to him—their lack of blood ties—matters. When the letter from his birth mother arrives, her thoughts betray the fragility of their connection: "He was looking for himself in her. She felt her heart skip a beat, and the fear she had lived with since Abrán became her son surfaced. It had come. The letter she had feared for so long had come"(17). His look of recognition while reading the letter declaring that he is Cynthia Johnson's son (we might better call of a lack of recognition) begins the collapse of his natural, organic relationship with Sara. An artificial agent—a letter—proves the lack of natural connection between them. And while their relationship will continue to be strong (it helps no doubt that Anaya removes Abrán's birth mother from the novel very shortly), the fact that Sara feels a letter could harm their relationship—so much so that she has always feared it—reveals its tenuousness. Furthermore, the evidence of the letter, as flimsy as Anaya could have made it given that Abrán has known no other mother than Sara, suffices to make Abrán distance himself from Sara: "He had looked at her and did not recognize himself"(17).

Sara's declarations of love and devotion matter, but still lack the weight of blood's physical connection. After affirming his adoption, she restates her love, but he does not react convincingly: "'I know that,' Abrán answered, feeling empty inside"(18). In fact, the letter seems only to prove something to Abrán that he already knew: "Perhaps he had always known this, but had never faced it"(18). How does he know? What lack was there in his relationship with Sara that now manifests itself in this empty feeling? Anaya's answer is blood; Abrán knows physically that he is not Sara's son.

Sara tries to make up for this lack of blood by substituting soul: "She did not want to let him go. She had raised him, she knew his soul, but he was not of her blood"(19). But if "soul" as Sara understands it were a true substitute for "blood," Sara would never have had cause to fear the letter. As if to convince Abrán that this letter is not a joke, she reiterates his relation to Cynthia Johnson, again using the language of blood: "But Cynthia is your mother. Your blood"(20). Clearly, blood matters.

Abrán and Sara confirm their relationship ("You are still my son," "I always will be"(21)), but the promise of discovering his blood relations lures Abrán so strongly that he leaves immediately. The revelation makes him reflect on everything he thought he knew about his heritage. As a light skinned Chicano, he was called guero by the "dark-skinned Mexican kids" and told "You're not Mexican, guero"(21). Their teasing fostered his toughness. Rejected by his birth mother's white family, he was raised by a darker-skinned Chicano family, but still had to fight to prove he belonged to his adopted group: "'I'll show you I'm Mexican,' was his battle cry"(21) as a youth. He uses his fighting skill to claim a Mexican heritage: "He had become intensely proud of his Mexicanness by having to prove it"(21). Anaya thereby suggests a fundamental difference between an inherited, genetic identity and a claimed one. Abrán's boyhood tormentors are not convinced of the reality of his Mexicanness, only afraid of his physical prowess. Despite Anaya's emphasis on the importance of blood, he does open up the possibility that one can "earn" one's heritage if one has not inherited it, but like Sara's deeply felt connection to Abrán, that earned Mexicanness is called into doubt by the revelation of his birth mother's identity. Where Anaya juxtaposes socialized identity and biological identity, he tends to place greater importance on the biological—the blood element.

Anaya next introduces yet another element to identity—the metaphysical. As Abrán drives to the hospital to meet Cynthia, he nearly hits a woman resembling "La Llorona... the wailing woman of the barrio"(22). He soon ascertains that this is no figure of mythology, but doña Tules, who "really was a Llorona, but a flesh-and-blood one"(22). Doña Tules impresses Abrán with her preternatural knowledge of the changes occurring in his life: "Your mother is dying, and you are being born"(23), she tells him. Like the reader of the text, she reads Abrán symbolically. She gives Abrán the metaphysical riddle, "Tú eres tú" ("you are you"), which solves nothing since the term "you" has become so inchoate for Abrán. He may find his birth mother and the facts of how his physical birth came about (and therefore discover more about his blood heritage, his racial make-up), but still not discover the "truth" doña Tules promises. As with other layering devices Anaya uses (especially Ben Chavez as author within the text writing a poem whose themes run parallel to this novel), this nod towards a metaphysical riddle adds another element to Abrán's search for his identity.

Abrán meets his mother, who thinks (not surprisingly), "My son, my blood, forgive me"(26). Though Cynthia Johnson has not known Abrán as a mother in the active sense (unlike Sara, she has not "mothered" Abrán, only birthed him), she does hold onto that vital connection between their bodies: blood, genes, that which she passes on to him physically and which will outlast her. For Anaya has no intention of introducing an Anglo influence at the level of environment (or culture). The dying Cynthia will not take over for Sara, nor affect Abrán's character in any way except to leave him on her death with another mystery: his father's identity. Anaya clumsily foreshadows Abrán's eventual discovery: "She coughed... Abrán instinctively reached for his handkerchief and

touched it to her lips. Only after he dabbed the blood at the edge of her lips did he realize the handkerchief was spotted with the writer's blood"(26-7). Cynthia's nurse, Lucinda, who will become Abrán's lover, helps shift our attention away from the potential mystery of what influence Cynthia or her family could have on Abrán and onto his father's identity: "Cynthia was Anglo, but Abrán wasn't, Lucinda thought as she looked at the features of the young man. Maybe half Anglo, but his father had to be Mexican"(29).

Within two pages, Anaya has disposed of the Anglo mother and almost any potential effect she could have had on Abrán. At this point, the novel tips its hand. Anaya will not have his Chicano main character investigating the twin influences on his physical body nor allow the Anglo mother any cultural or environmental influence.[1] Abrán will look into his mother's life and her family, but they will not change him. And since he was brought up Chicano (his father's "dark skin"(29) driving the point home about his non-Anglo-ness) and discovers his mystery birth father is Mexican-American, he will undergo almost no change as a result of his detective work. His genealogical inquiry will be incomplete at best, misguided at worst in its narrow focus on finding the father.

This incomplete representation of solving a genealogical mystery causes serious repercussions for our reading of Anaya's novel. Our attempts to see in this novel by the "father of Chicano storytelling in English" (as the back of the Warner Books edition calls him) an investigation of the meaning of cultural and racial hybridity will constantly be

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[1] The Anglo element of the city and novel of Albuquerque is not presented as entirely negative; Abrán's mother, unlike the villainous Frank Dominic, offers the potential of a redemptive, non-imperialist, racist Anglo figure. Anaya simply chooses not to utilize her influence in this way. Robert Gish says of the novel that "Much of the plot of Alburquerque is driven by that urge to know and preserve the true past as the growing city faces the struggle and the promise of its multicultural heritage"(Gish 140); however, Abrán seems only driven to know the part of his true past, his Chicano heritage, that he is already most familiar with. Gish's "multicultural heritage" is reduced to the monocultural.

thwarted, turned aside, and re-routed to a meditation on the metaphysical aspects of a Chicano's soul, which by the end of the novel become unambiguously Indian. Like Gloria Anzaldúa retreating from the potentialities of the hybrid she discusses in La Frontera/Borderlands towards the pure Indian (see Introduction, above, and Comer 223), Anaya avoids making Abrán Anglo in any way except the least meaningful (his physical appearance). In a broader sense, he thus makes pure Indians ("puro Indio") of his Chicano characters and makes the Mexican-American an indigenous presence. He works backwards towards an imagined Edenic time throughout the novel, with Abrán eventually ending up a doctor in a pastoral mountain community that seems removed from the complications of Albuquerque, Anglos, and the West in general.

Anaya makes gestures towards Abrán's investigation of both sides of his heritage, and I would now like to explore this task in all its incompleteness. For as I have suggested above, the incomplete reading of the Mexican-American's dual heritage is essential to the "field-Imaginary" of Chicano literary studies. At the moment he discovers he adopted, Abrán gives only temporary thought to his dual heritage. Even before posing the question of his new identity ("What was he now? Half Anglo, half Mexican"(30)), he thinks of his adoptive father's heritage as his own: "How much more did the man have to teach him about the ways of his ancestors?"(30). The "his ancestors" refers to adoptive father Ramiro, certainly, but Abrán shows interest in Ramiro's past because he takes it, even now, as his own. Furthermore, his adoptive family doesn't think of itself as "hybrid," "crossblood," or of dual heritage: "Ramiro and Sara were proud people, a pride they instilled in him. 'Puro indio,' Ramiro used to say"(30).

At least part of the crisis Anaya poses, then, should be that a young man who, despite evidence to the contrary (his skin color), formerly believed that he was "puro indio" now discovers he is part Anglo, part Mexican. The category "Mexican" could be, in another author's or protagonist's hands, a hybrid term, further complicating Abrán's sense of his genealogy. But Anaya's formulation emphasizes purity, not mixing; he chooses not to make the González family part Spanish, part Indian (at most, they are proudly unaware of this possibility). Whatever the Gonzálezes' heritage, Abrán discovers he has no blood connection with them. Anaya has Abrán make only the feeblest gestures towards caring about his mother's Anglo identity, or about the duality of his heritage (indeed, as we will see below, Anaya will emphasize the Anglo mother's affinity for Chicanos and Indians). Instead, he makes a crisis of Abrán not knowing who his (presumably Mexican) father is. And so Abrán promises God, "He would find his father"(34).

Anaya crafts a mystery plot that will reveal very little about what should appear a mystery to Abrán: namely, what it might mean to possess a dual heritage. Abrán knows from his childhood that Chicanos in Albuquerque can act callously towards "a child of the border": "la raza called people like him 'coyote'"(38). He accepts the fact that he now is truly a "coyote," though the novel attaches little significance to this acceptance. After briefly thinking of how seldom Chicanos and Anglos crossed the borders between them, Abrán doesn't start to wonder what it's like to be half Anglo; he starts to look for the Mexican father who has supplanted his adoptive Mexican father: "Okay, if I'm going to be a coyote at least I'm going to know my father"(38). Such a search promises to

solve very little of the mystery of his identity, since he has always thought his father was Mexican anyway.

I've suggested above that Anaya makes Abrán strangely uncurious about his Anglo heritage because Anaya views New Mexican Chicanos as basically indigenous and unambiguously Indian in the final accounting. If his Chicano characters are uncurious about any European (Anglo or Spanish) roots they might have, his Anglo characters (other than Cynthia) are downright hostile about Chicanos and Indians. Herein lies Anaya's socio-political critique of Albuquerque society and, more broadly, Western United States history. The "recent" arrival of Anglos to the area—from the Mexican-American War, through the Anglo stationmaster in 1880, to the time of the novel—has upset traditional Chicano and Indian life patterns and, more importantly, dispossessed and discredited these groups. It wouldn't matter, Anaya makes clear, whether Chicanos wanted to cross the town's internal borders to mix with Anglos; Anglos possess the lion's share of money and power in Albuquerque, and so their desire to keep non-Anglos out matters. So while the "Chicano" might be viewed as a potentially liberating hybrid (whatever that term's pitfalls) of Spaniard and Indian in the crucible of America, Anaya employs the rhetoric of cultural resistance. As the latest arrivals to New Mexico, his Anglos are usurpers. His Chicanos have been there long enough to have right of place (to become indigenous even); that right and much of their property taken away, Chicanos are now the downtrodden. In Anaya's world, we must read their reluctance to acknowledge their European genealogy in context of their resistance to Anglo-Americans. For la raza in Albuquerque, a simple dialectic obtains: "they" (Anglos) have the power; "we" (Chicanos) have none and aren't at all European, either, since the European is the

conqueror-thief and "we" are not "they." (I will discuss Anaya's depiction of Native Americans later in this chapter.)

Anaya's moral plotting of his two white villains supports this schema. He depicts Walter Johnson's dream of purity for his family and business ventures as enabling/forcing the Chicano refusal to dwell on any non-Indian elements in its make-up. In other words, Chicano "indigenousness" only matters to Anaya after the usurper comes (a relationship he doesn't depict between Native Americans and Spanish/Mexican usurpers, at least not in Alburquerque). Johnson's dreams of purity are those of a man who has already conquered, albeit incompletely, and now wants complete control over his world, down to the last details of who sleeps with his daughter. Anaya doesn't skimp on making Johnson powerful, and his biographical details make him a Horatio Alger-like success story:

> He had come from the Midwest during the depression, a lunger dying of tuberculosis. He recovered, bought land on the East Mesa, and sold it after the war. He had then built a bank and became the richest man in the state, a man whose holding company controlled a good part of the region. (38)

It's not enough for Anaya to make Abrán's grandfather an average white businessman with modest goals. Johnson must stand in for the white conqueror in mid- to late-20th century terms for Anaya's broad social critique to gain purchase.

Walter Johnson's contrast with Abrán is striking. Whereas Abrán thinks sentimentally of learning about his "puro Indio" heritage from his deceased adoptive father, Johnson sees his living grandson "not [as] a grandchild returning home," but as "a ghost from the past"(39). Like many (Anglo) Americans who want to leave the past buried in order to maintain their innocence and purity, Johnson strives to escape the past: "To succeed in business Walter Johnson had had to bury many ghosts. The formula was

simple: He used money to bury them, and they stayed put"(39). In his desire to forget the past, and his power to erase the past to enable that forgetting, he resembles not just the Anglo stationmaster of 1880, but also R.W.B. Lewis's American Adam. The American Adam is "the hero of the new adventure: an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone"(Lewis 5). In the cases Lewis studies from the 19th century, the Adamic figure forgets a European past; here, the American figure is forgetting the United States's past sins. His is no mere forgetting, either, but a systematic blotting out, a "formula."

Johnson's goals fit in with the genealogical themes of the book. He interests himself not in mere control over assets (his banking and real estate) and over his daughter's body, but also in extending his domination beyond his death. He does not focus on whether his daughter's teenaged dalliance with a Mexican-American corrupts her body, though the finality with which he treats the affair (as if she could not later get married and bear him grandchildren within a marriage?) and his chilly relations with Cynthia throughout her adult life imply that he finds her corrupt, ruined by the affair. More strangely, he imagines himself as sexually victimized by her actions: "in the act of becoming pregnant she had defiled his dreams. She had destroyed the dynasty he envisioned"(39).

Thus are we introduced to another version of genealogy in the novel (we will see another with the introduction of the novel's other white villain, Frank Dominic). Johnson's American Dream (which he views heroically, in the vein of an American Adam, and not ironically as we are invited to do) is predicated on forgetting the past for

the future. In Anaya's social critique, however, he can't let Johnson forget the circumstances of his daughter's affair (not even to make her the heir of his business empire). There is no room in his Alburquerque for Walter Johnson to forgive his daughter and accept his grandson into the family; if Cynthia once crossed a well-policed sexual border imagined by the townspeople, Walter will not allow another crossing.

We can gauge the degree of Johnson's villainy in rejecting Cynthia's child, then and now, by examining the Johnsons' genealogy and previous treatment of family. Walter has chosen to reject his own family, a father in the stockyards and a laundress mother: "I survived by leaving. I never looked back, and I never thought about my family again"(43). His wife Vera is an orphan, though not without a family history: "she is a Jew, from the old Jews who came with the Spaniards. Los marranos"(42). In this much, Walter reads Vera and himself as "both outcasts. She because she had Jewish blood, and I because I claimed no bloodline"(43). These romantic outcasts also form his typical American family, the kind one would find if the country as a whole could trace its genealogy to one source: "Right there was the history of the Americas. A man who gave up everything to start a new life"(43).

Johnson views his history as romantic and exemplary, but Anaya hardly makes the Johnsons' struggles to fit in pitiable. Anaya depicts Johnson's rejection of family against a backdrop of loving family relationships, one of which literally saves his life. For Vera Johnson was adopted by a Mexican family (despite her being Jewish, a fact whispered along the bar run by her adoptive parents). Walter thinks of this act in stereotypical language: "The Mexicans have a great love for children, he thought. If they take somebody in, he becomes family"(42). The love extends to him; when Walter steps

off a train in Albuquerque, ready to die, Vera takes him into her family just as don Manuel took her in. Anaya gives Walter such obviously stereotypical views about family to make a point, to suggest an alternative (and superior) way of viewing family ties. Set against the backdrop of modern Albuquerque, with its sharp division of successful Anglo businesspeople and struggling Chicanos in the barrios, Walter's view of America as experienced through his genealogy becomes the history of the conquest of America writ small. If Walter thinks of America as made up of (romantic) outcasts starting a new life with no taint of the past upon them, Anaya shows a trail of blood and disloyalty, ghosts of a past that should not be forgotten. Johnson's rejection of family (his parents, Vera's Jewish roots, his grandson) has made him rich, but culturally and spiritually impoverished.

While Johnson once dreamed of his daughter continuing his legacy, he envisions his United States as sprouting from people who reject their own past, who blot out the un-presentable or unpronounceable. Anaya uses him to show the importance of the past in two key ways: first, he suggests that individuals need to know their genealogy to know their own identity, and secondly, Johnson's villainy in rejecting his daughter and her love child evoke the American forgetting of its own past.

In the book's other white villain, Frank Dominic, Anaya offers yet another view of genealogy. Whereas Johnson makes the mistake of erasing his past and valorizing that erasure, Dominic tries to construct an artificial past. Like Johnson, Dominic is a very powerful businessman, interested in making Albuquerque a gambling mecca. Unlike the lily-white Johnson, Dominic has strong ties to Albuquerque's Chicano community, having been friends with the writer Ben Chavez. He grew up in the barrio with an Italian

mother and a father of unknown heritage (he's ambiguously either Hispanic or Italian); he claims some affinity with Chavez's background.

Set against the backdrop of a rapidly growing Albuquerque, with "Too many new people in the city, immigrants who didn't know the history of the place, new people who knew nothing of the values of the traditional communities"(66), Dominic's knowledge of history makes him comparable to other long time residents who do know the place. He speaks knowledgeably about the Spanish expansion into New Mexico, but glosses over the violence, focusing instead on a story of colonizing heroes. Chavez sees Dominic as a social climber, ignorant of the conflict between Chicano and Spanish identity: "Ben knew Dominic yearned to be a scion of the Spanish conquistadors. Frank grew up with the Mexican kids, learned the language, and fell into the dream that he really was a descendant of one of the old Spanish families"(68). Dominic's childhood yearning to belong (which parallels Abrán's) becomes the desire to master, not to be merely long established in New Mexico, but to be descended from its conquerors.

Dominic shares his fascination with creating a royal, masterly genealogy with many others: "Those who sought the Spanish in their genealogy never ceased to amaze Ben. . . . [M]any a nut in New Mexico had spent his life's earnings trying to find his link to a Spanish family crest"(72). Chavez sees politics as motivating Dominic's interest in genealogy: "[W]as this royalty bit part of the political package? ... Use it in the campaign—it would look good on TV and go down well with his North Valley friends"(72). For wealthy whites in Albuquerque, mostly bereft of history or any sense of belonging to the place they now control, Dominic can somehow represent their right of place. If Walter Johnson erases his genealogy in order to craft himself as an "American

Adam," Dominic traces his bloodlines for the same reason as the DAR or Boston Brahmins: to make himself indigenous without the sheen of failure he implicitly associates with Indian and Mexican settlers in New Mexico.

He is not one of those outsiders Ben Chavez excoriates, but his desire for mastery makes his interest in history problematic. Chavez almost feels sympathy for Dominic after his scheme to make Albuquerque a gambling center is washed up by a disastrous public event. He treats Dominic's genealogical interests as a personal pathology: "Good old Frank. He just tried too hard. That obsession he has with being a blue-blooded Spaniard is dangerous. . . . The theme of being sons and daughters of those first Spaniards has persisted in our miserable kingdom. It is Dominic's flaw"(290). Though he does refer to New Mexico as a "miserable kingdom," Chavez doesn't use this occasion to criticize the Spanish for the conquest itself, but to put forth his theory of why tracing one's genealogy back to the Spanish conquistadors doesn't work: "We all make history to serve our needs . . . . He has the sympathetic ear of those nuts who still think that after four hundred years in this land they're still Spanish blue bloods"(291). While I would argue that Anaya uses Dominic's politicizing of his artificial genealogy to criticize the politics of racism, Chavez refers to the fact that centuries of intermarriage have eliminated the likelihood of pure Spanish descent for anyone. Furthermore, he implies the land itself has contributed to the loss of purity, as he cites "four hundred years in this land" and not some more specific cause.

What is at stake in Johnson's erasing of his past and Dominic's politically motivated, botched genealogy? Anaya makes both men well-known, financially successful larger-than-life figures. For Anaya, they symbolize two false paths American

genealogies can take; their stories represent ways Anglo-Americans think about American history down to the most localized level of the self. His critical genealogy of nationalist narrative uses Johnson and Dominic as counter examples to Abrán. All of them reflect on their past, but only Abrán succeeds in making the past usable in a positive way. Anaya presents Abrán's search for identity as so idealized and mystical as to seem apolitical, even in a novel about a political battle. What Anaya said of Antonio Marez in (the far less obviously political) Bless Me, Ultima applies to Abrán: "When you find who you really are, you become a person of incredible power"(Dick and Sirias 134). Johnson bases his power on a lack of personal history. Dominic tries to legitimize his power with a faux genealogy. Abrán's quest to find his father and thus his own identity promises to make him powerful—as fighter, lover, healer, leader.

Walter Johnson presents Abrán with the first hurdle, turning him away out of a desire to forget the past (and out of actual ignorance of Abrán's father's identity). Abrán turns for help first to Joe Calabasa (on whom more below), then to Lucinda. Considered alongside the plot of discovering his father's identity, Abrán's growing love for Lucinda functions to confirm his organic connection—his belonging—to the New Mexico landscape. The new friends take a peaceful drive to Sandia Crest that prefigures their later trip to her idyllic, ancestral home in Cordova. This side trip allows Abrán to work through his feelings about the changes in his life and to provide back story (his accidental killing of Junior in a boxing match and subsequent escape to Los Angeles).

Lucinda offers Abrán the possibility of future healing through her vision of becoming a curandera in the mountains: "[S]omething else is calling me. . . . My dream is to set up a clinic in Córdova"(56). Unlike Abrán's escape from Albuquerque after killing

Junior, which brings him no peace, her vision promotes healing. Though Lucinda and Abrán have just met, Anaya creates a mystical connection between them. Abrán's desire to become a doctor complements her dream of a clinic in the mountains. The landscape energizes Lucinda and Abrán, its physical presence also having metaphysical effects: " 'The mountain is alive,' she said and drew closer to him. . . . The power and kinship Lucinda felt with the mountain were enhanced by Abrán's presence"(57). She even feels she has dreamed about Abrán before meeting him.

I have argued above that Abrán's quest for his own identity avoids potentially troubling questions about any Anglo influence on him; whether or not the "mystery" of his identity is actually mysterious, Anaya juxtaposes this mystery with Lucinda's more grounded, fixed identity. Her metaphysical descriptions of herself shore up Anaya's depiction of Chicano/a indigenism: "The energy and beauty of the mountain satisfied her soul; it was something inbred from her childhood in the northern Sangre de Cristo"(57-8). "Inbred" here means that her organic appreciation of this particular landscape is so rooted as to be hereditary. By implication, Abrán's joining with her (first in friendship, then sexually, later in marriage and the healing professions) will lend him this inbred connection to the land; as if Anaya hadn't emphasized it enough, marrying Lucinda will confirm and even sanctify Abrán's indigenism.

Anaya strengthens Abrán's "inbred" ties to the land in the scene where they bury Cynthia's ashes. Though he has never visited the place, he intuits its importance for the mother he never knew: "A place she knew"(79). Anaya's description of the placement of ashes beneath a cottonwood tree suggests a belief in what we might call "the circle of

life,"[2] as a being who lived now returns to the earth, carried by the child she generated on that earth: "If [the tree] could talk ... It would whisper to them of the autumn day twenty-one years ago when she came as a young girl to this bower and lay with the boy who was Abrán's father. This resting place for her ashes was also the place of conception"(79). Abrán's coming to the location of his physical origins has metaphysical implications. Not only does he sense the place's importance for his mother, but he also knows she and his father conceived him there: "[H]e felt the presence of his father. 'They were here,' he said and looked at Lucinda. Lucinda understood"(80). Anaya suggests that people develop affinities for the land, connections that are inbred and ahistorical. In other words, Anaya shows that even outsiders can cherish and grow into the land; this suggests a mobility that transcends bloodline and tradition.

Anaya finalizes Abrán's becoming indigenous through the "romance" plot. Abrán and Lucinda grow close through ushering his mother into the afterlife, suggesting that both are connected to the land and each other. Then Abrán has a brief affair with the mayor, Marisa Martínez. Anaya paints the fling as political and therefore not organic or natural; it reveals nothing of Abrán's actual character: "The desire he had felt for Marisa was real, but it was for the moment. He did not regret the passion between them, it had united them against a formidable foe [Dominic]"(147). Through physical love, Marisa teaches him "that the flesh can provide insight into the soul"(147), though she does not provide him with any other insight. Rather, the affair turns him back to Lucinda, and Anaya emphasizes that a union with Lucinda will connect Abrán (in a very mystical sense) to the earth and the people: "he had to find his spiritual center, something

[2] And the idea of the circularity of life is far from being the province of any one cultural group or ethnicity or nation. As Michaelsen puts it in The Limits of Multiculturalism, such ideas are "never not already

grounded in the values of Sara, something that came from the earth and the rhythms of the people, something he sensed Lucinda offered"(147).

Their trip to Lucinda's mountain home in northern New Mexico allows Anaya to make even closer connections between the couple and the land, though the effort ultimately removes them from the politics of Albuquerque and dulls the impact of Anaya's social critique. As they grow closer, Abrán and Lucinda form a partnership both "grounded" (as she shares her connection to the earth) and "spiritual" (as they become so close as to communicate without the physical senses). Lucinda's senses reach to the metaphysical, as when she learns of Abrán's affair through a nightmare: "She knew. The images of her dream had divulged his secret"(155). However, the closer she gets to her home, the stronger her spirit grows. Lucinda allows "herself to be cleansed by the land"(155), cleansed even of the sin of Abrán's affair. Abrán ponders the source of her intuition and healing power: "he guessed the gift came from [her father.] Or was it a gift that came from being raised in the mountains, in a land Lucinda described as timeless?"(155) As Anaya will show, this distinction is not one, as her father is so connected to the land to make his gift the land's gift.

Heading into the northern mountains, the couple even sees Catholic penitents benefiting from the land: "For these faithful believers, the earth of the valley was capable of curing the most severe illness"(161). Catholicism has long been practiced in New Mexico, Anaya suggests, and despite not being indigenous has become grounded. Anaya's narration even comments on the "local color" aspects of the penitents' Good Friday walk, making their actions less part of a universal ("catholic") religion than a local practice worthy of gawking by outsiders: "watch out for the tourists, they stop you to take

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internal to the traditions of the West"(32).

pictures... Pobrecitos, they think it's a show, they don't know what it means to us"(162). Again, he contrasts their authenticity with the tourists, those who don't belong (presumably Anglos, since they are unfamiliar with Mexican Catholic practices). Abrán himself does not practice his religion, but the confluence of the land and the faithful affects him: "Abrán felt the faith of the straggling penitents he and Lucinda passed on the road. His mother, Sara, believed in the journey of faith and prayed daily to her santos"(163). Apparently, performing a religion matters less than having close ties to the tradition (by visiting the land or being related to a practitioner). Abrán just needs to "double" his Chicano birth by doing Chicano things, to paraphrase Walter Benn Michaels (Our America 126).

By joining with Lucinda, Abrán will confirm his authentic Chicanoness (just as she promises him earlier: "'Will they accept me? I'm only half Chicano.' ... 'You're Chicano,' she said confidently"(153)). Of course, Abrán's doubts about his authenticity are brought about by the revelation of his birth mother's identity, but Anaya never problematizes Abrán's identity; Lucinda only helps the inevitable reconfirmation of his Chicano-ness. During their visit to a country church, "[t]hey stood and embraced, the bond of faith and earth uniting them"(164). Abrán even admits, "I felt my feet were rooted in the earth... Good medicine"(164). Abrán easily overcomes his lack of knowledge about Lucinda's way of life and becomes comfortable. Lucinda's family lives in such a way (i.e. "close" to the earth and not in the city) as to make them authentic Chicanos regardless of their practices. Furthermore, they have become indigenous, as I have argued Anaya makes Abrán. Lucinda's father, Juan Oso, spins tales of fighting with bear-men that depict him as "natural" and unspoiled by civilization. Though Anaya has

Juan tell "family histories"(170) and a partial history of Kearney's occupation of northern New Mexico, Lucinda's family (and the family she and Abrán will start) now lives apart from time and history. They live by natural rhythms Abrán (and Anaya) approves of: "It was clear they led a harmonious life"(166).

Though Abrán did have an adoptive father, Anaya quickly moves to make Juan Oso a new father figure, emphasizing Abrán's lack of ties to what we are led to believe is his own heritage. Far from the problems of Albuquerque, where prejudices kept Abrán's parents apart, Juan Oso helps Abrán "feel complete"(170) and educates him on how to become reintegrated with the natural world. Juan Oso tells of fighting a bear-man (after getting his bear-woman daughter pregnant) and entering the bears' world: "I felt good. I belonged. I had entered their world, hombre. I was one of them"(169). At first, Abrán envies Juan and Esperanza's groundedness: the "roots that went deep into the soil and the spirit of the people, he did not have"(171). But Juan promises that Abrán can join this world easily: "A man can put roots wherever he finds a good woman"(171). Despite having their land taken over by the Maxwells and Catrons (as Juan reveals "as if he were lecturing in a classroom"(173)), the Chicanos of northern New Mexico still have their essence: "they stripped it away, layer by layer.... They can't strip the heart, it's all we have left"(173). As with the anecdote about the Anglo stationmaster, Anaya makes Anglo conquerors the villains in a history that only goes back as far as Mexican settlement in what is now New Mexico (and does not editorialize on prior conquests, as I will show in part II). Though all of the pieces are in place to craft a picture of a people molded by history, Anaya emphasizes the timeless, essential heart maintained eternally by the land itself: "The entire valley and the mountain slept in the enduring peace of

spring. That core of the onion, [Abrán] thought, you can't strip that away. It will endure forever"(174). Abrán possesses that essence, Anaya argues, even without knowing the history or his own parentage. He may need to "put roots" where Lucinda comes from, but his essence (detectable in his "natural ease"(171) with Lucinda, his feeling of completeness with her family, feeling the faith of the local penitents, and feeling "rooted in the earth"(164)) makes him already indigenous.

Anaya doubles Abrán's indigeneity by extending the affinity for New Mexico's land (and by extension its people) even to Anglos like Cynthia and her mother Vera, who recalls (re)visiting the barrio with her daughter: "We danced and enjoyed ourselves as we never had before"(80). While Cynthia's mother had grown up in the barrio (making her return less of a border crossing), Cynthia went there because she felt an affinity for the people of the barrio that crossed her own upbringing. Vera goes so far as to say of Cynthia's painting of "the people from the pueblo, the old people" that "she was trying to find the parents she never had"(81). Here, Anaya's genealogy of Abrán's Anglo grandparents comes more in line with his indigenizing of Abrán. As we have seen, Walter Johnson is an American Adam type, trying to erase his history; his wife Vera has Hispanic origins as a child of the barrio, though ethnically she is Jewish. Anaya removes even these tenuous barriers to Abrán's indigeneity as Vera posits that Cynthia sought out parents to whom she could have some connection beyond blood. Of course, Abrán's Chicano (and "puro Indio") adoptive parents raise him to have the connection his birth mother Cynthia had to seek artificially; now Abrán seeks his "real" or birth parents, in an ironic reversal of Cynthia's quest.

Or is it ironic? In both cases, characters expect genealogy to tell them who they are. In Cynthia's case, she seeks out spiritual ancestors because she feels no kinship with her birth parents. Abrán has always felt that kinship with Sara and Ramiro, but upon discovering they have no blood connection to him, feels "empty inside"(18). The more Abrán investigates his genealogy, the more indigenous Anaya makes him, for even Abrán's Anglo mother sought Indian origins in the old people of New Mexico's pueblos. She did not "belong" with the Anglos, Anaya suggests, but with the indigenous population (and Mexicans, inasmuch as Anaya indigenizes them as well). So Anaya does not make Abrán's search for real parents ironically opposed to Cynthia's search for spiritual or metaphysical ancestors; in both cases, the characters move away from their non-indigenous, settler genealogy towards indigeneity and organic connection to the land.

In her artist's journal, Cynthia describes a "la matanza" in terms that effectively root Mexicans in New Mexico and reconnect her to Vera's lost Mexican heritage: "*It was in the fiestas of the people that I discovered the essence of my people, the Mexican heritage of my mother*"(94). Interestingly, Cynthia already fashions herself as one of the Mexican "people," a word that even without her use of "essence" would imply an ahistorical, organic, even racial collective. As much as her words seem like wishful thinking (recalling Vine Deloria's description of Anglo America's fascination with Indian spirituality; see Custer Died for Your Sins 3-4), Anaya treats them without irony. Her longing resembles Abrán's too much for Anaya to subvert it; to ironize her belief in an "essence" of the Mexicans (including her Jewish mother) would be to criticize Abrán's own attempts at genealogy. But in a critical genealogy, we must ask the questions Anaya does not have his characters ask: is the "essence" of an orphaned Mexican Jew (Vera) the

same as that of other Mexicans? Since Cynthia has an Anglo father (Walter), does she have half the essence of her "people"? If this essence is truly essential, why does Cynthia see it first in la matanza (and not, to choose the most obvious example, in her mother)? How could her mother's essence ever have been hidden, only to reveal itself when the daughter observed la matanza?

Anaya's answer seems to be that the Johnsons, even Vera, have become "puro Anglo" in a cruel example of the kind of acculturation that Anaya writes against. Cynthia writes, "I painted the fiestas of the Río Grande, the fiestas of your people, mi amor, the fiestas my mother used to tell me about when I was a child, because if life had not been so cruel, we would have shared these fiestas"(95). She does not quite make the fiestas *hers,* though she calls the Mexicanos "my people"(94). She imagines instead a degree of alterity between her Anglo culture and the culture (represented by the fiestas) of the Mexicanos. While she sees in the fiestas something of a birthright (as opposed to a cultural product that can be consumed no matter what one's own culture is), she also posits them as utopian, ahistorical, and timeless (like the future life Abrán envisions with Lucinda). They represent a world that she could have inhabited were the border between the city's Anglos and Chicanos not so stringently patrolled.

In making Cynthia Anglo, as I've suggested above, Anaya introduces the possibility of investigation into cultural and racial hybridity, only to sabotage that possibility. Here again, he suggests that crossing borders is not so easy when "essences" and "blood" matter so much. Though Walter Johnson's prejudice and desire to get ahead in Anglo society separate Cynthia from "her people," her blood connection allows her to rejoin them, even if she needs a kind of "native guide" figure in "mi amor" (Abrán's

father). Not surprisingly, then, Cynthia's account of la matanza lends metaphysical reach to the physical underpinnings of blood; she rediscovers a sort of lost identity, something beyond the physical (we might call it cultural) that she nonetheless knew before in her blood. Why else does she feel the need to search for parents when she has them? In Anaya's accounting, blood or race ultimately take the place of culture, anyway, as practices alone are not sufficient to confer cultural identity. Cynthia writes of the passing down of the rituals of la matanza, "It was the call to the matanza, an old calling, something they knew in their blood, something they had done surely and swiftly all their lives"(103). Why should the young men at the fiesta care about carrying on this ritual? Through physical actions—linked inextricably with the physicality of blood and race—the old men prove their old ways are superior, with the grandfather killing a pig not with pistol, but with a hammer in the old style. The old men complain that their ways will pass away, and Cynthia writes, "That is why I had to paint. I wanted to preserve the beauty of those moments"(106). But since the men know this calling "in their blood," nothing that we might call "the essence of my people"(94) could ever disappear. The specific (if superficial) practices of la matanza do not constitute that essence, so they can die away with the younger generation without actual identity being lost; even Cynthia can rediscover this essence.[3]

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[3] Walter Benn Michaels makes a supporting argument at great length in Our America. Michaels argues of French-speaking in Quebec, "without some way of explaining how what people used to do but no longer do constitutes their real identity, while what they actually do does not, it cannot be said that what the former French-speakers, current English-speakers have lost is their identity. My point, then, is not that nothing of value is ever lost but that identity is never lost"(198 n.242). In the present case, Anaya seems to support Cynthia's depiction of la matanza as something the younger Mexican-Americans should regret losing (for its "beauty"), but makes no argument that the practice is useful in and of itself. Cynthia and Anaya argue for a link between this practice and authentic Mexican-American identity, but Anaya's language ("the essence," "in their blood") dissolves the need for such a link. The younger generation need not practice la matanza to preserve their identity, since the calling to practice it is in their blood. The only reason for the young people to continue la matanza is that it signifies what they are (their essence) without actually

Cynthia's paintings confirm her ability to understand a people, at least in Anaya's terms, for in them she uses "pure light," as Lucinda calls it, "the primeval light of New Mexico... Pure light, as it must have been at the beginning of time"(154). This description makes Cynthia's paintings of the old people of the pueblos a type of origins myth, for she removes them from history through her use of light. Lucinda continues: "she could see their auras. The people she paints are real, but they have the glow of life. In her pure light there is no deception"(154). Anaya makes Cynthia an "authentic" artist, her work hearkening back to the "primeval" and capturing the essence of the people as it relates to the land. In effect, her writings and paintings attempt to show what is indigenous about a people without any appeal to history (which is anything but "pure" or without "deception").

Clearly, Anaya imagines tradition or culture almost purely in terms of blood or race, and he does so in a fashion that recalls Walter Benn Michaels' arguments about modern (and contemporary) concepts of culture and their connection to race. Abrán seeks his father's identity because he wants to know who he is (as if identity could not have been conferred to him by his adoptive parents, though conveniently Abrán's Chicano identity is never really challenged); he believes biology will help him decide his identity. But discovering an Anglo mother doesn't make him Anglo (and her own discovery of an "essence" that is actually Mexican helps confirm this). So what is at

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constituting that essence. If la matanza is felt in the blood, it will be practiced (in some form) by whoever feels the calling. In the case of la matanza, it is difficult to argue that its loss would contribute to an identity loss for Mexican-Americans since the only reason they have to continue this practice is that they are already irreducibly Mexican-American. What I'm suggesting with this reference (and in what follows) is that Anaya's appeal to something essential and physical (and metaphysical) in his Chicano characters' constitution—his use of a very limited genealogy—undercuts his own political commentary on the Southwest. His genealogy of America is thus quite critical when it comes to Anglo settlement in New Mexico and its effect on local inhabitants, less critical when it comes to the composed character of

stake in Abrán's genealogical inquiry is rather less than the possibility of taking on new traditions; his quest hews more closely to discovering what in his past will confirm who he already is.

We might say of Abrán (and by extension other Chicanos arguably represented by "the father of Chicano storytelling") what Michaels says of all Americans with respect to their history: "[W]hy does it matter who we are? [...] It must be [...] the ontological claim that we need to know who we are in order to know which past is ours"(Our America 128). Anaya invests in this kind of genealogy, but consistently hedges his bets, confirming which past is Abrán's and therefore making his identity rather simple: "tu eres tu." In other words, Abrán's identity supposedly matters because discovering his "real" father helps him find an "actual" or real or physical reason for considering himself a Chicano (or coyote, or any other term), but nothing changes in the novel. Instead of Abrán uncovering a complicated network of relationships among Spanish, Anglo and Indian ancestors, he only finds grounds (the ground of northern New Mexico serves this purpose literally) for his being Chicano. Here Anaya leaves off performing genealogy in favor of a metaphysical search for origins. As Michel Foucault writes, whereas a metaphysician will seek the "soul" of history (not its "body") "in the distant ideality of the origin"(Foucault 80), genealogy "opposes itself to the search for origins"(Foucault 77). In the final accounting, identity in Alburquerque is fundamentally racial and essentialist, as Abrán discovers through his mother's rediscovery of "her people" and her racializing of their traditions. Abrán claims a past based on race or blood, but ignores "the details and accidents that accompany every beginning"(Foucault 80). When he and

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Mexican-Americans, whom he sees as having an essence tied to the land they have inhabited for slightly more time than the Anglos.

Lucinda commit themselves to return to her idyllic, timeless mountain village, they are reclaiming a lifestyle—what might appear to be practices or "culture"—which only belongs to them because of race. Like Cynthia, who in her paintings captured "the soul of the people... the soul of this land"(157), they (re-)discover the "soul" (in Foucault's sense) of their people. They do not look beyond the origin of Mexican-Americans. They belong to the land (and vice-versa) because of a racial identity that belies New Mexican history. In the cause of exploring Chicano identity (and, more politically speaking, its relationship to Anglo-American identity), much of Alburquerque grounds "which past is ours" in racial terms, indigenizing Mexican-Americans and creating a myth of their origin (in the story of Abrán's parentage, but also in the renaming act of the Anglo stationmaster). This causes problems for the book's political dimensions—what I've been calling Anaya's critical genealogy of America—when we take into account Anaya's treatment of Native American characters and themes. Indeed, though Anaya's depiction of conflicts between Anglos and Chicanos works as a critical genealogy by opening up the story of the western frontier, his handling of Indian themes undermines this project.

Part II: Erasures

Anaya emphasizes healing and wholeness, taking them to utopian, metaphysical extremes. By the novel's ending, Abrán has "defeated" both Johnson (by discovering his father's identity) and Dominic (who both loses a bet when Abrán wins the boxing match and loses any chance of getting his casino plans approved). Anaya neatly contrasts the genealogical investigation of Abrán with that of Frank Dominic (and with Walter

Johnson's disregard for family history). Indeed, when asked by Laura Chavkin in 1995, "What common themes or concerns do you think unite Chicano writers"(Dick and Sirias 172), Anaya answered in part, "the relationship that we have to Anglo-America, the encounter with Anglo-America that occurred in the mid-nineteenth century, the continuing sense of tension between the two communities"(Dick and Sirias 172-3). He plots that tension in Alburquerque. However, when Anaya addressed Native America (as opposed to Anglo-America) in a 1985 interview with Paul Vassallo, he emphasized not tension or encounter, but shared heritage: "that image [of the Chicano] has to do with our commitment to understanding ourselves not only as Hispanics—as people of Spanish and Mexican origins—but as people who also share in the Native American origin and the Native American heritage. Our history is part Indian"(Dick and Sirias 99). Anaya continuously places his work in both Mexican-American and Native American traditions. Instead of drawing connections between Spanish/Mexican and Anglo colonial enterprises, he differentiates Chicano literature from Anglo literature based on Indian elements: "We are historically tied to Mexico [...]. [A]nd with that context of the Mexican experience is the experience of the Native American, whether that experience be in Mexico or here in the Southwest"(Dick and Sirias 100).

Anaya's explanation leaves much to be desired, his "with that context [...] is the experience" doing little to provide the context in which Native Mexicans, some with Spanish blood ties, some without, came to a Southwest occupied by Native Americans (inhabitants of the what is now the United States Southwest, as distinguished from Mexican-Americans). In setting Abrán's dream of becoming whole despite his mixed heritage against the plot line of Joe Calabasa's struggle to return to the reservation,

Anaya leaves too much history unexamined. If Anaya leads us to read Abrán's genealogical inquiry and eventual settlement as a means to becoming indigenous, how are we to read Joe and his family? How can Anaya criticize Anglo colonization (through the figure of Walter Johnson) and not the Spanish colonization that preceded it?

On the level of narrative, Joe's quest parallels Abrán's, as Joe struggles to return to the pueblo after Vietnam and its after-effects have torn him away.[4] In the end, he too will gain wholeness and healing. But Joe's pueblo also gives the lie to Anaya's indigenizing of Abrán and Lucinda. Joe's people (the Santo Domingo people) were there when "the Spaniards came, and later the Anglos"(48). When Lucinda takes Abrán to one of her favorite spots, she comments, "before there was raza here, the Indians used to come to this place... They used earth for healing"(148). Now, of course, la raza do occupy that land, but Anaya emphasizes healing rather than this earlier displacement. Anaya makes just slight references to the history of Spanish occupation of this Indian land, instead focusing on its "timeless"(156) nature. As we saw above, when Juan Oso recalls a displacement of peoples, he recalls Kearney's claiming of New Mexico for the United States, not Juan de Oñate's earlier conquest.[5] In a novel so predicated on exposing historical erasures and contesting the national narrative, Anaya's choice not to present any conflict in Abrán over his mixed heritage (Anglo/white and Chicano, i.e. Spanish and Indian), or between Spanish/Mexican settlers and Native Americans seems odd. In performing a critical genealogy as outlined by Russ Castronovo, one would seek

[4] One sees the plot of the soldier returning to the reservation after war in several well-known Native American novels, including Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony and N. Scott Momaday's House Made of Dawn. Including this theme allows Anaya to allude to these other texts (which are by authors who self-identify as Native American), thus bolstering the authenticity of the plot; it also lets the plot serve as shorthand for Native American alienation from the United States and tribal life, since readers may have knowledge of this familiar theme.

out and reinstate "what has been erased in the writing of national narrative"(Castronovo 9); what is missing from Anaya's narrative of Mexican-Americans in New Mexico is precisely the encounter with Native Americans that occurred prior to Anglos settling New Mexico.

Anaya lays Joe's plotline next to Abrán's. The two help each other resolve their respective conflicts, and their friendship serves as an antidote for the political fighting in the novel. Anaya provides no hint that either man recognizes any conflict from their ethnic groups' past histories. Indeed, Joe and Abrán fight together in the first chapter, intervening in a fight between Ben Chavez and a man he defeats at pool. Joe helps introduce one of Anaya's central themes, the connection of people to their land, when he shows concern for the Chicanos of the city: "If they build the big aquatic park the city is planning, la raza gets pushed out ... My grandfather used to tell me the city was going to grow. 'Just don't let them get the pueblo land,' he said. If you give up your land, you die"(13). Joe alludes to his people's own history of survival without referencing whether his people have ever lost pueblo land.[6]

Despite Joe's alienation from his home, Anaya paints him and his pueblo as sources of wisdom for Abrán and his people, suggesting more strategies of survival in the present than past conflicts. Joe becomes one of many father figures for Abrán: "Joe was older; he knew the world. He became, in a sense, the father Abrán didn't have"(16). As we saw in my previous discussion, however, Abrán is anything but fatherless. He loses his adoptive father Ramiro at a young age, but remembers him nonetheless; of course,

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[5] A brief account of this conquest is given in Mexican Americans/ American Mexicans: From Conquistadors to Chicanos by Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Ribera, pp. 20-21.

Abrán searches for his biological father (Ben Chavez) even after Chavez enters his life and becomes another sort of father figure. Anaya seems to be using these father figures to suggest the array of influences not just on Abrán, but also on Chicanos as a group: the "puro indio" Mexican father (Ramiro), the Native American father from the pueblo (Joe)[7], the Chicano activist father (Chavez).[8] Viewed allegorically, Chicanos become the inheritors of a Native American tradition, not the usurpers.

As Abrán searches for his father to determine his own identity, Joe seeks to overcome the distance between him and his father. Again Anaya shows that genealogy reveals personal identity; he suggests that Joe has not been himself since Vietnam, that a return to the pueblo will restore and regenerate this truer self. Joe sees that Abrán's discovery of his birth mother's identity creates a "new reality"(46) for Abrán, but wants to change his own new reality, which is unpleasant: "Nam had separated him from his own father and from the old men of the pueblo"(47). Like Juan Oso, Joe's father represents the value of maintaining close ties to the land, making Joe's separation from the land of his people doubly regrettable: "[His father] was strict in the old ways, he sat on the pueblo council, and he farmed.... Squash and summer, that was his identity"(47). Though Joe is a "coyote" like Abrán (his mother is "a Mexican woman"(47)), both seem to belong only to one group. Like Abrán, Joe is teased when young, since "Nobody likes a coyote"(47). Peers may make fun of and fight these protagonists, questioning their authenticity, but Anaya assures that these "coyotes" represent just one side of their hybrid

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[6] The pueblos of what is now northern New Mexico underwent generations of give-and-take in the "contact zones" they shared with invading armies of Mexico (which included Spaniards, Nahua Indians, and crossbloods) and other Native Americans (Apache, Navajo, Comanche). See Meier and Ribera, pp. 20-23.
[7] Joe is also part Mexican through his mother; see p. 47.
[8] As I argued above, the Anglo (or Spanish) influence exists biologically, but is hard to discern in plot or character.

identities. There is no mention of Joe returning to the old Mexican ways of his mother, just as there is no chance that having an Anglo mother will make Abrán at all Anglo: "'Half-and-half, damn!' Abrán cleared his throat. He didn't want to be half Anglo"(47). Yet again, Anaya presents the chance to depict the conflict between Native American and Mexican-Americans, but dissolves the conflict by founding the identities of his characters in one or the other.

Anaya invests both men with authenticity, down to Joe's conception of his people's place in the universe, a conception that defies any appeal to history[9]: "The Calabasa family" –note that Joe un-self-consciously only considers his father's lineage, not his mother's Mexican heritage, having already claimed that her transplantation has made her native—"had been Santo Domingo people since the beginning of the world. They lived at the center of the earth, according to their legends. That was stability"(47-8). Of course, this appeal is literally metaphysical: Joe appeals beyond the bounds of human knowledge and the history of human dwelling (he has no need to appeal to history or anthropology) to assert primeval origins for his people. They are the first people and occupy the earth's center. Anaya no doubt means for readers to take this claim seriously; though the understatement of "That was stability" reads like a joke, Joe's thoughts reveal both ironic distance from and envy of his elders' world views.

Through his grandfather, Joe has learned the ways and history of his people. In Joe's accounting, pueblo areas were invaded by Spanish and Anglos.[10] As a way to

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[9] Michel Foucault notes that because history "is the concrete body of a development," "only a metaphysician would seek its soul in the distant ideality of the origin"(80). The Calabasa family's sense of itself is not at all genealogical in Foucault's sense of the term, but rather an ahistorical idealization.

[10] Though the conquest was carried out in the name of imperial Spain, the forces included "Spaniards, *mestizos*, Indians, and *afromestizos*"(Menchaca 67). Anaya has Joe figure both groups of invaders as white.

counter and compromise with these invaders, Joe's people have had to "learn the white man's way"(48). Now, however, Joe is estranged from the tribe; despite the strength and "stability" that should inhere in Joe because of his genealogy and upbringing, "Now, he couldn't return to the pueblo of his grandfather. He had learned too much of the white man's way"(48). In his own mind, Joe has become less authentically Indian based on his experiences as a soldier in Vietnam. As a young man, he dreamed of being a Marine and even tried to pretend he was hunting deer back home when he was scouting Vietnamese. But Joe can't make killing Vietnamese like killing deer, and soon he finds himself in a position like that of soldiers and settlers who conquered the Indians of the United States West: "I could imagine the women in the village hiding the minute they heard the shot, grabbing their bambinos and holding them close to quiet them, like the Indians did long ago when the U.S. Cavalry came down to skirmish"(50). He comes upon an old Vietnamese and recalls his old "chant for the deer"(51), a song meant to put the intended shooting victim at peace: "Come, brother deer, give your life to my people. Let me take your breath of life so my village can live"(51). The Vietnamese counters with his own song, and Joe thinks, "In his wrinkled face I saw the face of my grandfather.... In his face I saw the face of my people"(51). Joe feels solidarity with this man and thereafter divests himself of the war: "I was done with it"(52).[11]

By itself, his breaking away from his old self (which sought to kill in the name of the United States) does not purge him of learning "too much of the white man's

[11] This passage features prominently in Margarite Fernández Olmos' postcolonial reading of Alburquerque in Rudolfo Anaya: A Critical Companion (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999). Indeed, many texts by non-white North American authors fit into postcolonial readings (as do some white texts from the early days of United States independence) that connect colonialism in North America to colonialism elsewhere. While such a critique is implicit in my reading of Anaya, I also question the colonial relationship between ancestors of present-day Mexican-Americans and Native Americans of the Southwest; as I've been arguing

way"(48). Serving in Vietnam makes him a conqueror; in Joe's and his people's self-conception, they are the victims, not the invaders, and so Joe's actions make him less authentic. Anaya thus suggests that actions can determine one's ethnic make-up: one can become less Indian, but then return to Indian ways (after a cleansing). What seems to be most important is presence on the pueblo land. Other young Indians leave and become the attorneys who support Dominic's plan to buy pueblo water; though they bring with them outsiders' ways, they are welcomed back into the community. Upon his eventual return to the pueblo to protest this plan, his outsider status matters again for Joe. The community sees that he brings with him impurities of the war: "Joe had been to a place of war, the place called Nam.... They knew he was troubled. He was not yet cleansed of the evil spirits of Nam"(185). The in-group will let Joe back in, but slowly: "it would take time before he reentered the circle of the pueblo"(186).

Joe's late return to pueblo politics robs him of any credibility with the tribal council, and he begins to doubt his own identity. His dreams of Vietnam frighten him, but more importantly, his reflections on being mixed-blood remind him of his actions in the war. Whereas Anaya's Chicano characters don't reflect on the taking of New Mexico by Spanish forces (which included Spaniards, mestizos, Indians), Joe does: "Spanish blood and Indian blood mixed in Joe, as it had in people for hundreds of years along the Río Grande. He was a Santo Domingo man, but in him ran the blood of the conquistadors, the old Spanish blood of the conquerors of his people"(187). Joe's language consistently positions him as the Indian despite his mother's bloodlines: "*They* took *our* food and women"(187; emphasis mine). Being mixed-blood does not make it

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throughout this chapter, Anaya gives evidence of this relationship without analyzing how it might affect his political message. Fernández Olmos' interpretation is also watered down by this omission.

possible (or perhaps necessary) for Joe to consider himself more than Indian. And like Abrán in his defensiveness of his Chicano identity, Joe has always had to endure barbs for being Indian, even from Mexican children to whom he was related: "why did it matter that he had Spanish blood in him? ... [T]he Mexican kids used to tease him and he would fight.... [H]is mother would clean him up and say, 'Don't fight, Remember, they are your cousins'"(188). Joe's mother imagines the kind of solidarity Joe later feels with the Vietnamese man, and her idealism certainly undergirds Joe's friendship with Abrán. Still, Joe seems ill-equipped to accept the significance of her genealogy of the Calabasa family; he sticks to his Indian identity instead of seeing himself as hybrid in any important way: "*They* took *our* food and women."

At best, Joe's Vietnam experience gives him insight into "conquering" (detached from any specific historical or cultural identity, such as Spaniard or American) as the abstract force responsible for waste and pestilence: "But what the hell, isn't that what all conquerors do? ... Didn't we take the women of our Nam brothers?"(187) He identifies with the conquerors not because he considers himself part Spanish (though that would complicate Anaya's depiction of Chicano presence in New Mexico), but because he has experienced conquest himself. The experience jolts him out of his desire to be a U.S. Marine, but he also disassociates himself from his pueblo. For much of Alburquerque, then, Joe drifts about detached from his roots (which should help shape his identity), and the novel leads us to pity this unnatural position. Eventually, of course, Joe reintegrates himself with his home, though his insights into conquest advance no further. As Indian, Mexican, citizen, soldier and postmodern drifter, Joe Calabasa could potentially offer a historical perspective the novel lacks. Instead, Anaya relegates him to the role of proving

platitudes about the value of returning to one's own home and re-connecting to one's land. Joe promises his friends, "I'm going to pay attention to the old men, get back to the ceremonies and dances"(292). The writer Ben Chavez, ever Anaya's surrogate, thinks "Joe was finding his way back to the circle of his people ... just as Abrán and Lucinda had found each other again"(292).[12] In other words, even in this occasionally very political novel, the main Indian character (Joe) performs much the same function as its Chicano protagonist. In a novel so concerned with correcting past erasures through a new genealogy of the Southwest, we might expect the figure of the Native American (Pueblo in this case) to offer some perspective. The Indians of New Mexico have their own history of settlement, displacement, retrenchment and survival, a history full of conflicts with Spanish, Mexican and Anglo groups. How is it, then, that we get so little sense of this through Joe Calabasa? Or rather, what is the payoff for Anaya in not pursuing this path?

The point in highlighting Anaya's incomplete genealogy in Alburquerque is not to wish his book were a different book, not to assert that all texts must be about certain issues and themes, and certainly not to scold the book for not offering a certain kind of critique. It is, however, to trace out the very selective genealogy performed by a modern Chicano forefather, to evaluate what Chicano writers and their readers have wanted to remember and forget.[13] As an object of textual study, Alburquerque belongs not just with other Chicano works so that one might study "Chicano" cultural issues, but with other

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[12] Here again, Anaya uses the figure of the circle to establish integrity and wholeness for his Indians and Chicanos, which his Anglos lack.

[13] I use the word "modern" here to indicate Anaya belongs to the generation of Chicano activists and writers who have become active since the 1960s. For a re-evaluation of a Chicana literary ancestor from the 19th century, see José F. Aranda, Jr., "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies," American Literature 70.3, 551-579.

texts of Westward and Northward expansion, imperialism, and the postcolonial world. With his strong focus on historical losses suffered by Mexican-Americans and relatively light coverage of Anglo and (non-Mexican) Indian identities, Anaya attempts to root Abrán Gonzalez in the New Mexican ground. To indigenize is to assert not merely a prior claim. After all, Joe's Indian ancestors also have a claim (prior to his Mexican ancestors). With his personal genealogy, Frank Dominic tries to assert a very old claim to the land based on the actions of the Spanish conquistadors, but claims deriving from conquest are precisely what Alburquerque's political content criticizes. The Spanish presence is invalidated on moral, ethical, and spiritual grounds. Beyond the claims of occupying a place first, Anaya posits indigeneity as both a proper way of holding land (to possess and practice a spiritual connection to it) and as a form of guilt-free subjectivity.

Ultimately, there may be no satisfactory alternative to Anaya's depiction of Abrán, which relies on mythologizing Indian presence, both in establishing Abrán's blood-based historical priority and the importance of place. As a form of critical resistance to Anglo domination, Anaya's critical genealogy reveals just part of the intricate pattern of inter-group relations in New Mexico. Perhaps some part of the narrative will always be missing, some part of identity always shifting. Critical genealogy as described by Castronovo and practiced by Anaya can go only so far, for as soon as a narrative of exclusion is told, it hardens with its own exclusions in place and must be fractured again. Castronovo says of African American writings, "these elided and dispossessed accents reverberate throughout the structure of national narrative, casting doubts on whether that narrative can be told ever again in coherent fashion"(Castronovo 30). The imagery of reverberation suggests a shaking of

foundations, a perpetual tearing apart of stories and monuments, a call for principled incoherence that will never settle. Inasmuch as Anaya's Alburquerque is a finished product, a published novel, it ultimately coheres around a blooded and fixed notion of Chicano identity. I would suggest, however, that reading this and other novels together continually shifts and destabilizes those national and "elided" narratives.

CHAPTER 3

'Kin to nobody:' The Disruption of Genealogy in Larry McMurtry's Lonesome Dove

Like the beginning of Rudolfo Anaya's Alburquerque, the epigraph to Larry McMurtry's 1985 novel Lonesome Dove is symptomatic of the intriguing challenges to interpretation this book offers. McMurtry follows the dedication page with a quotation from T.K. Whipple's Study Out the Land: "All America lies at the end of the wilderness road, and our past is not a dead past, but still lives in us. Our forefathers had civilization inside themselves, the wild outside. We live in the civilization they created, but within us the wilderness still lingers. What they dreamed, we live, and what they lived, we dream."[1] Right away, McMurtry wants us to know his novel concerns America writ large. He indicates that his individuals, groups, and families will stand in for the nation, or at least a certain conception of that nation. In a way, this move is too predictable to be as bold as the opening "All America" might imply. After all, the reader of westerns may be familiar with their status in United States culture as the repositories of the myth of the frontier, one of our oldest origins myths, and therefore may expect that any novel set in the west, especially the "old west" (of the late 19th century), will somehow be "about" America. An academic reader might think of Richard Slotkin's work on how important frontier narratives including "western" novels and films have reflected and helped shape the nation's consciousness.[2]

However, someone reading with a more critical eye—someone skeptical that the McMurtry who wrote the bitter Horseman, Pass By could be writing a typical western,

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[1] Larry McMurtry, Lonesome Dove (New York: Pocket Books, 1985) n.p.

perhaps, or someone familiar with minority discourse analysis—will ask the contentious but nonetheless pertinent question, "Who is this we?"[3] Does this "we" include Native Americans, for example, or even women, or anyone else who might be considered beyond the pale of the "civilization" spoken of? McMurtry does not accept the statement at face value and expects his readers to find it troubling. Given Lonesome Dove's depiction of multiple groups and families which disintegrate rather than cohere, I would argue that McMurtry thematizes the failure of any sort of "we" to hold together and thus criticizes the very possibility of any novel, western or otherwise, to narrate a coherent version of the nation. Rather than offering a genealogy by which readers might trace their heritage back through their nation's history, McMurtry disrupts and confounds genealogy. Russ Castronovo makes a similar argument in describing the dissonance between national history and citizens' disruptive memories:

> National narrative, once assumed as the site of cohesion, can be seen to fissure into sites of contestation, exclusion and repression. "Adding story to story" leads not to one larger story, but to dispersed histories that stand in uneasy relation to one another. As Homi Bhabha argues, "national memory is always the site of hybridity of histories and the displacement of narratives." (6)

Lonesome Dove is far from a "site of cohesion," depicting instead the attempt to narrate a nation (to create a community with the name of "America") as fraught not only with the exclusion of various "others," but also with confusion about the value of community

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[2] See particularly Richard Slotkin, Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993) and Regeneration Through Violence (1973; New York: Harper Perennial, 1996).

[3] This moment should recall the by-now familiar scene in our culture of the destruction of our assumptions about minority acquiescence to the totality of American culture, the moment captured when Eddie Murphy's Tonto replies to the Lone Ranger's desperate, "we're surrounded" with "what do you mean, 'we,' kemosabe?"

itself. McMurtry's version of the western also implicitly criticizes Western narratives whose versions of America are not so critically self-aware of their own exclusions or the limits of their possibility.

As I argued in Chapter one, Western Literature as a field has never simply supported the ideology of imperialism nor blindly underwritten the legacy of conquest, to use Patricia Limerick's phrase. The field, including exemplary authors like McMurtry, has never accepted the simple "West as America" equation found in popular thought and in some genre westerns. By examining McMurtry's critique of how groups, particularly families, try to organize and maintain their identities, I hope to show that he invalidates the possibility that any coherent "we" that might represent America has inherited the legacy of the pioneers, or even their dreams. He uses the elements of western myth and the familiar "trail-drive" structure,[4] but only to critique the romantic viewpoint of those western stories that unproblematically present a homogeneous version of American history, where gender roles are constant, and after the "forefathers" found America by eliminating "the Other, there are no more crises of national identity, for the borders have been fixed.

In Lonesome Dove, McMurtry shares the concerns of minority writers like Rudolfo Anaya and Leslie Silko with questioning the narration of the nation. Homi Bhabha writes that "minority discourse" "contests genealogies of 'origin' that lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority. Minority discourse acknowledges the status of national culture—and the people—as a contentious, performative

[4] According to Frank Gruber's identification of typical western plots, Lonesome Dove includes elements of the Ranch story (of which the trail-drive is a variation), Empire story (due to its scope), Outlaw story (the Blue Duck and Jake Spoon sub-plots), and the Marshall story (though this is view only nostalgically). See Cawelti, 61-2.

space"(Bhabha 157). A critical genealogy of America (as defined by Castronovo 9) should not only examine the challenges posed by minority discourse, but also analyze the performance of cultural supremacy implied by Bhabha's words. While some of the characters in Lonesome Dove may appeal to a superiority of culture (at least Call believes he is superior), and the Hat Creek outfit certainly thinks of itself as attaining a symbolic "historical priority" by driving the first cattle into Montana, McMurtry uses the failure to cohere of groups and families to reveal fault lines in the national myth of origins that is the western. Of course, McMurtry is not a minority, nor are most of his characters, but his novel nonetheless fulfills Bhabha's description of "postcolonial perspectives," which "intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic 'normality' to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples"(Bhabha 171).[5] McMurtry's narration of the disruptions of group and family structure de-naturalizes the "we" of the book's epigram; if that "we" represents anything in the context of McMurtry's narrative, its identity is difficult to ascertain. If any readers see themselves and their own view of nation or people in Lonesome Dove, they are likely mistaken.

Lonesome Dove represents a sort of turning point in McMurtry's career, belonging as it does to a genre whose conventions he fought against in his earlier fiction and non-fiction. Unlike his first novel, Horseman, Pass By, which sought to expose the folly of clinging to old ideas of the West based on inaccurate mythologies, Lonesome Dove focuses on the stereotypical "Old West" itself. In writing a novel that hews so closely to the genre western as practiced by Max Brand, Zane Grey, and Louis L'Amour,

[5] As I attempt to show in Chapter 2 on Anaya, Russ Castronovo makes many of the same points; not coincidentally, he relies heavily on the work of Bhabha but applies his critical genealogy to different

McMurtry takes the great risk of becoming that which he despises.[6] McMurtry has clung steadfastly to the notion that little quality fiction has come out of the western United States, and his enmity for the popular writers of generic westerns remains strong: "The overwhelming popularity of utterly ridiculous pulp fiction is a matter to give one pause"(Sacagawea's Nickname 109). Indeed, the influence of genre westerns is such that they dominate popular conceptions of both the history of the Old West and the literature of the western United States. That is, the imagined West they present, with images of manly heroes, sometimes savage, sometimes noble, but always vanishing Indians, and few women, blocks not just popular understanding of the history of the settling of the United States, but also the ability of serious fiction to communicate any other view of the West. To attempt to reiterate the themes of Horseman, Pass By via the form of the western itself would prove daunting, but McMurtry adapts a popular form in order to address its internal contradictions and ridiculousness.

Arguably, Lonesome Dove fails to work as McMurtry would wish, which only proves his contention that the "West that was ... and the land that is" pale in the nation's imagination next to "the West that even the most accurate scholarship can't do a thing about"(Sacagawea's Nickname 13), the west of popular mythology, advertising, political rhetoric, and pulp fiction. Instead of reading his novel as ironically commandeering the genre's stale formulae, many readers (and the 1989 made-for-TV adaptation of the novel garnered McMurtry even more readers) embraced a successful writer's giving in to the power of the old stories. As McMurtry would later write,

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national narratives. See Castronovo, 6-9.

[6] One thinks of Star Trek's Dr. Spock (speaking from within the space version of horse opera) commenting, "Only Nixon could go to China."

> I thought of Lonesome Dove as demythicizing, but instead it became a kind of American Arthuriad.... Readers don't want to know and can't be made to see how difficult and destructive life in the Old West really was. Lies about the West are more important to them than truths, which is why the popularity of the pulpers—Louis L'Amour particularly—has never dimmed. (Walter Benjamin 55)[7]

Clearly, "accurate scholarship" on McMurtry's own work should illustrate how he ironizes and demythicizes "lies" from the old west. More importantly, though, the highly romantic popular reception of Lonesome Dove reveals what is at stake in it or any novel that confronts a nation's most powerful myths: the underpinnings of American (U.S.) identity and all that attends it (including domestic and foreign policy and the export of U.S. culture).

In this chapter, then, I seek to show how one well-known white western writer has used icon and genre to destabilize the meaning of words like "us" and "them" when used to describe the people of the United States; read in the context of non-white writing from the U.S. West, McMurtry's work contributes to the re-writing of our nation's narrative of itself. I argue that we can not use Lonesome Dove—or, given its lessons, any other western story—as support for reading the larger narrative of the conquest of America as the United States' myth of origins. I read the disruption of genealogy in Lonesome Dove—the pointlessness and even inability to maintain or trace family, national, or ethnic ties—as a purposeful disruption of the nation's ability to narrate a coherent story of itself.

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[7] Mark Busby comments on McMurtry's reaction to the reception: "McMurtry was surprised by the powerful romantic reaction to Lonesome Dove. While he had set out to debunk the myth, he discovered instead that many readers filtered out the anti-mythic material and responded only to the powerful romance of the western legends"(Larry McMurtry and the West 237). Michael Kowalewski blames the film adaptation for much of the romanticizing: "Though McMurtry refused to glorify the West... his antimythic efforts served only to reinforce the legendary aspects of the film. The more credible his characters were, the more they seemed larger than life"("Introduction" 3).

The introduction of the Hat Creek outfit in Chapter One presents us with many of the vexing problems of the epigraph, problems I take to signify McMurtry's interest in troubling group identity formation. Gus McCrae is a former Texas Ranger, now largely retired, who served Texas most of his adult life. Yet when McMurtry introduces him, the state of his birth is mentioned first and placed in the context of how inhospitable the Lonesome Dove sun can be: "a hell for pigs and Tennesseans"(3). After describing Gus as the half-owner of the cattle company, McMurtry further cements Gus's place of birth as determinative of his identity when he calls Dillard Brawley "a fellow Tennessean"(5). The description makes it seem that Gus would prefer to think of himself this way; he claims kinship ("fellow") with another man based on state of birth. When Gus drinks, his pleasant feelings are "foggy and cool as a morning in the Tennessee hills"(7). The characterization of Gus as a Tennessean makes us wonder how long one needs to live in Texas to become a Texan, or how much service to the state one must perform to become "naturalized." Additionally, McMurtry presents Gus as someone for whom origins—even those based simply on state of birth—matter to the exclusion of experiences. Readers will find very little in the book to help them explain what a Tennessean is or how one acts, but will find Gus as Texan as anyone.

McMurtry depicts the setting in racialistic and nationalistic terms, adding to the troubling difficulty of becoming naturalized. All Lonesome Dove citizens know the border between Texas and Mexico demarcates national identity; moreover, they evidently are prepared to police that identity in case of threat. When Gus considers shooting a snake, he reconsiders due to its potential effect on the community: "Everybody in town would hear it and conclude either that the Comanches were down from the plains or the

Mexicans up from the river," and if they were drunk or unhappy, "they would probably run out into the street and shoot a Mexican or two"(4). While Gus remains a Tennessean, the more obvious markers of race allow him to be included among the (white) citizens of the town, who can tell (simplistically speaking) who does not belong.

McMurtry tells another story to establish racial and national borders, this time regarding the "one white barber in Lonesome Dove," Dillard Brawley. Brawley is shot by an unhappy vaquero he was trying to help; the subsequent amputation of his leg causes him to lose his voice, then his customers. McMurtry writes, "in time many of his customers drifted off to the Mexican barber"(6). Presumably, they have previously gone to Brawley under the presumption that the Anglo barber is superior to the Mexican one, or that it is proper that Anglos give their patronage to other Anglos. McMurtry finishes the episode with a telling joke that establishes Call as intolerant, but more importantly sets up further racial divisions: "Call even used the Mexican, and Call didn't trust Mexicans or barbers"(6). We must infer a stereotype of Mexicans as untrustworthy as the necessary anchor of this joke that also takes in barbers. Racial and national characteristics clearly form a large part of identity for Call and other characters.

A final example of the shaky ground on which McMurtry establishes the cohesion of his Hat Creek outfit comes in Bolivar, the Mexican cook (who, unlike the Mexican barber, at least is humanized with a name). McMurtry establishes Bol as a cantankerous former bandit who rudely and loudly rings the dinner bell at the ranch, causing Gus to quip, "I figure he's calling bandits"(12). Like the joke about the Mexican barber, this one depends for its humor on the character of Bol himself; were he not actually a former bandit, it would make no sense. While joking, Gus establishes the possibility of Bol's

treachery (as in the case of the barber) and describes his old gang in derogatory racial terms that compound the quality of slipperiness or trickery: "Why, you remember that greasy bunch he had"(12).

Yet, as so often is the case with stereotyping, the joke reveals more about Gus and the outfit than it does about Bolivar. If the story of the town's unified reaction to Comanches or Mexicans invading (4) introduces a form of group cohesion, that cohesion doesn't always hold. The international border is quite permeable in Lonesome Dove, with Mexicans raiding north and white Americans raiding south, and both groups ignoring the laws of both countries.[8] The identity established by Gus, Call, and the groups they represent (Lonesome Dove, Hat Creek, the Rangers, Texas) must be called into question when the former lawmen break the law so frequently and as a matter of course. Gus goes so far as to base Bolivar's very presence and utility at the ranch on his questionable ethics: "In the business we're in, it don't hurt to know a few horsethieves, as long as they're Mexicans"(12). The "foreign" identity of the other horse thieves enables the relationship to work. Far from being innocent of Bol's previous lawlessness (which should cause them to act as they do when they catch Jake Spoon with horse thieves), they profit by it, using the convenience of the nearby border to hide not only from their own country's laws, but also from their own consciences. The lawmen in Lonesome Dove are far more slippery or "greasy" than any Mexican bandits. Their lawlessness calls into

[8] James F. Brooks has argued that the process of stealing cattle across the U.S.-Mexico border helped capitalism flower and new inter-ethnic communities form. His key literary examples are Cormac McCarthy's western novels; McMurtry does not much develop the Mexican side of this relationship. See Brooks, "Served Well by Plunder: La Gran Ladronería and Producers of History Astride the Río Grande," American Quarterly 52.1 (March 2000), 23-58.

question their very identity, and if famous Texas Rangers don't exemplify the values of the "civilization" they fought to protect, how can anyone?[9]

One of the United States's treasured stories about its national character involves the naturalization of citizens from all over the world—one can become American (even if there are actually a lot of stipulations on that identity based on color, religion, time spent in the country, etc.). But in Lonesome Dove, as I argue above, Gus is not even a naturalized Texan; in his mind, he remains a Tennessean. In one further troubling episode from the early, establishing chapters of the novel, McMurtry further denaturalizes the narrative of how one becomes American. As much as Gus may cross the nation's borders to engage in activity his nation forbids, when it comes to establishing national identity, Gus is a stickler for origins. When Bolivar wants to show his independence, he confusedly comments that "Gen-eral Lee freed the slaves"(17), thus launching Gus's strange comments on nationality. First Gus corrects Bol (skipping over the fact that Bol's comment not only compares himself to a freed slave, despite Gus's attempts to "master" him, but also figuratively makes him an American, subject to such emancipations). Pea Eye tries to point out how the emancipation didn't apply to Bol: "He just freed Americans"(17); his comment shows that Pea Eye sees Deets and other freed slaves as Americans. Pea Eye sees Mexicans as needing freedom, but as ineligible for it as non-Americans. The dominance of Anglos over Mexicans in Texas since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (a theme in some Mexican-American literature) is implicit here, but the men's confusion over how a historical act might affect or be affected by nationality

[9] McMutry's thematization of the conflict between those who bring civilization and those who come after recalls classic formulations of the frontier going back to Hector St. John de Crevecoeur: the first wave is often unfit (too violent and uncouth) to live with those who come after. While McMurtry has Call and Gus reflect on this familiar paradox, I think it adds to rather than resolves the complications of who belongs.

gives one little faith in the clarity of national identities or the standards that determine them.

Gus snorts, "Who Abe Lincoln freed was a bunch of Africans, no more American than Call here"(17). To paraphrase my earlier questions about Gus's Texanness, if Call and the African-American Deets are not American, who is? Call defends himself: "I'm as American as the next"(17), a claim Gus shoots down based on Call's birth in Scotland. Apparently, in his view, being born in Tennessee or Scotland, or being descended from those who were born in Africa prevents one from ever obtaining another identity. One's origin determines one's fate to Gus. Of course, Gus's words are hogwash (and only half-jokingly offered, though since most of the jokes in the book anchor themselves to some stereotype, I think it accurate to call these Gus's actual thoughts), but they fit into a long line of national narratives that establish a national "we" based on lineage, or race, or on some other artificially drawn border. Gus does not analyze how the migration of populations might affect issues of nationality, thus ignoring a major factor in North and South American history. Even though he is generally sympathetic to Deets and Call, if not to Bolivar, Gus's comments constitute in-group snobbery, a fetishization of origins that allows no change or escape. Gus effectively narrates a story about an America whose citizens are defined by their birth and whose borders are permanently closed to outsiders. As he did with the too-bold-and-romantic-to-be-true epigraph about a "we" who dream of a homogeneous past, McMurtry makes Gus's arguments boldly ridiculous. Gus's arguments are analogous to Call's stature, bold and imposing beyond their true measure.

Given these fractious negotiations, we must hesitate to treat the Hat Creek Outfit's adventures as an "American" story as both the definition of American and the cohesiveness of the outfit are unsettled. After establishing uncertain group relationships, McMurtry launches into his trail-drive plot. Before setting out and along the way, the outfit picks up new members, often constituting itself by disintegrating other families. The O'Brien brothers have left Ireland to find their fortunes, but end up lost in Mexico, where Call and Gus rescue them during a cattle-stealing expedition. Far from being recruited for the trail drive, the brothers basically just tag along until they are accepted: "It seemed the Irishmen *were* part of the outfit, though"(194). McMurtry's emphasis on "were" highlights the outfit's shaky grasp on who belongs. Jasper Fant gets hired simply by wandering through Lonesome Dove at the right time. Call visits neighboring farms to find young boys interested in working for him, like the Spettle boys: "So desperate were their family circumstances that Call was almost hesitant to take them... the family was about to starve out"(176). Jimmy and Ben Rainey join despite their mother's hating to part with them: "I'd rather sell pigs than hire out boys"(180). While it might seem that Call is making the Hat Creek Outfit into a new family for these young men, his own detachment from his son Newt (about which more below) makes this unlikely.

The Hat Creek Outfit also loses members along the way. Sean O'Brien's death by snakebite early in the drive establishes the seriousness of the enterprise. Jake Spoon abandons Lorena and the drive to gamble; Call and Gus end up hanging their old friend as a horse thief. Most importantly, Bolivar the cook grows homesick and resigns after an accident he causes while daydreaming of home ruins the outfit's wagon. Bol's departure, like the outfit's earlier discourse on Americanness, provides another occasion for

McMurtry to sketch the tenuous connections people have for family and community. On the one hand, Bol misses his daughters and his country: "The fall convinced him he had lived long enough with Americans. They were not his *compañeros*. Most of his *compañeros* were dead, but his country wasn't dead, and in his village there were a few men who liked to talk about the old days when they had spent all their time stealing Texas cattle"(345). McMurtry seems to appeal to Bol's nationalism and nostalgia for his country's past, but Bol's actions reveals the limits of national feeling. Bol has been living in Texas with the Americans for a long time and not visited his wife and daughters very frequently. Riding away, he feels foolish for letting a mistake drive him back home: "He didn't miss his wife that much.... He felt a little bitter as he rode away. The *Capitán* should not have let him go"(347). Bol's own interest in returning to his homeland (the kind of homecoming Anaya romanticizes in Alburquerque) pales next to being comfortable: "He didn't really like the Americanos, but he was used to them"(347). Though the Americans and Bol mark him as different for being Mexican, ignoring the permeability of the border, habit has inured him to Lonesome Dove; Mexico now means mostly memories to Bol. In the end, his "return to Mexico had been a trial and a disappointment"(943). His family has dispersed, and his wife drives him away, so he returns to where he felt comfortable, even though he no longer has the cowboys to cook for. By the time Call returns, Bol scarcely remembers himself: "He grew lonely, and could not remember who he had been"(943). McMurtry uses Bol's wanderings (and what we might call his incomplete assimilation into the U.S.) not as a gauge of the relative strengths of Mexican or U.S. nationalism, but as testament to the slipperiness of

national narrative's grasp. Bol has fond nostalgia for Mexico and loathing for life in the United States, but he returns to Lonesome Dove anyway.

McMurtry presents other disconnected families through the plot lines of July Johnson and Clara Allen. July's wife Elmira leaves him for a previous lover while July chases Gus and Call's old friend Jake Spoon. A former prostitute, Elmira loathes her settled married life down to the most basic rituals: "She seldom did eat with them. It bothered July a good deal"(253). Instead, she sits above them on the loft swinging her legs, an activity that reveals her flightiness and flouts the conventions that order July's life: "It was a thing out of the ordinary, and July didn't like for things to be out of the ordinary.... [H]e looked upon common practices as rules that should be obeyed"(253). Elmira disregards common practices and lacks what July would consider common moral principles like affection for her family; their relationship casts further doubts on the cohesion of family: "She had just married out of fright—she didn't want him or the child either"(258). Almost as soon as McMurtry introduces the Johnsons, he splits them up, with July heading to Texas with stepson Joe Boot to chase Jake, Elmira leaving for Kansas to find Dee Boot, and Roscoe the deputy subsequently chasing July to tell him his wife has left.

July's plot line is best characterized as a dispersal or dissemination. His family is introduced together in Fort Smith, Arkansas and quickly disperses. Elmira joins up with two rough buffalo hunters, gives birth to July's baby at Clara Allen's, abandons the baby, and finally dies on the plains, presumably from an Indian attack. Joe Boot travels with July to find Jake at his mother's urging (she doesn't want him or her newborn). After passing up the chance to join Wilbarger's crew, Joe dies at the hands of Blue Duck.

Roscoe chases after July in a vain attempt to preserve the Johnson family, nearly finds a wife (Chapter 37), and picks up a surrogate daughter by rescuing Janey from an abusive older man. Not surprisingly, Janey lacks a stable family. She remembers her name because her mother called her Janey, but now lives with "old Sam," who, she says, "give Bill some skunk pelts for me"(364). Family is practically an alien concept to Janey; she claims "I ain't really his anyway"(364), questioning Sam's bartering for her, but seeming by this denial to legitimize her relationship with Bill. Sam abuses her sexually, a perversion of order that confuses Roscoe (whose idea of normal family relations derives from July) as he listens: "July had always cautioned him about interfering in family disputes.... Roscoe didn't know if it was even a family dispute that he was hearing"(362). Janey seems to be Sam's slave, "though of course slavery had been over for years, and in any case the girl was white"(362). Janey kills Sam and joins Roscoe, forming another unorthodox family. July and Roscoe later try to leave Janey in Fort Worth, but she follows them: "it was clear to everyone that Janey was along for the trip"(456). This reconstituted family holds no more promise than July's old family; all of them but July are murdered by Blue Duck. Elmira and Dee Boot fare no better.

One can attempt to read the failure of this grouping to cohere as a lesson about the hardships of the West, and it tells us at least that much. McMurtry makes July too naïve to recognize what Elmira is, but also idealistic to abandon his belief in the standards his family should conform to. The inexperienced Joe and Roscoe are incompetent to manage a family group or survive when faced with difficulties like Blue Duck. Elmira is too stubborn to stay with her family, and Dee Boot too selfish even to belong to a family. Their group misfortunes clearly make Lonesome Dove an "anti-western." More

importantly, I would argue that the dispersal of July's friends and family members compounds McMurtry's disavowal of the unifying power of genealogy (and the less familial connections that form communities).

In the end, McMurtry makes July and Clara (and July's newborn son Martin) the closest thing to a working, generative family in the novel. July ends up living and working with Clara Allen while she raises Martin, yet even their makeshift family has a shaky foundation. McMurtry portrays their many hardships not merely as illustrative of the pioneer's hard life, but as inhibitive of life itself. Clara has been married to Bob, an unimaginative man with conventional beliefs (like July) and few talents. McMurtry gives Clara some unconventional attitudes to match her with her old lover, Gus. For instance, Clara and Gus both express an affinity for Indian ways of life that shock Bob and Call, respectively: "[Bob] could not believe he had married a woman who wanted to live like an Indian. He had worked hard to give her a respectable life, and yet she said things like that"(651). Bob has proven to be an ineffectual horse trader and trainer, and a horse's kick incapacitates him. Now Clara mourns the loss of her three sons, her husband's injury, the misjudgments of her past, and her family's bleak future.

The loss of the boys hurts particularly since the Allens expected them to grow into young men to help on the farm. Clara may love her two girls, but boys would make the farm more successful and carry on the family name (Bob's last name, that is). She imagines Bob's desire for male offspring even transcends his injury, as she watches the paralyzed man's penis become erect: "He couldn't talk or turn himself, and he would never beat another horse, most likely, but he still wanted a boy. The stem let her know it, night after night"(655). This one sign of life in Bob provokes and taunts Clara, who

imagines conceiving another child with him: "I could go through it one more time... and maybe it would be a boy. Though she had borne five children, she sometimes felt barren"(655). For a moment, Clara's need to generate new life, coupled with her sadness over the loss of the boys, overwhelms her understanding of what she still has. She is not barren, of course, but McMurtry's characterization emphasizes her sense of her failure to produce an heir and, on the broad level of the novel's epigraph, the impossibility of her life and story to generate any symbolic descendents. Despite raising two girls (and, soon, July's son) and displaying an admirable vitality, Clara serves not as exemplar of the "pioneer spirit" but of "how difficult and destructive life in the Old West really was"(Walter Benjamin 55) (though as suggested above, many readers have admired her and the novel without seeing McMurtry's demystification).

When Elmira arrives at Clara's and gives birth to July's son, she is far from her husband and still fleeing: "It was July's and she didn't want to have anything to do with anything of July's"(668). She bases her loathing on July's part in fathering the boy, disregarding her own genetic contribution. Her buffalo hunter companion Zwey (who is addled) wonders at the abandonment: "'I wisht she'd brought the baby,' Zwey said. 'I always wanted us to have one.' The way he said it struck Luke as curious. It was almost as if Zwey thought the baby was his"(671). So Elmira leaves the Allens with a man who thinks he is her husband and the baby's father, in search of ex-husband Dee Boot, with Zwey insisting they are married. When Elmira discovers Dee is in jail and about to be executed, she leaves town with the buffalo hunters; another family fails to be united.

Unlike Elmira, Clara reacts to the birth with love and concern, but her taking Martin in creates another mixed family. Because of her need to feel productive (though

she has not created Martin), she shares Martin with Bob: "I guess we got us a boy, Bob"(669). As when she saw Bob's erection, she imagines this baby will reverse their familial losses and Bob's injury: "the thought was in her head that if he saw her with a child it might make a difference. Bob might see it, think it was theirs"(669). Yet even as she shares "their" baby with her husband, Clara must depend for assistance on her employee Cholo: "'If you see any goats next time you go to town, let's buy a couple.' Then she grew a little embarrassed. Sometimes she talked to Cholo as if her were her husband, and not Bob"(668).

The arrival of new life on the Allen farm brings a measure of joy to Clara, but a joy muted by her past disappointments and the circumstances of Martin's birth: "It was unnatural, she knew, for a mother to leave her child a day after it was born"(669). Clara will raise Martin as her own child, but always know the artificiality of the arrangement. When July arrives, he first attempts to rejoin Elmira. Her rejection of him further cements McMurtry's confounding of family cohesion: "'I guess we got our own family now,' July added. His heart was sinking so that his voice almost failed, for Ellie had not turned her head or given much more than a momentary sign of recognition"(702). Their family relations are so skewed that Clara must tell July about his own wife: "I don't think that woman wants you or the baby either"(709). She must also help the father-son relationship along: "I think it's time you took a look at him.... He's your boy"(715).

McMurtry slowly establishes the potential romance between July and Clara, but bases it less on passionate attraction (something we might read as organic) than on good sense. For example, Clara tries to use logic to claim Martin from July, knowing her relationship to the child is artificial: "I'm getting attached to Martin.... He ain't mine, but

He ain't your wife's anymore, either. Young things mainly belong to themselves"(710). Having been frustrated as wife and mother, she hesitates to get close to July, but by the time Gus and Call visit, July and Clara have something like a common law marriage: "'So do you aim to marry him?' 'No, that's one of the things I'm through with," Clara said.... Augustus chuckled. 'I hope you ain't contemplating an irregular situation"(769). July remains merely boarder and employee for a while, but slowly grows to love Clara. McMurtry gives this love subplot a stuttering pace. Just when July becomes ready to ask Clara about marriage (and he couches it in the conditional: "would you ever marry me?"(900)), she has grown ready to take another husband. Yet nothing flows naturally between them. Clara hates July's insensitivity and inarticulateness. July's romantic notions of love prevent him from managing the affair successfully. When Martin falls sick and Clara stays up all night in the sick room, July misses his chance to establish the intimacy of husband and wife. She scolds him: "I sat there all night in that room with your baby. Where were you?"(903) Though they seem destined for each other by the logic of the plot (because each has lost a spouse and would be better off married than alone), McMurtry defers their formally becoming a family. Clara promises an answer to July's proposal, but only after he suffers for a year (ostensibly for his insensitivity): "I'm not about to say now.... Ask me in a year"(904). Arguably, they already form a makeshift family just by living together, but it is difficult to imagine them as "our forefathers," or the family they create as bequeathing any legacy.

When readers of Lonesome Dove are tempted to see July and Clara's pulling together (or the Hat Creek Outfit's) through adversity as symbolic of "our" forefathers' struggles, or of "us" as a nation, they must remember the disruptions in family and group

structure as well. Call pulls young men from their families. Elmira leaves July Johnson in search of a previous lover, abandoning her son. July leaves his wife to track Jake Spoon and eventually loses his step-son, deputy, and wife (not to mention severing himself from his home and career). Clara loses her sons and husband and rejects July until a later date. If anything, the restlessness that drives the Hat Creek Outfit north (for no apparent reason, Gus argues) only unifies an unsettled group, in two senses: first, in that they are moving north (and losing members along the way at a regular pace), and second, in that their identity will not settle, will not become fixed, will not cohere into a "we" that Americans might find representative.

The supposed heroism of Gus and Call forms the basis for most "heroic" readings of Lonesome Dove. The epigraph from T.K. Whipple refers most directly to their actions: first as Texas Rangers who made Texas safe for Anglo settlers, second as ranchers who drove the first cattle to Montana. I've argued throughout this chapter that McMurtry's dissolution of families and groups distances readers from his characters and their potential legacy. As the main protagonists, Gus and Call are most likely to provide readers with their surrogate ancestors. However, McMurtry's depiction of these "heroes" debunks not only the transmissibility of their legacy (emphasizing dispersal of family over regeneration), but also the desirability of transmitting it.[10] Further, in setting Call's unwillingness to question his ideals and actions against Gus's consistent doubts about their past and present enterprises, McMurtry makes the pair too inconsistent to follow.

[10] Lonesome Dove does not give us much detail about how Call and Gus performed as Texas Rangers, except to make clear that their actions were applauded by the Anglo politicians and settlers. There is not much grist for a reading that emphasizes the Rangers' role in expanding the American Empire. At the same time, McMurtry acknowledges the racial politics of the Rangers' legacy (that Mexicans like Bol are still outsiders in Lonesome Dove) and, more importantly, demystifies these Rangers' heroic status, albeit in their capacity as ranchers. For a reading of a novel more attuned to the Rangers' role in empire, see José

Rather than depicting two possible models of heroism for the reader in search of national origins, he presents a complex relationship that cannot be comprehended by a simple narrative like Whipple's epigraph.

McMurtry establishes Call and Gus as the arbiters of law and order in their part of Texas. As larger than life figures within the world of the novel, they stand for more than themselves, but McMurtry consistently destabilizes their authority through Call's hypocrisy and Gus's philosophical self-doubt. After Gus, Call, and company rob their Mexican nemesis Pedro Flores, Jasper remarks, "If the Mexicans knew the Captain was gone they'd come and take back Texas"(175). McMurtry consistently makes characters like Jasper view the Texas Rangers' and later the Hat Creek Outfit's routing of Mexicans in Texas (formerly part of Mexico) a personal matter rather than a broad political one. The migration of Anglos into Texas and repulsion of Mexicans from it is presented not as the movement of empire (with the philosophy of Manifest Destiny and the strength of the U.S. military behind it), but as the work of individual men like Call and Gus. The skill and command of the Rangers combined with the completeness of their victory in Texas makes people on both sides of the border perceive individuals like Captain Call as heroic. Call himself views his life's battles (against various Native Americans and Mexicans) this way. Flores's death reminds him of his last victory as a Ranger: "Kicking Wolf had kept two companies of Rangers busy for twenty years.... [T]he death of Kicking Wolf meant the end of the Comanches, and thus the end of their real job"(183). Similarly, the loss of fellow rancher Flores, with whom he has illegally "exchanged" cattle and horses

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David Saldívar on Américo Paredes's George Washington Gómez in Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 36-56.

across the border for years, means the end of life on the border for Call: "We might as well go on to Montana.... The fun's over around here"(183).

Call and Gus have conflicting ideas about what they accomplished and what their legacy should be. Again, they tend to view their contribution to the nation in terms of individuals. When Call and Gus reflect on making Texas safe for bankers and other settlers, Gus emphasizes the ironies, putting distance between himself and his accomplishments as if he didn't mean to do what he did. The settled life makes Call similarly uncomfortable and bored, but he sticks close to the ideals behind his actions.

> "It's a funny life," Augustus said. "All these cattle and nine-tenths of the horses is stolen, and yet we was once respected lawmen. If we get to Montana we'll have to go into politics. You'll wind up governor if the dern place ever gets to be a state. And you'll spend all your time passing laws against cattle thieves."
>
> "I wish I could pass a law against you," Call said. (238)

Gus tries to analyze (in its sense of "to take apart") their role, pointing out the contradiction between their thievery and law enforcement. As always, Call relies on the strength of his convictions instead of questioning them; he tries to bully Gus into silence. The exchange is played for humor, but adds to McMurtry's critique of the transmissibility of this legacy.

McMurtry also uses the partners' exchanges about fighting Indians this way. Call believes in the reasons for his life's work, but McMurtry critiques the one-sidedness of Call's ideals and all that has derived from them. Before setting out on the drive to Montana, Call has a brief moment of self-doubt before deciding his actions are justified:

"He had quickly convinced himself it was necessary, this drive. Fighting the Indians had been necessary, if Texas was to be settled. Protecting the border was necessary, else the Mexicans would have taken south Texas back"(242). He doesn't know the reasons this drive is necessary, but hopes his "old sense of adventure" will return, "once they got beyond the settled country"(242). His thoughts suggest adventure itself—the feeling of a solitary individual—justifies all his actions and that socio-political reasons (protecting settlers in Texas) come later. Here again, McMurtry seems to perform what Homi Bhabha calls "minority discourse," for in dramatizing encounters that would be turned into national narrative by generations of writers and readers, he "contests genealogies of 'origin' that lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority"(Bhabha 157). Though Call does not analyze other historical possibilities (his justifications make his actions seem inevitable), McMurtry's words at least provoke readers to consider that the Indians themselves had priority in Texas, that Texas had been part of the Mexican empire before the American one, that the conflicts at the heart of our myths of origins about the West were not historically inevitable but willed and performed.

During a visit to San Antonio, Call tries to absolve himself of responsibility for settlers' founding towns all over Texas. This is a strange move, since Call does take pride in his work and (as seen above) considers it to have been necessary precisely so settlers could live there. Even though both men display anxiety about their legacy during a bar fight with young men who don't recognize them, Gus still critiques their role in aiding the beginnings of Anglo settlement:

> "The dern people are making towns everywhere. It's our fault, you know."

"It ain't our fault and it ain't our business, either," Call said. "People can do what they want."

"Why, naturally, since we chased out the Indians and hung all the good bandits," Augustus said. "Does it ever occur to you that everything we done was probably a mistake?" (349)

Call certainly respects himself and considers the Indians and presumably Mexican bandits beneath his notice as beyond the borders of civilization: "Nobody in their right mind would want the Indians back, or the bandits either"(349). Through it all, McMurtry makes clear that both men are racing civilization as white, yet if Gus cannot conceive of what Texas would be like were Indians or Mexicans still in control (he doesn't know how to name what he supposes to be alternative to civilization), he does convincingly argue against the form of civilization Anglos have established in San Antonio: "I think we spent our best years fighting on the wrong side"(358).

Interestingly, McMurtry couches part of their discussion in this chapter not just in terms of historical legacy, but familial heritage. As he imagines himself pushed out like the Indians (a historical irony since he is responsible for removing the Indians), Gus states, "If I can find a squaw I like, I'm apt to marry her. The thing is, if I'm going to be treated like an Indian, I might as well act like one"(358). Ultimately, of course, Gus ends up dead in Montana and fathers no children. While arguing with Call about their responsibility for bringing civilization, Gus switches to the idea of Call's starting a family: "'Call, you ought to have married and had six or eight kids,' Augustus remarked. If he couldn't get anywhere with one subject he liked to move on to another"(350). Given McMurtry's concern with genealogy, Gus's new subject seems not "another" but

the same. Just as Call is reticent about begetting Anglo life on the plains, he shows no interest in starting a family or acknowledging his son Newt. Because Call considers his own sexuality a failing, admitting he visited Newt's prostitute mother Maggie would debase him. When the boy is born, Call stays with the Rangers (in which capacity he has not betrayed any of his ideals) rather than marrying Maggie. Her death completes his failure: "He knew at once that he had forever lost the chance to right himself, that he would never again be able to feel that he was the man he had wanted to be"(394). Through Call's heroic stature and hidden contradictions, McMurtry suggests failures in the United States's accounting of itself.

I find Newt significant in this regard. On one level, Newt is the ever-present reminder of Captain Call's fallibility: "The boy, growing up in the village, first with a Mexican family and later with the Hat Creek outfit, was a living reminder of his failure"(395). He serves a demystifying function. But in a novel so concerned with group identities, with creating a "we," Newt and his father also present the possibility of a family coming together. The mystery of Newt's father slowly unravels for him and the reader. Yet while the main plot threads are wrapped up—the cattle drive reaches Montana, though Call returns to Texas—the family will not cohere. Call's shame over visiting Newt's prostitute mother, combined with 17 years of neglecting his duty to Newt, prevent Call from telling Newt he is his father. Ken Davis has shown that the young protagonists of McMurtry's earliest novels (Horseman, Pass By, Leaving Cheyenne, and The Last Picture Show) are initiates poised on the threshold of maturity, ready for initiation into the adult world.[11] While Newt proves himself as a cowboy and makes

[11] Kenneth W. Davis, "Initiation Themes in McMurtry's Cowboy Trilogy," in Taking Stock: A Larry McMurtry Casebook, Ed. Clay Reynolds (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1989), 174-180.

headway towards being accepted by the men, McMurtry does not go the final yard and reintegrate the Call family as a family. Like July and Elmira and then Clara, they miss the connection, and Newt goes on without a father or his last name. If the Hat Creek outfit is somewhat more integrated after their acceptance of Newt's maturity, the final disavowal of familiar bonds between Call and Newt diminishes this unity.

Call makes but a few gestures towards admitting he fathered Newt. In one crucial episode, Call rescues Newt from a whipping by an Army officer. Call beats the man to a pulp as the rest look on, stunned: "Newt felt he might get sick just seeing the way the Captain punished the man"(739). On the one hand, it might appear that Call's overreaction shows his affection for his son, and Newt does ask, "Was it me?"(742), suspecting Call's protective feelings. Furthermore, if we read Call as heroic, this episode merely shows the limits to which Call will push himself and reasserts his "greatness." On the other hand, Call does not acknowledge that fatherly affection for Newt underlies the severity of his reaction to the whipping. In fact, he retreats behind his reserved façade by reasoning, "I hate a man that talks rude"(741). Either Call hides behind a false reason, or he acts openly to protect his son but cannot acknowledge their relationship with anything but inappropriate violence. In either case, Call does not form a familial bond with Newt. One can more convincingly claim the opposite, that Call's violence in service of his ideals prevents him from getting close to his son.

The episode would seem at least to bring Call and Newt closer. We might argue that receiving Call's horse, gun, and watch symbolically makes Newt his son (and New does know the truth by the end). Call certainly expects this effect, telling Clara, "I give him my horse"(931) and "I put more value on the horse"(931). Newt accepts the gifts,

but rejects any connection with the Captain or anyone. Since Newt will not accept the legacy of Call's violence and misplaced idealism, his legacy will instead be fatherlessness. When Pea Eye notes, "He acts like you're his kin," Newt replies, "No, I ain't kin to nobody in this world... I don't want to be. I won't be"(922). In direct contrast to the epigraph from Whipple, Newt declares a break from the past, a refusal of fathers and forefathers similar to that at the end of William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom. His refusal obviates any genealogy, whether of one's own family or one's nation.

The book ends instead with a focus on death (including Wanz's suicide), not the future (the old, not the "New(t)"), with the Captain stubbornly leaving his son in Montana to travel back to Texas in order to fulfill his promise to bury Gus there. Knowing the stakes of his refusal to acknowledge his son (and receiving a rebuke from Clara), Call comes close to establishing the ironic distance between himself and his past that Gus (and McMurtry) maintain. When a reporter tries to get a reaction for a story about Call's triumphant cattle drive ("They say you're a many of vision"), he reacts with weariness and sarcasm: "Yes, a hell of a vision"(939). After all the work he did in service of Texas and to establish a new life in Montana, he now thinks, "He had never felt that he had any home on the earth anyway. He remembered riding to Texas in a wagon when just a boy—his parents were already dead. Since them it had been mostly roaming"(942).

In the end, neither Gus nor Call has any recognized descendants. If these are meant to be "our" forefathers in a non-ironic sense, why does McMurtry leave them without children? But that is what McMurtry gives us in Lonesome Dove: an ironic epigraph about a unified "we" standing for America leading to a father's refusal to give his name to his son, and the son's absolute refusal to be kin to anyone. In his assault on

the romantic myths of the West, McMurtry forces us to reject those myths as our origins. Somewhat like Rudolfo Anaya, McMurtry critiques origins myths; both authors call for closer analysis of received wisdom about our national narratives. Where Anaya concerns himself with a reconnection to the earth that ends up reifying such myths, McMurtry deracinates his characters, leaving no recourse to a homelands or biological inheritance. Far from reifying the myth of the West, he attempts to assault its narratives and its very transmission. Taken together, the novels suggest not only the fragile grounds on which national (including ethnic) identities are founded, but also the ongoing contest over how those stories will be told.

CHAPTER 4

Two Ways of Coming Home: The Value of Origins in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine

In their novels Lonesome Dove and Love Medicine, Larry McMurtry and Louise Erdrich criticize the United States' legacy of conquest and its attendant myths. McMurtry focuses his critique on the old frontier myths and their transmission through generations of Americans; he suggests a break with genealogy, with tracing U.S. origins to the cowboys romanticized in so many western stories. Erdrich's work criticizes this legacy from the point of view of Ojibwa Indians living in North Dakota and Minnesota. As many critics have pointed out, she seems to advocate the value of family and community, at least for her Native American characters.[1] From the point of view of

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[1] A great deal of work has been done on Erdrich and especially Love Medicine. Most analysis of the novel takes notice of important themes like love, family, and Native American cultural survival. I will analyze some of this work in the context of my own concerns below, but as there is no space to address all the critics' articles in such depth, here I offer a brief survey of work devoted to Love Medicine. An early special issue of Studies in American Indian Literature features positive, brief responses to the novel that lay out many of its central themes and methods. Editor Karl Kroeber mentions the book's diverse narrative voices and realistic depiction of Chippewa Indians engaged in creating their identities through contact with others ("Introduction," Studies in American Indian Literature 9.1 (Winter 1985), 1-4). Dee Brown congratulates Erdrich for depicting for American readers little known lives as they change over time (no title, Studies in American Indian Literature 9.1 (Winter 1985), 4-5). Ursula LeGuin praises the many voices and highlights the theme of "who belongs" (no title, Studies in American Indian Literature 9.1 (Winter 1985), 5-6). Scott Sanders goes against the grain of many critics in that he praises Erdrich's celebration of Native life, but sees her characters as becoming less Indian (no title, Studies in American Indian Literature 9.1 (Winter 1985), 6-11). A few critics do not really focus on the themes of home and family. Robert Silberman reads Love Medicine in light of Native American literary tradition and contemporary critical theory ("Opening the Text: Love Medicine and the Return of the Native American Woman," Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook, Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 136-154). Lee Schweninger links feminist and environmental issues ("A Skin of Lakeweed: An Ecofeminist Approach to Erdrich and Silko," Multicultural Literatures through Feminist/Poststructuralist Lenses, Ed. Barbara Frey Waxman (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 37-56). Jason P. Mitchell reads Love Medicine along with Blood Meridian as debunking American myths ("Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine, Cormac McCarthy's Blood Meridian, and the (De)Mythologizing of the American West," Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction 41.3 (2000): 290-304); his comparative approach resembles that of my project, but doesn't afford him much depth on Love Medicine. Marianne Barnett reacts to her personal experience of reading the novel and focuses on themes of love and redemption ("Dreamstuff: Erdrich's Love Medicine," North Dakota Quarterly 56.1 (1988): 82-93). Thomas Matchie compares the book to Moby-Dick and sees it as "not polemic" like "so much of Native American literature"(Matchie 478) ("Love Medicine: A Female Moby-Dick," Midwest Quarterly

30.4 (1989): 478-491). Julie Maristuen-Radokowski provides historical and anthropological background for the people depicted; Maristuen-Radokowski also argues the novel depicts a changing sense of Indianness ("The Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota: Its History as Depicted in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine and The Beet Queen." Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook. Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. 13-26). Marvin Magalaner treats her use of symbolism, especially water ("Louise Erdrich: Of Cars, Time, and the River,"American Women Writing Fiction: Memory, Identity, Family, Space, Ed. Mickey Pearlman (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1989), 95-108). Loiuse Mengelkoch argues that Native American writers including Erdrich are in a unique position to portray the paradoxes of the human experience; she specifically mentions Erdrich's concern with mixed-blood characters ("Rejection and Renewal: The Theme of Alienation in the Writings of Five Mixedblood Word Warriors," Entering the Nineties: The North American Experience, Ed. Thomas Schirer (Sault Ste. Marie: Lake Superior State University Press, 1991), 134-148). In an article that usefully compares Erdrich and Leslie Silko's different depictions of ethnicity, Susan Perez Castillo argues that Erdrich skewers the "banalization of ethnicity in the stereotype of 'heritage'"(233). Few critics other than Perez Castillo see Lipsha as not saved by traditional Ojibwa culture ("The Construction of Gender and Ethnicity in the Texts of Leslie Silko and Louise Erdrich," Yearbook of English Studies 24 (1994), 228-36). She also wrote a useful analysis of the so-called controversy over Silko's negative review of The Beet Queen (based on the misunderstanding that German characters in were supposed to be Native American); in it, she notes that Erdrich works differently, but is as politically committed to extra-textual reality as the more obviously polemical Silko ("Postmodernism, Native American Literature, and the Real: The Silko-Erdrich Controversy," Massachusetts Review 32.1 (1991), 285-94). A. Robert Lee places Erdrich in the context of other ethnic writers; he writes of her circular style in Love Medicine and the clash of white and Ojibwa values, though without much analysis of these ("Ethnic Renaissance: Rudolfo Anaya, Louise Erdrich, and Maxine Hong Kingston," The New American Writing: Essays on American Literature Since 1970, Ed. Graham Clarke (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 139-164).

Other critics have discussed the important themes of family, home, and Native cultural survival in more depth. Jill R. Deans sees the many informal adoptions in Erdrich's work as potentially subversive of discourses of legitimacy; an analysis of Lipsha in various Erdrich novels is prominent ("File Under 'L' for 'Love Child': Adoptive Policies and Practices in the Erdrich Tetralogy," Imagining Adoption: Essays on Literature and Culture, Ed. Maryanne Novy (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 231-249). Claire Crabtree reads the novel as formally designed to reflect Native American belief and to show Native collisions with patriarchal white society ("Salvific Oneness and the Fragmented Self in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine," Contemporary Native American Issues, Ed. Thomas E. Schirer (Sault Ste. Marie: Lake Superior State University Press, 1988), 49-56). Debra C. Holt argues that Erdrich shows how her characters need to continue tribal traditions in order to maintain their identity ("Transformation and Continuance: Native American Tradition in the Novels of Louise Erdrich," Entering the Nineties: The North American Experience, Ed. Thomas Schirer (Sault Ste. Marie: Lake Superior State University Press, 1991), 149-161). David Mitchell sees Erdrich's main concern as finding something valuable (by looking to the past) in contemporary Native American experience despite Native victimization at the hands of a hostile dominant ideology ("A Bridge to the Past: Cultural Hegemony and the Native American Past in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine," Entering the Nineties: The North American Experience, Ed. Thomas Schirer (Sault Ste. Marie: Lake Superior State University Press, 1991), 162-170). E. Shelley Reid places Erdrich's writing in the context of other American stories about identity; she uses the tropes of middle ground and mediation to describe how Erdrich depicts Native Americans to a non-native audience. Reid also argues that Erdrich revises earlier, non-native tropes for depicting identity ("The Stories We Tell: Louise Erdrich's Identity Narratives," MELUS 25.3-4 (2000), 65-86). Using the newer version of the novel, Margie Towery discusses Erdrich's emphasis on survival and cultural continuity. She notes that leaving home is as important as coming home (109) for some of Erdrich's characters, an assertion that tempers the arguments of many readers who see Erdrich's work as about "homing in." Finally, while Towery makes gestures to Erdrich's sharper politics in the 1993 edition, she reads the novel as working towards a balance (the balance Lipsha supposedly finds at the end) that makes it hard to see whether anything has been accomplished; in other words, Towery de-emphasizes culture as a site of struggle ("Continuity and Connection: Characters in Louise Erdrich's Fiction," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 16.4 (1992), 99-122). Susan Farrell reads Lipsha as bridging cultures at the end of the novel, thus avoiding the trap of assimilation that traps June ("Erdrich's Love Medicine," Explicator 56.2 (1998), 109-112). Hans

genealogy, then, Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine operates in opposite fashion from Lonesome Dove. Lonesome Dove ends with a son rejecting all ties to "kin" by way of rejecting his father's belated attempts to make them a family; through this plot, McMurtry suggests a way of rejecting the U.S. legacy of conquest. Love Medicine ends with Lipsha Morrissey finally meeting and deciding to help his father, who like Call is a hero figure despite frequently breaking the law. Lipsha embraces his father even though Gerry Nanapush has never been involved in his life as any kind of relative, let alone a father figure. Lipsha's dramatic encounter with the biological father he never knew leads to him driving his father to the safety of the Canadian border before returning, momentously, to the reservation he has recently forsaken. While Erdrich's novel features plenty of missed familial connections like those in Lonesome Dove, Love Medicine ultimately endorses the value of home and origins.

The many critics who have written on Erdrich's best-known novel have generally emphasized this celebration of home and family as a step towards shoring up Native

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Bak also cites the importance of bridging two cultures, viewing intercultural conflict "as an ambiguous source of both strength and powerlessness"(146); Bak also discusses the balance between magical and realist elements in her novels ("Towards a Native American 'Realism': The Amphibious Fiction of Louise Erdrich," Neo-Realism in Contemporary American Fiction, Ed. Kristiaan Versluys (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 145-170). Helen Jaskoski details the interplay between Indian and white elements of culture in "Saint Marie," showing how Erdrich uses Ojibwa "windigo" stories and Euro-American Christianity (in the form in which reservation Indians encountered it); her analysis deftly notes that Native American identity is constructed across various borders, but she doesn't delve into how Erdrich constructs differences and similarities ("From the Time Immemorial: Native American Traditions in Contemporary Short Fiction," Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook, Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27-34). Lissa Schneider discusses storytelling itself as a healing medicine ("Love Medicine: A Metaphor for Forgiveness," Studies in American Indian Literature 4.1 (1992), 1-13). James Stripes considers the problems in treating the relationship of Erdrich's avant-garde fictional forms and their relationship to history, mostly in Tracks. He falsely claims that only Gerry Nanapush becomes an activist (even in the 1984 edition, there are several characters of whom this can be said) and implicitly argues for anthropological readings of Erdrich's fiction (which would teach non-Indian readers about tribal peoples) ("The Problems of (Anishinaabe) History in the Fiction of Louise Erdrich: Voices and Contexts," Wicazo sa Review 7.2 (1991), 26-33).

American, or more specifically Ojibwa,[2] identity (a key element to cultural survival). Yet within Love Medicine, one finds a telling slippage between a valuation of family and home in general and any endorsement of specific Ojibwa values that would preserve them. In other words, I would argue that while Erdrich certainly highlights the importance of home and familial connections for survival, she does not so surely mark these survival techniques as important specifically for Ojibwa (or Native Americans in general) as against non-Ojibwa. At stake in determining whether Erdrich's treatment of these themes (we might say, using the central metaphor and title, her love medicine) applies universally or only to (some) Native Americans is the way we read and evaluate any text. As I have argued previously, the creation of disciplines like Native American studies (including corollaries like Native American Literature within the discipline of literary or cultural studies) has had benefits and drawbacks. The fetishization of cultural authenticity encouraged by the growth in Native American literature, whatever its benefits, has tended to reify something we might provisionally call "Native American culture" and in so doing has fixed differences between Native and non-Native.[3]

In the present case, the interest in Native American fiction might be considered to have benefited Louise Erdrich herself (though again, the personal tragedy of her life—lawsuits and allegations of abuse against her by some of her adopted children and the suicide of husband Michael Dorris—mitigates her success). Inasmuch as the critical and financial success of Native writers can be seen to benefit society—perhaps most notably

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[2] I will mostly use the spelling "Ojibwa" throughout my discussion of Erdrich's work, as she seems to favor it. See Hertha D. Sweet Wong's explanation in her "Introduction" to Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook, Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9 n.1. Alternative spellings include "Chippewa" (which Erdrich uses in Love Medicine), "Ojibway," "Ojibwe," and "Anishinaabe."

[3] For more on the exclusions inherent in classifications, see Scott Michaelsen, The Limits of Multiculturalism: Interrogating the Origins of American Anthropology (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); the "Prolegomenon" (1-32) particularly has inspired this discussion.

by instructing the general public that Native Americans are not the Vanishing Americans and therefore cannot be counted out politically, economically, etc.—consolidating gains by Native writers under the rubric of Native American literature is beneficial. I would argue, however, that the separation and classification of cultural artifacts according to such anthropological definitions reifies and fixes competing identities, creating perpetual conflict and exclusion of various others; at its limit, this sort of classification can achieve quite the opposite result its advocates usually imagine. To interpret Erdrich's "love medicine" (to use a short example I will analyze further below) as deriving from a uniquely Native American perspective (or even to appeal to Erdrich's mixed German-Ojibwa heritage) is, at its limit, to claim that something essentially Native or Ojibwa has inspired our insight (that is, whatever we might value in our reading experience); it is to claim an alterity for Ojibwa knowledge that should preclude non-Ojibwa from understanding Love Medicine at all—or at least limit us from learning anything about how these Ojibwa use these Native values, lessons, or strategies to survive. The classification of different stories and practices by race (disguised as culture) also violates the mixed-blood logic of the novel and would make it impossible (again, at the limits) for the mixed-blood characters themselves to utilize these strategies.

The reader's difficulty in comprehending the Native American content of the book has in fact attracted comment from critics including Catherine Rainwater and Karah Stokes.[4] Rainwater sees Love Medicine as creating epistemological difficulty for its

[4] Catherine Rainwater, "Reading Between Worlds: Narrativity in the Fiction of Louise Erdrich," Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook, Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 163-178 and Karah Stokes, "What about the sweetheart?: The 'Different Shape' of Anishinabe Two Sister Stories in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine and Tales of Burning Love," MELUS 24.2 (1999), 89-105. I will discuss Rainwater below; Stokes notes that unless readers are familiar with Anishinabe folklore, they will necessarily misunderstand much of Love Medicine. While she acknowledges that the novel includes "elements of Anishinabe as well as of German-American, Catholic, and Midwestern

readers by using two different cultural codes (Native American and Christian) but favoring neither: "a hermeneutical impasse confronts the reader as he or she attempts to follow diverse interpretive avenues that refuse to converge at a crossroads"("Reading Between Worlds" 167). Ultimately, the novel marginalizes readers in order to teach them to revise their expectations of narrative: "This primary value—epistemological insight—which Erdrich's text associates with marginality might then be adopted through a revision of narrativity"("Reading Between Worlds" 176). Rainwater interprets the reader's newfound confusion or "disempowerment" as productive of a new perspective on the world, particularly the insight that "the world takes on the shape of the stories we tell"("Reading Between Worlds" 177). Rainwater's analysis displays a deep investment in the logic of multiculturalism, in which, as Scott Michaelsen puts it, "'we' are still too much like ourselves" and "have a need or a duty to hear the voices of those 'other' than ourselves who share this world with 'us'"(Limits of Multiculturalism ix). An analysis critically informed by semiotics, reader-response theory and Native American cultural criticism, Rainwater's article nonetheless fails to make much of Love Medicine as a specifically Native American artifact. A great deal of fiction (indeed, of creative writing in general, including biography, poetry, film and creative non-fiction) performs just as Rainwater argues Love Medicine does—to give us a temporarily destabilizing new perspective on the world, but also to reassure us that our telling of stories can shape our interaction with that world.[5] In the context of North American history (including literary

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cultures"(Stokes 89), Anishinabe are implicity figured in her article as universal translators. That is, they can understand the German-American elements, for example, but the Anishinabe elements "tantalize non-Anishinabe readers by lending a different shape to her fiction, a shape that they can sense but cannot fully distinguish"(89).

[5] I would argue that one could appeal to many eras and traditions here, from the experiments of modernism and postmodernism (Joyce, Dos Passos, numerous non-Native American postmodernists like John Barth, Abdelkebir Khatibi, or Robert Coover) to the world-creating works of Shakespeare and Milton.

history), one can see a Native American voice as potentially destabilizing, but Rainwater makes no claims that one could not also make for other fiction; it is difficult to understand from her analysis how Erdrich's book will make us less like ourselves. Furthermore, the political effect of Love Medicine on readers—what we might potentially see as the payoff of the novel—is implied rather than argued by Rainwater.[6] Her arguments tend more towards explaining the function of fiction in general rather than showing how specific Native American narration technologies help Native Americans.[7]

Rainwater's attempt to distinguish between Ojibwa and non-Ojibwa knowledge in Love Medicine typifies much of the criticism on the novel. Before turning to my own discussion of how Erdrich values ideals like "home" and "community" in Love Medicine, especially through the two versions of homecoming (June and Lipsha's) that bookend the novel, I will explore the work of some previous critics who argue that Erdrich offers a celebration of these values in Native American life and that there is something inherently or essentially Native American about her depiction of them.[8] For example, Louis Owens

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[6] Rainwater uses the 1984 edition of the novel, which has been seen as more politically subtle. See note on my use of the 1993 edition.

[7] Rainwater and Stokes' arguments might also be more persuasive were they clearer about what disables non-Indian readers from understanding Indian elements of Erdrich's fiction; though Erdrich herself is far from pure-blooded German or Indian, Rainwater and Stokes imply something biological (i.e. something stronger than just being an outsider to a social group or tribe) enables some readers and not others for understanding. An attempt to fill in the gaps in their arguments is implicit in this chapter.

[8] Others could have been chosen, and some of their insights will enter my analysis. I will mention a few critics in brief here in addition to the extended analysis that follows. Jeanne Smith analyzes Erdrich's depiction of ways extra-corporeal bodies influence identity; for Smith, needing others translates into harmony with others ("Transpersonal Selfhood: The Boundaries of Identity in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine," Studies in American Indian Literature 3.4 (1991), 13-26. Ann Rayson points out how characters in different Erdrich and Dorris books construct identity from a variety of cultural sources (though there is little analysis of Erdrich's contradictions in Love Medicine ("Shifting Identity in the Work of Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris," Studies in American Indian Literature 3.4 (1991), 27-36). Dennis Walsh argues that previous critics have focused too much on Native American spirituality in the book and ignored important Catholic elements. His argument notes that while Erdrich is familiar with religious incorporation or syncretism, this "seems impossible"(109) in the 1993 edition of Love Medicine because the anger versus Catholicism and the favoring of Chippewa codes is so strong ("Catholicism in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine and Tracks," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 25.2 (2001), 107-127). Louise Flavin argues, contra many other critics, that many markers of "Indian cultural identity have

(himself a crossblood critic and novelist) joins Erdrich's concern with genealogy to her depiction of characters' ties to the earth. He notes that she uses both Indian and non-Indian elements, but has little to say of what might constitute the non-Indian parts of Love Medicine; he concentrates on the mixed-blood as marginal character within U.S. society. He argues for the importance of staying close to the geographies that inform Indian group identities; those characters who lose a "close relationship with the earth—and specifically with that particular geography that informs a tribal identity—are the ones

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disappeared"(64) and that Erdrich's novel presents Ojibwa lives with realism. Hers is one of several accounts that view the book with some pessimism; strangely she appeals (like Schultz, below) to the Indian American as an American, though she does not explicitly show the book's connections to a broader "American" literature ("Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: Loving Over Time and Distance," Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction 31.1 (1989), 55-64). Karen Janet McKinney treats the destruction of Ojibwa culture as a foregone conclusion (laying much of the blame on Catholicism) and reads the ending with a mixture of hope (that Erdrich's readers will reject sentimentalism over what is lost) and pessimism (because Erdrich portrays the survival only of individuals, not the whole culture) ("False Miracles and Failed Vision in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine," Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction 40.2 (1999),152-160). James McKenzie's early article contradicts some of the early, negative reviews of the book which treated it as a sociological tract; since 1986, however, many other critics have chosen to treat the novel in just that way, usually considering Erdrich's own appeal to cultural continuity as her main concern. McKenzie agrees that Love Medicine celebrates and protects a core Ojibwa culture, even claiming that it does this "thereby, for American culture as a whole"(56). While projecting a faith that the novel encourages a renewal of Ojibwa culture, he astutely comments, "What precise forms such a renewal might take the novel does not explore"(61) ("Lipsha's Good Road Home: The Revival of Chippewa Culture in Love Medicine," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 10.3 (1986), 53-63). William Gleason focuses on the subversive value of humor, but also links story telling in the novel to the survival of Ojibwa culture; he sees the several homecomings as survival itself without saying much about failed homecomings or successful leavings ("'Her Laugh an Ace': The Function of Humor in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine," Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook, Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 115-135). Unlike McKenzie and Gleason, Greg Sarris is not optimistic about the ending, wondering, "is finding our fathers and knowing our families love us as much as they can medicine enough?"(204) He shares his personal reactions to the book, but also to critics who rely on their fixed notions of Indianness to understand the text; he calls for readings that open dialogues between readers and texts to "expose the intermingling of the multiple voices within"(193) ("Reading Louise Erdrich: Love Medicine as Home Medicine," Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook, Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 179-210). James Ruppert discusses Erdrich's mediation of two cultures (something critics like Owens and Schultz consistently show is happening but do not acknowledge), noting the epistemological doubts created in the novel by juxtaposing two cultural codes; like Rainwater and Sarris, he emphasizes that the reader of Love Medicine undergoes a jolt in reading that can change their social and political beliefs. His reading is steeped in the multicultural logic of needing the other to complete us (Mediation in Contemporary Native American Fiction (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), especially chapters 1, 2 and 8). Nora Barry and Mary Prescott use Ojibwa stories and rituals to frame their reading of Love Medicine, arguing that male characters particularly suffer from the loss of traditional outlets. They read the novel as presenting spiritual values as the key to survival (melding cultural and physical survival) ("The Triumph of the Brave: Love Medicine's Holistic Vision," Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction 30.2 (1989), 123-138).

who are lost".[9] Like many critics, he lauds her treatment of "those who survive in a difficult world"(54), but for those who get lost, he can offer only the comforts of home: "They are the Ishmaels of the Indian world, waiting like June Kashpaw to be brought home"(54). For Owens, "the inevitable search for identity"(55) important to any Native American novelist leads home, away from the mainstream which he (and Erdrich[10]) define as against Indian culture. He reads June's death in the snow as providing the novel with a "mythic catalyst"(57). He combines her suicide ("June deliberately chooses death"(56)) with the function she performs as a literary figure ("the feminine Christ-figure resurrected as trickster"(56)). Owens uses references to Native American belief to bolster his argument that in failing to live, or even to return home safely, June can become a "fragmented culture hero made whole within memory and story"(56). He argues that while in a "Euramerican context," June's "loss of a centered identity" kills her and is cause for concern, in a Native context, loss of self "prefigures healing and wholeness and a return to the tribal community often takes the form of physical fragmentation"(56).

What interests me about Owens's argument, other than the fact that he refers to a "Native American mythology" that revels in fragmentation and sounds curiously like postmodernism, is the difficulty it and other readings like it present a reader who wonders at their political consequences for other characters like June. In a novel that seems to

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[9] Louis Owens, "Erdrich and Dorris's Mixed-bloods and Multiple Narratives," Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook, Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 54. Subsequent references to this article will be noted by page number in the text.

[10] He quotes Erdrich as feeling a kind of "dual citizenship," ill at ease in the mainstream culture, but nonetheless able to "take in non-Indian culture and be comfortable in both worlds." From Joseph Bruchac, ed., Survival This Way: Interviews with American Indian Poets (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), 77, 79, 83; cited in Owens, "Erdrich and Dorris's," 55. Significantly, Owens does not really explore how Erdrich's comfort with the non-Indian world might inform different readings of Love Medicine, readings that de-emphasize the differentiation between Indian and non-Indian sense of home and community, though he has explored these issues in Mixedblood Messages.

celebrate survivors, one must wonder, as Lipsha Morrissey does when viewing the burned out veterans he deems "yesterday's Action Army," what to make of the failures. June does not survive; Owens treats her as a literary device, a catalyst. Others make her whole; she doesn't do it herself. She is a catalyst because the reactions of others tell us about their characters, including their "potential for survival"(57); in Owens's reading, some are lost, some are saved. His view on failures—that they serve the greater good—seems harsher than Erdrich intends, though it resonates with the combination of Christ and trickster imagery used throughout the book (as Owens rightly claims).[11] June is a sort of trickster for him, but clearly not one who escapes. In describing her effect on other characters' enhanced well-being (required because "historical time has eroded a Chippewa sense of identity"(56)), he elides the fact of her loss: "When, at the end of the novel, Lipsha Morrissey crosses the water to 'bring her home,' we know that Lipsha has finally arrived at a coherent sense of his place within the community (including the land itself) from which identity springs"(57). Leaving aside for now the fact that Erdrich leaves Lipsha's "sense of his place" very much ambiguous, Owens's reading makes June a crude sort of object or literary device.

Granted, Love Medicine is a literary text, and one must allow Owens to view a character—a simulation of a person—as simultaneously a symbol. But given Erdrich's political aims, June's fate should attract more commentary lest community in Love Medicine devolve into a mere exclusionary tactic, a way of marking "good" Ojibwa (the survivors) off from the "bad" ones. Such a reading can make Love Medicine into a

[11] Kathleen Sands's reading agrees with Owens's on many of these issues. She reads the ending as happy and triumphant and June as a catalyst whose failure heals others, though she is "beyond the healing embrace of family love"(Sands 40). Like Owens, Sands doesn't analyze the political implications of June's failure for the tribe's survival (Sands, "Love Medicine: Voices and Margins," Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine: A Casebook, Ed. Hertha D. Sweet Wong, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 35-42.

morality tale (and it reads as one, at least on the level of the literary) but only by neglecting the political consequences implied. Many critics, like Owens, choose to emphasize the literary and cultural without attention to the political.[12]

Erdrich's text does invite literary readings, but in the years since the first version of Love Medicine was published, Erdrich has defended her work's apparent apolitical subtlety by affirming her political motivations.[13] In an article for the New York Times Book Review, Erdrich stated, "Contemporary Native American writers have therefore a task quite different from that of other writers I've mentioned. In the light of enormous loss, they must tell the stories of contemporary survivors while protecting and celebrating the cores of culture left in the wake of the catastrophe"("Where I Ought to Be" 23). Critics have frequently treated this as a declaration of Erdrich's political sensibility as a writer.[14] As Chavkin glosses it, "This is an eloquent expression of her purpose in Love Medicine, and it is likely that in the 1993 expanded version of the novel Erdrich, not happy how this task was accomplished in the original Love Medicine, intends to add to and to clarify the stories of her contemporary survivors so that readers will respond more

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[12] These elements do overlap, of course; for example, many critics see the circularity of the narrative and its emphasis on orality as subversive of the dominant U.S. ideology. In my use of "political" here, I'm trying to highlight the difference between using a character as a symbol or catalyst (literary technique) and the potential for fictional characters to represent or simulate real-world peoples and for authors to use them to comment on conflicts and effect political changes (though Erdrich stays away from policy discussions, she does discuss matters like partitioning of Ojibwa land and the building of casinos on tribal land).

[13] Some explanation of the choice of edition is called for in the case of Love Medicine. As Allan Chavkin has pointed out, many of the additions made after the 1984 edition make the 1993 edition much more obviously political. He writes of her "need for a Love Medicine that is more effective than the 1984 book in conveying its political ideology." Chavkin, "Vision and Revision in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine," The Chippewa Landscape of Louise Erdrich, Ed. Allan Chavkin (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 90. Other readers still prefer the earlier edition. I am using the 1993 edition because of its more explicit (and in many ways fuller and more interesting) politics, but most of my analysis will focus on elements that appear in both editions. I will refer in the text to the 1993 edition of the novel by page number.

[14] As even a cursory review of scholarship on Erdrich reveals, this single statement constitutes one of the more important tools critics have for interpreting Erdrich. This passage is quoted in Owens, Chavkin ("Vision"), Wong ("Introduction" and "Narrative Communities"), Maristuen-Radokowski, Gleason, McKenzie, and Reid, to name a few.

sympathetically to them"("Vision" 94). Owens comments (using the earlier edition) that "the non-Indian reader is not made to feel acutely, as he or she is in other Indian novels, a sense of responsibility for the conditions portrayed"("Erdrich and Dorris's" 64); this supplements Chavkin's assertion about Erdrich looking for sympathetic readers, but even in the later edition, Erdrich creates sympathy without sacrificing her politics.

Chavkin sees in Erdrich's presentation of the survivors' stories "[t]he theme of preserving and celebrating the core of Chippewa culture that has survived historical and contemporary oppression"(94); indeed, Chavkin sees Erdrich as linking survival to the celebration of culture. That is, he argues Erdrich uses Love Medicine to show that Ojibwa must practice their culture to keep themselves alive.[15] Chavkin relies on the logic of a multiculturalism that elides differences between people and culture. As Walter Benn Michaels writes in critiquing Charles Taylor's multiculturalism: "The idea is that if their distinct culture disappears, if, say, French Canadians stop speaking French, then their identity will have been lost, the people will not have survived"(181 n.242). Like Taylor, Owens makes the past crucial for the creation of the self: "As nearly every Native American author has sought to demonstrate, the loss of the past means a loss of self, a loss of order and meaning in the present moment, and an inability to contemplate a future that is part of that moment"(59). While Erdrich certainly cares about the survival of her characters, she does not so closely link actual survival of people to their survival *as* Ojibwa. She does not suggest that Ojibwa will die if they stop certain cultural practices.

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[15] In another permutation, the culture of the threatened minority is treated as a balm to the majority. David Johnson and Scott Michaelsen's reading of American Indian College Fund advertising resonates with Chavkin's reading: "Indians need Anglos... in order to be *themselves*, which allows Indians to shore 'us' up, take care of 'our' culture"(Johnson and Michaelsen, "Border Secrets: An Introduction," Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics, Scott Michaelsen and David E. Johnson, eds. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 7).

But while Owens's reading of June's failure (based on her abandonment of her home) and the benefit it provides others (inasmuch as they come together to shore up their own identity in the wake of her death) is supported to some extent by events in the novel, her death does not logically mean that any Ojibwa who leaves the reservation will die, nor can the "potential for survival"("Erdrich and Dorris's" 57) of the others depend merely on whatever Owens takes to be Ojibwa cultural practices in Love Medicine. Owens implicitly argues (using the same logic as Chavkin) that adherence to Ojibwa culture will save Erdrich's characters and prevent that "loss of order and meaning in the present moment"(59), though Owens probably means only that they would cease to be Ojibwa were they to abandon Ojibwa ways. Yet in Owens's analysis of Erdrich's mixed-bloods, it can too often be impossible to pin down what he thinks Erdrich thinks has been lost, or how prior losses have affected (even impoverished) contemporary identity. In reference to other plots in the novel, Owens stresses how the formal construction of Love Medicine helps Erdrich address cultural loss:

> Formally, the novel's fragmented narrative underscores the fragmentation of the Indian community and of the identity that begins with community and place; and the fragmentation of this community, the rootlessness that results in an accumulation of often mundane tragedies among the assorted characters, subtly underscores the enormity of what has been lost. (64)

Owens later makes confusing and contradictory claims to both the universality and specificity of Erdrich's characters. He believes Erdrich makes "the universality of Indian lives and tragedies easily accessible to non-Indian readers"(65), and certainly non-Indians (like those in the other novels under consideration) also experience the tension between "rootlessness" and "community and place." But Owens later adds that while this rootlessness may be shared with non-Indian characters, "no reader can come away from

Love Medicine without recognizing the essential Indianness of Erdrich's cast and concerns"(65). Since Owens believes that Erdrich's characters need their past (especially given "the enormity of what has been lost") to understand themselves, the question of what makes these characters and their problems essentially Indian should be the key to figuring out what they need to do to survive.

Owens offers but a few comments on what constitutes Ojibwa identity in Love Medicine, and most of these only implicate Indian belief rather than explaining it substantively. For instance, he contrasts "linear, Western time"(56) with "cyclic/accretive time"(55). As Scott Michaelsen has noted, the figure of the circle Owens posits as essentially Indian is "reminiscent of both old and new Western traditions of thinking... never alterior to the West"(The Limits of Multiculturalism 32). He offers "the land itself"(54) as central to Indian identity, though this is never untrue of non-Indians, either.[16] He reads June as a trickster figure, but again, the trickster is common to most world mythologies. He notes that Eli has "lived closer to the traditional Chippewa ways"(63), including old ways of hunting and wilderness survival quite familiar to generations of non-Indians living in rural woodlands around the globe.[17] Eli may be Owens's best example of traditional Ojibwa living, but Owens can say little more of him than to echo Albertine in saying that Eli keeps his wits while his more assimilated brother

[16] And, curiously given Owens's assertions that Indian characters need to be tied to the land to preserve their identity, Erdrich seems less concerned with her characters' relationship with the earth or non-human environment than with interpersonal relationships. As Owens points out, some characters do criticize the negative effects of land allotment, but Erdrich makes this concern more political than spiritual. Lee Schweninger tries to read Erdrich's interest in the environment, but succeeds mostly in explaining general eco-feminist theory and not the specifics of Erdrich's text (Schweninger, "A Skin of Lakeweed: An Ecofeminist Approach to Erdrich and Silko," Multicultural Literatures through Feminist/Poststructuralist Lenses, Ed. Barbara Frey Waxman (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 37-56).

[17] And familiar in literature as well, for example in that minor figure of American literature, the rustic who leads the city folk on hunting and fishing expeditions (e.g. in Theodore Dreiser's American Tragedy).

Nector becomes senile.[18] In Love Medicine, at least, Erdrich does not focus on her most traditional character, nor make the survival of others depend on the maintenance of Eli's lifestyle, which might be called extremely Ojibwa. Despite Owens's insistence on her portraying some "essential Indianness," he also acknowledges that the central image of Indianness Erdrich builds up derives from many disparate Ojibwa voices, as Erdrich's seven narrators "weave their many stories into a single cloth that becomes, very gradually, a coherent fabric of community—a recovered center"(55). Yet to admit that the "essential Indianness" and "recovered center" will derive from so many stories rather from just Eli's most authentic Indianness, for example, begs the question of how contemporary Ojibwa identity is composed.[19] While searching for a "recovered center" acknowledges very real losses, it places undue emphasis on an unattainable goal and re-marginalizes some of Erdrich's characters (like June). Owens praises the book for "the heroic efforts of a fragmented community to hold on to what is left"(55) and its "illumination of liminality"(55), but his own concern for recovering an essential Indian center leaves behind too many characters and ignores how identity is negotiated in Love Medicine.[20] His language emphasizes drawing lines to keep outsiders out based on their inauthenticity, while Erdrich's own language is much more forgiving and ambivalent.

Perhaps a better clue in Owen's reading of how Erdrich constructs her characters' negotiations between traditional Ojibwa views and contemporary non-Native American values can be gleaned from his reading of Albertine Johnson. Erdrich makes Albertine

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[18] Not that senility kills Nector (i.e. Nector's deficiency in Ojibwa ways does not kill him); he dies as a result of Lipsha's botched attempt to incorporate Ojibwa love medicine and the modern convenience of frozen turkey, on which more below.

[19] I am avoiding adding here, "from Ojibwa and non-Ojibwa elements alike" because the very problem I have with Owens's analysis is his artificial identification and separation of these elements, as if their pure and authentic essences could ever be recovered to shore up either Ojibwa or white identity.

[20] That is, identity is negotiated rather than springing from some inner essence.

important by making her the narrator of most of the first chapter; like Lipsha, she is marginal to the community of the identity and so has a different perspective on the novel's events than Nector, Lulu, or Marie have. Owens quotes her views on other characters extensively (June, Eli, Nector, Lipsha). He notes Albertine's mixed racial background; she calls her Swedish father "doomed to wander," and Owens adds, "(the quintessential Euramerican condition of eternal migration)"(58), fixing migration as a European value (so that rootedness can be seen as only an Ojibwa value). Albertine's grandmother Marie was also very white, only marginally Ojibwa in her own mind and considered "white trash" by Indians (at least as a young woman; her transformation into an Indian activist is a major plot development): "I don't have that much Indian blood." Albertine therefore stands out from many of her cousins superficially, but as Owens notes, "she identifies herself as an Indian"(58). Owens explains that while "Albertine has run away in the past"(58)[21] and behaved self-destructively like June before, "she is the character in the novel who, among those of her generation, is most secure in her identity"(58). Owens says nothing to dispute Albertine's Indianness, so we must infer that she has that "essential Indianness" he sees as required of survivors in Love Medicine. Her sureness of identity, in Owens's reading, would ostensibly make her centered and stable, and therefore a survivor capable of helping the community find its "recovered center."

Yet Albertine's mixed-race background causes problems for Owens's reading of which he seems unaware. He argues that her certainty is "provided, ironically, by her mother, who says defiantly, 'I raised her an Indian, and that's what she is'"("Erdrich and

[21] Under Owens's racial logic, June and Albertine's roaming must derive from their Euramerican parts; he has no counter explanation about why more Indian characters (like King or Gerry) would roam.

Dorris's 58). Owens reads the continued survival of Erdrich's Ojibwa as based on recovering a lost center, a primordial Indianness that has been lost due to Euramerican colonial violence, so he must say of Albertine's stability that it comes "ironically" from her mother Zelda, who has married two Scandinavian men and whose own mother has little Indian blood. The stability can only be ironic for Owens because he claims that Erdrich's characters survive by reaching for an essentially Indian past identity. Owens would expect someone who was less marginal to be as stable as Albertine, but Erdrich's novel works differently. Albertine's stability comes from a combination of her wandering between the two worlds that produced her (the Ojibwa reservation and the white city) and her mother's insistence on raising her Indian, whatever her blood quantum. Zelda consciously makes Indian identity important to Albertine; Albertine's "essence" alone does not.[22]

In addition, Albertine's comments on others foreground her marginality and the efforts she must maintain to remain Ojibwa (when Erdrich implies that Albertine could easily slip away to the city forever, like Henry Lamartine). Owens can make little of Albertine's perspective because of his emphasis on recovering lost essences; he can only observe, "It is Albertine who understands the motivation of her great-grandmother, old Rushes Bear, in keeping Eli at home while allowing Nector to be educated at the government school"(59). Reading Rushes Bear's decision and Albertine's understanding of it could be crucial to Owens's reading, yet he does little with this observation except to

[22] It should be noted, though, that Albertine's Indian blood gives her a reason to claim this past as hers, and Owens clearly depends on this. See Walter Benn Michaels's discussion of heritage in Our America, pp. 126-129, including footnote 224. He argues of Slim Girl in Laughing Boy that "she can make herself a Navajo only by doubling Navajo birth with the doing of Navajo things"(Michaels 126); without the warrant of race, there is no reason for Slim Girl (or Albertine) to claim Indian identity. By the same token, this identity must be kept up by "lining up her practices with her genealogy"(Michaels 127); Owens seems to rely overmuch on what the grounds of race ("essential Indianness") can provide, thus his need to see Albertine's stability as ironic.

comment (along with Albertine) that Nector loses his mind, "a victim of mechanical, entropic, historic time, while his brother has remained alert to the reality of his more traditional life"(59). Given the negative consequences of Rushes Bear's choice, what does Albertine understand? Why did she want to gain "a son on either side of the line"(Love Medicine 19)? Owens's logic implies that Albertine comes to an understanding of the value of traditional Ojibwa ways (again, this understanding must come "ironically" given how little Indian blood Albertine has), but then she would also need to realize that letting Nector go to the government school was a mistake since nothing is gained by it; instead, Albertine understands that Rushes Bear figured that balancing her son between the two societies was best. Owens wants to blame Nector's later senility on an encounter with a time system he can't understand, but Albertine has also gone away to school and work in the city and withstood the "kind of disastrous life that killed June"("Erdrich and Dorris's" 58). She has survived to be the most stable member of her generation, "most secure in her identity"(58). What Erdrich demonstrates through Rushes Bear's decision and Albertine's later understanding of it can not be merely Albertine's appreciation for traditional Ojibwa ways and for the destructive power of government schools and "historic time," for Albertine demonstrates that one can survive by living on both sides of "the line" and remain "essentially Indian" while doing so (as even Owens would agree).

Lydia A. Schultz demonstrates similar difficulty in reconciling Erdrich's treatment of characters marginal to Ojibwa and Euro-American cultures, while simultaneously arguing that Erdrich emphasizes and preserves Ojibwa community and

contributes to the definition of "American."[23] Schultz shares my concern with analyzing whether community values can "travel," or rather whether the survival of Ojibwa culture as practiced by characters many of whom are also Euro-American holds any promise for people in general. Schultz concludes that Erdrich succeeds in making the local and particular apply to the universal. Like Chavkin above, she uses the logic of multiculturalism, trying to balance Erdrich's presentation of the particular and universally human: "By bringing a marginalized culture to a mainstream audience, Erdrich opens up the possibility of greater understanding"(93). By using fragments of Ojibwa stories in the more familiar novel form, Erdrich "enables people to see their shared humanity" and makes "dominant culture more inclusive by redefining what it means to be American"(94). Like Owens, Schultz displays concern over Ojibwa as a real tribe (politically defined) but must mix this concern with readings of Erdrich's use of symbol and appeals to the spiritual, placing in doubt any political reformation Love Medicine might accomplish. That is, Schultz mutes the value of her appeal to a more inclusive dominant culture by also valuing a spiritual and metaphoric survival. Finally, Schultz uses and abuses notions of heritage and culture in such a way as to forestall the inclusiveness she sees in the novel, at times implying unbridgeable differences between Ojibwa and Western cultures.[24]

Schultz begins by contrasting Erdrich's use of multiperspectivity with the modernists', pointing out that Erdrich ultimately creates a community with many voices rather than chaos. She initially over-emphasizes the disorganization of Love Medicine's

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[23] Lydia A Schultz, "Fragments and Ojibwe Stories: Narrative Strategies in Louise Erdrich's Love Medicine," College Literature 18.3 (1991), 80-95.

[24] It need hardly be added that her appeal to the notion of culture enables much of this difficulty, in particular her appeal to Ojibwa folk stories collected by difference-seeking anthropologists.

multiple narrative voices: "Love Medicine appears to depict the world as a chaotic place beyond any communal organization"(Schultz 80); then Schultz claims Erdrich formally subverts modernist use of multiperspectivity by making readers unify the text. Through this process, Native American and non-Native readers alike examine their attitudes towards Native Americans, leading up to the ultimate redefinition of "American."[25] Schultz addresses the problems of treating Erdich as "ethnic," since this othering process can make her characters inscrutable. She concludes that "Erdrich attempts to avoid being exoticized by making her characters recognizably human above all else"(82), but her article focuses more on precisely those elements in Erdrich's writing most likely to seem exotic: "Erdrich's heritage as a Native American provides her with a world view that differs substantially from mainstream American, or European-inherited, views"(82). She mentions the emphasis on orality, community, and the interconnectedness of all things (features which are not unfamiliar to the Western tradition, either). Her language and use of Paula Gunn Allen's description of the "sacred hoop" (while ironically showing the inter-connectedness of all things) set up Indian and non-Indian as absolute opposites. For example, she reads the deaths of Henry Lamartine, Henry, Jr., and June as giving "an ambiguous vision of the world" in the "dominant culture," but as something else within "an Ojibwe world view": "These deaths serve merely as the physical conclusions to lives that are already spiritually dead"(84). Schultz does not discuss whether this same conclusion about the three tragic lives could be reached using the dominant culture's world view (which, if truly ambiguous, would at least consider this possibility in addition to another one); despite her using the label "ambiguous" for the dominant culture, then,

[25] In the emphasis on narrative strategy, Schultz's argument parallels Catherine Rainwater's (see above), but Rainwater makes no appeals to general American culture.

she opposes two fixed cultures which must read these events a certain way rather than emphasize the play of meaning available to both.

Her reading of Lulu's reaction to her husband and son's suicides takes this further (and takes her further from the ultimate goal of making these stories fit into a definition of "American" which she paints along the way as absolute and unchanging). She sees Lulu's lies about the deaths (her public claims that they are accidents, not suicides) as maintaining "the sense of communal harmony"(84). Lulu and the community do not want to focus on the Henrys "inability to cope"(84), even though they all share it to some degree; Schultz takes this decision to extremes, making the entire community's survival dependent on it: "At this point she chooses to preserve what community remains on the reservation rather than to risk its loss by exposing how it has been corrupted by the dominant culture's values"(84). Of course, the reservation has long been affected, if not "corrupted," by non-Ojibwa values—indeed, its very existence as a reservation is a United States imposition—so the need to lie about the community's very identity seems odd. Like Owens, Schultz has difficulty reconciling the failures with the survivors. If two men kill themselves (thus failing to survive the imposition of a foreign culture), the rest of the community will die unless it lies about its own composition, according to this logic. She also treats June's failure as does Owens: "she has achieved a metaphorical homecoming when thoughts of her bring together the community she sought"(85). Schultz seems to think Ojibwa readers will be more satisfied with this homecoming since it unifies them while reducing their numbers; she appeals implicitly to an Ojibwa identity where spiritual survival trumps physical. If June "failed in her physical attempt to return home"(85), the logic goes, at least her homecoming has metaphorical value to others.

This reading may be based on accurate understanding of Ojibwa religion (Schultz appeals to several anthropological writings; Schultz 94-95), but it sets up a false opposition between the two cultures. Arguing that Ojibwa will be satisfied to read June's failure as some kind of victory makes the political necessity of improving Ojibwa lives less urgent; on the opposite side, the arugment de-emphasizes the Christian (ostensibly Western, though of course in this context it is foolish to see it as alterior to contemporary Ojibwa life) component, making it seem as if western and/or Christian readers will miss out on June's transcendence.

Schultz further cements the differences between Ojibwa and non-Ojibwa cultures by citing Barbara Johnson: "Difference is a misreading of sameness, but it must be represented in order to be erased."[26] I would argue the representation of boundaries between cultures solidifies rather than erasing difference, especially in its reliance on the culture concept, wherein increasingly complex permutations of identity create more boundaries. Furthermore, the quotation from Johnson does not describe what happens in Love Medicine (or, I would argue, in the disciplines of Native American or western American literature, taken as disciplines). Schultz argues (like Rainwater) that "getting us to employ various Ojibwe points of view" makes readers "perceive how the members of that culture have been marginalized by dominant American culture"(93), but identifying (erroneously) perspectives and values which are shared by many groups (orality, importance of community, the unity of all things) as belonging to one group fixes that relation of domination rather than relaxing or remedying it.

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[26] Johnson, "Thresholds of Difference: Structures of Address in Zora Neale Hurston," "Race," Writing, and Difference, Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 323; quoted in Schultz 93.

Adding to the confusion of her reading, Schultz acknowledges that there can be multiple definitions of Native American, though her classifications do not allow for the significant overlap that inheres in the relations between Ojibwa and non-Ojibwa in the book. Hearkening back to her unease with treating Erdrich as "ethnic," she writes, "Erdrich answers our implicit question of 'What is it like to be Native American?' by debunking the idea that there is such a thing as a Native American view, by helping us to acknowledge that there is not even a single Chippewa view"(92). This analysis fits the novel and Schultz's descriptions of its multiperspectivity well, but begs the question of how one can separate and classify Native and non-Native knowledges within the book without recourse to "such a thing as a Native American view." An incomplete hint comes from her treatment of the effect of Western religion, where she distinguishes between wholesale and partial acceptance of the other: "Western religion only harms those Native Americans who choose to embrace it wholesale" while those "who accept only the aspects of the religion that reinforce their world view... manage to coexist with Catholicism"(88). Here, Schultz seems to claim that despite the dominance of western culture, Ojibwa can still pick and choose which aspects of it to believe "without being absorbed or rejected by it"(88); this would seem to indicate that there is no such thing as a western view either (given how easy it is to "choose" not to buy into it "wholesale"), but would therefore de-emphasize the power of the dominant culture.

Schultz's absolute delineation of differences (including religious ones) forces her into some ridiculous readings; for example, she first argues that Marie manages to coexist with Catholisicm, but then blames "Western religious and cultural constructs"(88) like "fidelity and monogamy" for harming Nector, Lulu and Marie's friendship and courtship.

For Schultz to build up the importance and value of Lulu and Marie's friendship, she must overstate the barriers to it, including the western concept of monogamy that prevents Nector from marrying both women: "The friendship that develops after Nector's death allows us to see what might have happened if Nector had been able to marry both women, as Ojibwe culture condoned"(88). So confining are the "labels of Western culture"(88) that they prevent two women from becoming "allies who work together to build a community"(88).[27] Curiously, Schultz invests western morality with a shocking power to influence behavior; just as surely as western religion and culture has rules, it has rule breakers, adulterers in this case, and the same can be said for Native American culture (even if fidelity and monogamy seem foreign to it). Given her belief that Marie is not absorbed by her Catholicism, Schultz's argument that Catholicism prevents Marie from having a friend is illogical at best, though it feeds into her reading of Erdrich's view on assimilation.

Those "characters who try to assimilate, such as King and Beverly, are failures in the views of both cultures"(88), she writes, though it is not clear that either man is completely assimilated. The main evidence for their assimilation into western culture seems to be that neither cares enough about the community (both are selfish). Beverly and King both try to succeed off the reservation (we do also see King on the reservation) and become "misfits, not because they are American Indians, but because they attempt to deny that heritage"(89). This denial is true of Beverly, but less convincingly so of King. Schultz contrasts their rejection with acceptance: "those who accept their heritage while

[27] The reading is ridiculous on many levels, too many to mention above. Part of the plot between Nector, Marie and Lulu hinges on their changing over time and maturing. The friendship between the two women is enabled by Nector's death because of their shared life experiences, not disabled because of Nector's earlier inability to marry both women. This emphasis on what Lulu and Marie can now do "to build a community" also posits that there was no community before Nector's death.

still participating in the modern world, like Gerry and Lipsha, become almost militantly heroic"(89); they "adapt without assimilating." By choosing to follow only parts of western religion that fit with their worldview, Aurelia and Marie adapt and so survive. Adaptation would seem to include some acceptance of the other culture and some denial of one's own culture, calling into question the value of acceptance. Schultz sets up acceptance/denial of heritage as binary opposites: King is a misfit because he assimilates, Lipsha a hero because he does not. However, Erdrich's characters usually find themselves somewhere in the middle. Albertine goes to a non-tribal school and works in the city, yet she is stable and proud enough of her minimal Indian heritage to insist on it as her primary identity. For most of the novel, Lipsha is torn between two worlds, and his coming home at the end cannot guarantee his future stability.[28] Finally, sticking to Ojibwa traditions, as June does in her early life under Eli's tutelage, guarantees nothing. Perhaps acceptance goes beyond admitting that one is Ojibwa and the behavior that would show this, but I would argue that merely ending his flight to the city and returning to the reservation, though they may constitute Lipsha accepting his heritage, can not guarantee future success or failure for him, much less indicate the survival of Ojibwa culture. As Karen McKinney puts it, "It seems likely that he has achieved his own survival, but the survival of his people as a viable society is still in doubt"(159). Ultimately, readers who treat the ending as positive and hopeful (inasmuch as it seems to promise the survival of a culture) connect Lipsha's survival to group survival, while those

[28] In addition, Schultz's argument that Erdrich debunks "the idea that there is such a thing as a Native American view"(92) is disingenuous in light of her assertion that Lipsha accepts his identity. If it is difficult to pin down Ojibwa identity (and I think Schultz is correct in arguing this and in claming Erdrich shows it), how exactly does Lipsha know he is accepting Ojibwa identity and not something else? The broader the "*collection* of Ojibwe eyes"(92) that make up the communal perspective, the further from any kind of centered identity that might be called by one name; given the long Ojibwa encounter with various whites, the more likely that a broadly defined Ojibwa identity will cease to be Ojibwa at all at its borders or contact zones.

who (like McKinney) read the ending with more skepticism point out the distinction between individuals and whole societies.

As I stated above, what is at stake in deciding such questions is our way of interpreting other texts, Native American, Chicano, or white. Much of what happens in Love Medicine would seem to support a "Native American reading" of this text by a mixed-blood German-Ojibwa. Indeed, as a review of the criticism shows, many critics have focused on elements in the novel which seem Ojibwa or generally "native" and combined Erdrich's use of these elements (including oral storytelling, the interconnection of all things, and the value of family) with research into other Native American stories and rituals (both from Ojibwa sources and non-Ojibwa writers like Paula Gunn Allen) to present a reading that shows how Ojibwa culture has survived and can continue to survive. Yet as seen in the discussion of Louis Owens's reading of Love Medicine, a reader could glean such an interpretation without the benefit (or impediment) of culturally specific markers and, furthermore, apply the book's lessons to non-Ojibwa lives. Erdrich's main theme (what we might call the book's payoff or primary value, other than the surface attractions of its accomplished, poetic use of English) is that love heals. To credit this message to "the essential Indianness of Erdrich's cast and concerns"(Owens 65) is to circumscribe harsh limits indeed for the novel. The origins of Erdrich's characters matter to them not because of their Indianness, but more simply because their origins provide security, even if some characters miss out on it.

Erdrich plots out the theme of love's reconstructive power through family relationships, but not all of these are healthy or productive. A comparison of the characters of June and Lipsha, especially through their "homecomings" in the first and

last chapters, will reveal that coming home, whether to the reservation or elsewhere, offers hope but no guarantees for cultural or personal survival and success. June fails to get home, and her "death haunts the novel"(McKenzie 58), exerting an influence on the rest of the book beyond what Lipsha's homecoming in the last chapter promises for the future. Her failure to find a good road home to the reservation represents the impossibility of total survival for Ojibwa or any people. Communities will always leave some people behind, Erdrich suggests. June is important to the other characters, and her death not only sets the tone for the novel, but also sets in motion the remembrances that form it. Louise Flavin makes June's very marginality thematically important, calling her "a figure more often on the perimeter of others' lives than clearly a center of focus"(Flavin 62). And as Louis Owens argues, June is a catalyst who makes things happen for others but cannot save herself. The central figures of this group of Ojibwa are easy to identify—Lulu, Marie, Eli, Nector—but Erdrich concerns herself equally with marginal figures like June and Lipsha, thereby questioning how the group both coheres and excludes.

June is the first piece of the genealogical mystery that Lipsha decodes throughout the book. Since she has been away from the reservation for most of his life, Lipsha has not been able to confirm rumors that she is his mother; furthermore, her absence has forced Lipsha to look outside the reservation for his origins, thus destabilizing his identity. Surrounded by relatives with established family ties living in the place of their origin, Lipsha becomes marginalized as tribal members mark off the "blood children and the took-ins, like me"(253). June's return does not publicly resolve Lipsha's dilemma, though it does set off the events that lead to him confirming his father's identity.

The opening of Love Medicine, however, provides even less resolution, throwing into contrast life on and away from the reservation and forcing readers to ponder whether June's Ojibwa origins matter. The first chapter is titled, "The World's Greatest Fishermen," a reference to a hat that King, Jr. wears and which his uncle Eli claims as the greater fisherman. The hat's wording is not pluralized, but Erdrich makes the title "Fishermen" to contrast two sets of identities: King's false or ironic one and Eli's true identity as the greatest fisherman. The title also refers to Jesus Christ's Biblical metaphor linking fishers of fish to fishers of men. Since water imagery appears throughout the book, a reader sees immediately that June is drowning and needs rescue (either/both physical aid and spiritual salvation). Erdrich sprinkles in signs to highlight June's past and present paths. She finds herself in "oil boomtown Williston" on the "morning before Easter Sunday," "killing time" before a bus can "take her home"(1). June is not from this oil boomtown, implicitly marked as a Euro-American place and not June's home, especially since Erdrich calls June "a long-legged Chippewa woman"; even though she has spent most of her time away from the reservation, Erdrich suggests, the home where she could never rest is still her home. Other signs mark the familiarity of the oil town for June, such as the man who signals to her from a bar: "He looked familiar, like a lot of people looked familiar to her. She had seen so many come and go"(1). Yet this familiarity does not stabilize the setting, since so many of the people live transient lives.

June has passed through the lives of many men, yet sits down with this one, too, hoping he will be different. Like the others, he has cash (from oil rig work) and notices her physical appearance, making suggestive jokes and buying her drinks. While June has made preparations to go home ("Her hair was rolled carefully, sprayed for the bus

trip"(2), she has bought her ticket already), her eagerness to return dissipates with the chance of a good party: "They weren't expecting her up home on the reservation. She didn't even have a man there, except the one she'd divorced. Gordie"(3). Elsewhere in the novel, Erdrich will present Lulu's similar willingness to change male partners with loving forgiveness, in "The Good Tears." Here, however, she presents June's promiscuity as a false attempt at reinvention and rebirth. Beyond the opening sentence's reference to Easter Sunday, Erdrich uses egg imagery to suggest rebirth, first applied to eggs June shares with her next male companion, then applied to June herself (her top is a pink shell which she peels off). After some form of intercourse with the oil worker, June shoves herself out from beneath his body into the cold outside the car: "It was a shock like being born"(6).

June does undergo a kind of metamorphosis here, with ambiguous results. As she gets dressed in the winter cold, she realizes "it was unclear whether she was more drunk or more sober than she'd ever been in her life"(6). She finds herself far from the oil town, but further from home when she decides "to walk home instead of going back there"(6). As one knowledgeable about the outdoors (a legacy from her uncle Eli, who raised her), June can recognize that the "Chinook wind"(6) coming over the plains could kill her, but she continues on "even when her heart clenched and her skin turned crackling cold"(7). Some inner part of her already transcends her earthly body: "the pure and naked part of her went on"(7). Erdrich contrasts the physical impediments and spiritual transcendence: "The snow fell deeper that Easter than it had in forty years, but June walked over it like water and came home"(7). She presents two possibilities (both of which can be simultaneously right): June is choosing death to end her miserable life, or

June is simply choosing to become immortal, to transcend her physical body. Catherine Rainwater argues that these two elements provide an "Encoded 'undecidability'"("Reading Between Worlds" 165) that marginalizes readers and makes them more accepting of alternative epistemologies, namely, American Indian knowledges. She notes (with rather too great an emphasis on the non-Indian reader's naiveté), "In Love Medicine, June's 'home' might not be a Christian heaven but instead the reservation, where her spirit, according to Native American beliefs, mingles with the living and carries out unfinished business"(165).

Rainwater's reading resonates well with later parts of Love Medicine, especially "Crown of Thorns," in which Gordie thinks he sees June's spirit (though here, too, Christian imagery complicates a Native American reading); it also treats the ambiguity of the language appropriately. Upon further analysis, though, what reader looking for Christian signs and themes will think that a woman who has just had intercourse with a stranger (and not for the first time) is going to heaven when the word "home" is written? I am not presenting a straight reading of the chapter based on Christian dogma, but rather complicating Rainwater's reading, which oversimplifies "home" into "a Christian heaven," when Erdrich more likely (given June's past) means only to indicate a general transcendence of the earthly, fallen body. Also, while Rainwater suggests otherwise, western Europeans also have a tradition of ghosts or spirits walking the earth, troubling the living; to read June as returning home to the reservation as a spirit to haunt Gordie is not necessarily to read the book based solely on Native American codes. I grant that the ambiguity of Erdrich's language enables both readings and leads to Rainwater's "hermeneutical impasse"("Reading Between Worlds" 167), but wish to turn the reading

of June's homecoming towards political ends. While deciding which code ultimately rules June's death is political, Erdrich's language makes this decision impossible and therefore makes the process fruitless. In other words, what happens to June's spirit, were it possible to determine it to be in a Christian heaven or on the reservation, matters less than what her failed homecoming means for the cultural survival of Erdrich's characters.

Erdrich herself has made cultural survival of the greatest importance, and June's failure makes this survival less complete. Readers like Owens and Rainwater attempt to make June's death less of a failure, Owens by arguing that June's death catalyzes more positive actions in the book, and Rainwater by arguing that Erdrich uses June's transcendence and the Native American values it represents to marginalize non-Indian readers into a position more accepting of Native beliefs. None of this helps June survive or reintegrate with the group she has forsaken during her exile in the white world of North Dakota oil towns. June's homecoming reads like a miracle spiritually and symbolically (recasting Christ's walking on water and resurrection), but literally like a pathetic tragedy. Whatever we make of her homecoming figuratively, it sets a somber tone for the rest of "The World's Greatest Fishermen" and starts a chaotic series of events among her family back home. Just as June's origin on the reservation fail to help her come home,[29] so too does the rest of the family have difficulty cohering despite their common origins and family ties.

Albertine Johnson narrates the rest of the chapter, which concerns the aftermath of June's death. She learns from her mother (Zelda) that "June was gone—not only dead

[29] That is, the fact that the reservation is her home cannot guarantee her survival. Of course, she fails herself as well by staying away so long. Her separation from the reservation and Ojibwa values is usually seen as the reason for her failure. I don't deny this, but am more interested in what this indicates about how groups cohere around supposedly fixed notions of group identity and origins.

but suddenly buried, vanished off the land"(7). Albertine's reflections blame the "false spring"(7), with its sudden snow, for June's death; this theme of falseness comes immediately after June's walking on water and casts aspersions on the possibility of June's transcendence. Albertine has her own difficulties with coming home. She lives "far from home... in a white woman's basement"(7), and news of June's death makes her "feel buried, too"(7). Albertine marks the difference between herself and her landlady pointedly, placing herself beneath the white woman (buried in the basement) and in a poor position to help her family. Albertine displays some self-consciousness about her Indian identity, though she is probably just one-quarter Ojibwa. She also has differences with her own mother, again showing that family ties and shared origins guarantee nothing. She jokes about reading up on "Patient Abuse" in her nursing textbook that "[b]etween my mother and myself the abuse was slow and tedious, requiring long periods of dormancy, living in the blood like hepatitis"(7). She likens their quarrels to a genetic or natural condition.

Soon her thoughts turn to June and June's struggle to fit in with the rest of the inter-connected families of the reservation. June's mother dies and her father runs off to the city. She marries Gordie though "they had to run away to do it. They were cousins, but almost like brother and sister"(8). Here, Albertine implies that too close a family connection is damaging (which helps explain her distance from her mother). June "wasn't much as a mother"(8) and runs off, "leaving her son King"(9). What makes June incapable of staying home? Albertine mentions her propensity for fun and her beauty, but nothing beyond June's singularity seems to explain her inability to fit in. On one hand, her beauty is so representative of her group that Grandpa calls her "Miss Indian

America"(9); on the other hand, she is "'like a no-good Morrissey'"(9), like her father, and genetically doomed to wander. (As I discussed above, this is not unique to Indians or Caucasians in the novel, as Albertine's father Swede Johnson is also "doomed to wander"(10).) She promises to succeed in the white world and send for King, but it never happens; thus King is also doomed to alienation from the group. Albertine sees June's death as no accident, but the inevitable result of her failure to succeed in various oil-boom towns. While it might seem that June's abandonment of Ojibwa ways causes her failure and thus her death, Albertine's analysis resists this explanation. Even far from home, June's origins remain strong, as if embedded in her very body: "She'd have known by the heaviness in the air, the smell in the clouds. She'd have gotten that animal sinking in her bones"(10). Here, Erdrich posits a value to origins (for example, June's upbringing) that cannot be destroyed (even by the destruction imposed by the non-Indian world). June has been away from home most of her adult life, but still retains the sense of nature her uncle Eli taught her. So too can Albertine detect the reservation from afar despite her long absences in the city: "I always knew it was coming a long way off"(11). This retention of key cultural values (in this case, a close connection to the natural world) problematizes the discourse of cultural survival surrounding the book and its interpretations.[30] Lydia Schultz claims that June's (and Henry's) deaths "serve merely as the physical conclusions to lives that are already spiritually dead"(84), but this does not account for or examine the incongruities between June's desire to die and her continued connection to the earth. Barry and Prescott refer to June as "trapped between the rituals

[30] I call them "cultural values" here in keeping with other critics of the book; I have tried to suggest that such knowledges are not inherently, essentially, or uniquely Ojibwa or Indian at all, and that separating them off as "cultural" only preserves damaging differences.

of two genders"(132), as if June's problem were not a disconnection from her native culture but a confusing overabundance of it.

Without explicitly saying so, Albertine compares herself to June. After hearing the news, she finds a place to lie and "thought of Aunt June until I felt the right way for her"(10); she immediately follows this "right way" with "I was so mad at my mother, Zelda"(10). Albertine's anger, connected her to thoughts of June, stems from her mother's careless (or perhaps intentionally harmful?) failure to tell her earlier of her aunt's death, but it also goes far back to her mother's past. Unlike June, who abandons her son, Zelda works hard to raise Albertine, but also blames Albertine: "I'd been the one who'd really blocked my mother's plans for being pure"(10). She refers to Zelda's long-ago desire to join the Catholic convent, itself likely representing a desire to join something powerful and above reproach (at least from the perspective of a young Ojibwa girl; Erdrich critiques Catholicism's negative effect on the Ojibwa), far different from the impurity of Zelda's mixed-blood family. Zelda and Albertine are both mixed-bloods, and Zelda makes her daughter resolutely proud of her Indian heritage. Albertine's knowledge of the land, made parallel to June's, does not disappear even though she removes herself from home to study nursing. Yet it is Albertine's desire to be and to act Indian which most mark her as different from June. Though June was physically representative enough to be called "Miss Indian America" and knew a great deal of woods lore—indeed, Erdrich marks June as unambiguously Indian—her refusal to acknowledge this seems to separate her from the group. Albertine and Zelda behave in many ways that are un-Indian, including their devotion to Catholicism and Zelda's marrying several Swedish husbands. However, their political investment in Indian identity keeps them solidly

within the group. Zelda and Albertine both seem to realize that Ojibwa identity is a political construction more than a blood quantum or even a kind of knowledge. They may lack June's woods lore, but they know Indian politics and consider themselves absolutely Indian. "The policy of allotment was a joke... I saw as usual how much of the reservation was sold to whites and lost forever"(12), Albertine comments, without any sense of irony over her and her ancestors' whiteness. When King arrives with his wife Lynette, Zelda comments (again without irony), "There's that white girl," to which her sister Aurelia replies, "What about your Swedish boy?"(15) The desire for purity of Zelda's youth is not quite gone, only now she seeks to keep her family purely Indian, a foolish dream considering her own previous racial and cultural boundary crossings.

Erdrich combines the plot of family discord with commentary on how groups separate insiders and outsiders. Aurelia continues to juxtapose Zelda's racism towards Lynette with Zelda's own crossings: "*Jeez*, Zelda! ... Why can't you just leave it be? So she's white. What about the Swede? How do you think Albertine feels hearing you talk like this when her Dad was white?"(24) Zelda's racist insults mark off Lynette as a perpetual outsider, even though she belongs to the family. Her former husband is also an outsider, and Albertine distances herself from her father: "I feel fine.... I never knew him"(24). Aurelia does not object when Zelda insists, "My girl's an *Indian*.... I raised her an Indian, and that's what she is"(24); she accepts the composite nature of Indian identity, but criticizes Zelda's racism both on general principles and because Albertine should (though she happens not to) feel some part of her is being insulted by her mother's jibes. Of course, Erdrich's own formulations of character are not racist; as I argued above in my critique of Louis Owens, Albertine is stable because she bridges white and

Indian, not despite her part-white blood. Rather, Erdrich portrays how her characters struggle to identify what and who is and is not Ojibwa, and thereby what would be considered the survival of Ojibwa culture. Her Indian characters continue to inter-marry with whites, making their racial identity more indeterminate, even as they continue to assume and attempt to fix the differences between white and Indian (as when King comments on his wife, "She don't fit in"(26), ignoring that he and his wife fail to fit in because of their personalities, not race).

As the family gathers to remember June, Albertine continues to reflect on the family's history, including how the family retained land during periods of allotment and termination. Her grandfather, Nector, was sent to government schools and so learned enough to understand politics: "He'd been an astute political dealer"(19). His brother, Eli, was kept home by Rushes Bear to learn traditional Indian lore. While Louis Owens sees Nector, now a senile old man, as a victim of western time ("Erdrich's and Dorris's" 59), Nector has in fact done much to preserve the family's Indian identity, if more politically than culturally: "he'd kept the land from losing its special Indian status under that policy called termination"(19). At worst, Rushes Bear's decision to raise one son "on either side of the line"(19) supplies balance to the group, with Nector preserving their political rights and Eli their cultural practices. At most, perhaps Nector's contribution outweighs Eli's, for it keeps the families Ojibwa and not something else, while Eli, who "raised June like his own daughter"(23) seems to have had less success preserving Ojibwa lives. And without the political designation of Indianness, there would be no reason to group these characters together at all (given that so many of them are half or more white and do not engage in Indian practices as Eli does). Given Erdrich's concern

for cultural survival, it is easy to understand why Owens values Eli and devalues (and even pities) Nector, but the logic of Erdrich's own concerns makes Nector's political maneuvers essential to preserving the Ojibwa as Ojibwa.

These differences also play out in the debate over King's "World's Greatest Fisherman" hat. King alienates himself from the other Ojibwa inasmuch as he attempts to associate himself with power (resembling Marie and Zelda's desires to obtain the power Catholicism promises), whether that of imperialistic United States ventures overseas (the Vietnam War), or that brought by killing animals. When asked the first thing he "ever got," he tries to impress Albertine by replying, "A gook.... I was in the Marines"(30). King has ignored the craft of hunting in favor of the mere thrill of killing, so he must demur questions about how he skins a skunk, for example. He tries to reconcile his uncle Eli's actual skill with his own attempts to bolster his image: "You're the greatest hunter. But I'm the World's Greatest Fisherman"(33). Eli calmly calls his boast, and King hands over the hat, infuriating Lynette. Erdrich marks both King and Lynette as disingenuous about their heritage. King gives the hat to Eli because he knows his uncle is the better fisherman and lacks the courage to continue his lies. Lynette gives the hat less significance and merely wants her husband's material possession back. Her view of heritage is rather simple, though there is something of the truth in her comment to Eli, "They've got to learn their own heritage! When you go it will all be gone!"(32) She takes pride in calling herself "full-blooded Norwegian" even though this is an empty signifier to her: "I don't know nothing about my family"(34). Like Lynette, King knows little of his family, but he is less open about claiming his Indianness. Lynette insists King is known in the Cities by his hat, an empty signifier (purchased rather than earned) that

helps contrast the city (where recognition is contingent on performance of identity or at least the appearance of it) with King's home (where his Indianness is a given, independent of performance or open claims). Lynette ends up asking for the hat back, thinking that King needs it to anchor his fragile identity.

By the end of the story, King and Lynette's violent relationship turns into attempted murder; Albertine and Lipsha return to the house to find King drowning his wife. When Albertine interrupts the fight, however, King and Lynette leave together. Lynette feeds King's ego (and preserves their outsider status) by blaming his family for his violence towards her: "It's them. You always get so crazy when you're home. We'll get the baby. We'll go off. We'll go back to the Cities, go home"(42). On his way out, King stomps on his special hat, and Albertine hides it beneath King, Jr.'s mattress, as if the hat itself represented King's violence and needed to be hidden. The family conflicts are mirrored with the smashed up pies. Albertine "worked carefully for over an hour" to fix them, but "once they smash there is no way to put them right"(42). In a smaller way than June and Lipsha, King and Albertine also represent two ways of coming home. Both are outsiders after a fashion, but King's superficial attachment to his relatives and their values prevents him from being at home there. Albertine has disagreements with her mother and pursues an education in the white world, but she makes some attempt to heal rifts rather than running from them. At the extreme limits of what their different homecomings represent, we can see King as the Native American whose only tie to that identity is biological; this keeps him coming home, but promises little for the future survival of Ojibwa. Even though Lynette claims to be committed to heritage (hers and King's), her understanding of heritage is too superficial to make it matter. Still, as

Lipsha's eventual homecoming attests, King's son might overcome his father's indifference and claim his Indian heritage as Albertine does. Albertine preserves her Indianness through continued commitment (both the declaration of Indianness and the attempt to learn about Ojibwa history and culture through Eli and others). Biology neither helps nor hinders her, though at the limits, Albertine's potential descendents could have so little Indian blood as to make them outsiders under political definitions of Indian identity (including those that take blood quantum into consideration).

Albertine's discussions with Lipsha begin the slow resolution of the book's genealogical mystery. Unlike King, who was the product of June and Gordie Kashpaw's marriage from which he should have garnered some stability, Lipsha is fathered by Gerry Nanapush, born of June, but not claimed by either. Whereas Albertine has plunged into her Indian identity based on her mother's encouragement and her complete estrangement from her Swedish father, Lipsha has less reason for such certainty. Adopted informally by Nector and Marie Kashpaw, he goes by his mother's maiden name (Morrissey) though no one admits openly that June is his mother. If at times Lipsha is made to feel an outsider (especially by King, who is jealous of sharing his mother and strangely proud of being "legitimate"), he never actually doubts his Indianness. Erdrich makes his self-doubts independent of ethnic identity politics; Lipsha is no more or less than a confused adolescent.

Albertine finds herself drawn to Lipsha, which may indicate that she identifies with his confusion (perhaps her political sentiments have not entirely outweighed her interest in knowing something about the unknown Swedish part of her). She follows Lipsha away from the house, knowing he has gone to his favorite place to escape the

family's fighting; that he has a known refuge indicates how frequently Lipsha has needed to escape his family! She joins him, and they gain respite from all conflict in the beauty of nature: "I tipped the bottle, looked up at the sky, and nearly fell over, in amazement and too much beer, at the drenching beauty"(37). Whereas in Anaya's Alburquerque communing with nature functions to remind Mexican-Americans that they belong to New Mexico's earth (and vice-versa), thus tying them together as a group, here nature works to connect Albertine and Lipsha to the universe despite the difficulty of staying connected to their families. The fights brought on over the memory of June, old jealousies, and simple racial and group prejudice pale next to the northern lights, which help them to transcend earthly trouble. "Everything seemed to be one piece," she thinks, "All of a piece.... As if the sky were one gigantic memory for us all"(37). Albertine tries to puzzle out messages in the sky, including her feelings about June, producing images touching on memory, but beyond reason: "I thought of June.... Her amusement at both the bad and the good. Her defeat. Her reckless victory. Her sons"(37). Albertine joins the two perspectives on June's death encouraged by Erdrich's depiction of (death but also transcendence), simultaneously linking her sons King and Lipsha to defeat and victory, the bad and the good. Albertine accepts the irresolvable contradictions of June's character; she achieves the "right way" to feel about her.

Lipsha, on the other hand, still feels unbalanced and blames June. He tries to figure out why King, who is mentally unstable ("I'm scared of his mind. You can't never predict when he'll turn"(38)), should have so much self-confidence while he, Lipsha, doubts himself. Yet even here, Erdrich depicts Lipsha as a stabilizing, healing influence, as Albertine thinks, "Lipsha's voice was a steady bridge over a deep black space of

sickness I was crossing"(38). Lipsha bridges different influences and is characterized by his duality, a combination of surprising intelligence and nonsense: "I loved him for being both ways"(39). She means to reveal that June was his mother as she hopes this will help him. She recoils from telling Lipsha who his mother was after his diatribe against her: "even if she came back right now, this minute, and got down on her knees and said, 'Son, I am sorry for what I done to you,' I would not relent on her"(39). Lipsha remembers only the (false) rumors that his mother tried to kill him: "She would have drowned me"(40). He rejects her for Grandma Kashpaw (who raises him), but keeps open the possibility of getting to know his father. Thus Erdrich hints at how she will unravel the mystery around his parentage. The uncertainty around his status at home (i.e. the question of whether he even belongs there), coupled with new information about his parents, drives him away, but knowledge eventually brings him a kind of security in his identity.

Despite the voyage of Lipsha that culminates in the final chapter's reunion with his father (which also refers to him symbolically bringing June home), Erdrich presents little to make June's homecoming redemptive. June dies, and her death aids no one. King buys a fancy car with the money she leaves him, but this only confirms his shallowness (which the last chapter deepens). The car also sets off the squabbles that result in Lynette nearly being drowned and the pies being ruined. Lipsha's reunion with his father benefits both of them (as I will discuss below), but taking King's car (and by association, June's favor) does not make up for years of neglect. June's spirit (in the form of a deer) haunts her ex-husband Gordie in "Crown of Thorns," suggesting both that she is not at rest and preventing him from healing. Gordie ends up lost in the woods,

where "they heard him crying like a drowned person, howling in the open fields"(229). Even relying on Ojibwa interpretive codes to read "Crown of Thorns," we can scarcely see Gordie as engendering cultural survival.

Marie's reflections on her niece's upbringing offer no solace to a reader looking for reasons why June should have failed to thrive (but which would leave hope for the survival of others). In "The Beads," Marie begins, "I didn't want June Morrissey when they first brought her to my house"(85) and then takes her in like the others she adopts (including Lipsha). Readers will not find, however, that this act of love gives June what she needs to survive. Though Marie takes in June out of love for her dead sister Lucille Lazarre, her dissociation from the rest of the Lazarres devalues any sentiments about family. Marie refers to her non-Indian mother as "the old drunk woman who I didn't claim as my mother anymore"(85), and that appellation is all we learn of mother Lazarre.[31] June's father is "the Morrissey, the whining no-good who had not church-married my sister"(86); of course, her sister hadn't married Morrissey in a church either, but Marie lays the blame on the man and forgives her dead sister. Elsewhere in Love Medicine, lovers beget children out of wedlock and thereby aid Ojibwa survival (Lulu's account of parenting hero-son Gerry with Moses Pillager stands out), but here Marie uses her relatively staunch Catholicism to scorn and sever ties with her white relations. Marie does feel a sentimental attachment to June ("it scared me, the feeling I might have for this one"(86), but June's wildness separates her from the other children and Marie. June curses Marie for stopping the children from "hanging" her as a horse thief, and even defies Marie's attempted punishment: "Brave as me, that was June"(91). Marie gladly

[31] In fact, "old drunk woman" is how scholars refer to her; see Peter G. Beidler and Gay Barton, A Reader's Guide to the Novels of Louise Erdrich (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), p. 182.

hands June over to Eli to live in the woods. Her justification hints at the unstable value of family in Love Medicine: "It was a mother she couldn't trust after what had happened in the woods"(92). Besides, Marie notices, "she was more like Eli. The woods were in June, after all, just like in him, and maybe more"(87). Marie even muses that June's origins are not with Morrissey or Lazarre, but with "what the old people called Manitous, invisible ones who live in the woods"(87). Whether a reader believes this about June's origins or not, her special connection to the earth does not help her survive. We are left with two possible explanations: either June fails because some of her family are worthless (i.e. the Morrisseys) and some of the others reject her (as Marie's other children do)—i.e. the very concept of family, Ojibwa or otherwise, fails June—or she fails because her origins in and traditional knowledge of the forest cannot avail her.[32] To revisit Erdrich's charge for Native American writers is to foreground how complete is the tragic failure of June: "they must tell the stories of contemporary survivors while protecting and celebrating the cores of culture left in the wake of the catastrophe"("Where I Ought to Be" 23). June does not survive, despite venturing between Indian and White worlds, and the failure of the book's most woods-savvy character says little about the value of a core Ojibwa belief in the connection to place and nature.[33]

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[32] Barry and Prescott argue, "Because June tries early to adopt a woodlands tradition that is no longer workable in most cases—Eli is an exception—she cannot carry into her adult present the life that made her childhood secure"(130). However, they do not explain the reasons why this tradition is no longer workable, nor analyze the many insecurities of her childhood that invalidate their argument.

[33] As I have attempted to show above in my review of criticism, for many critics the novel enacts the preservation of core cultural beliefs. There are notable exceptions, including Louise Flavin, who writes, "she depicts a cultural milieu where the sacred ceremonies, tribal rituals, and Indian cultural identity have disappeared"(64). Flavin's view is rather more extreme than my own, probably owing to a different understanding and usage of the culture concept. It should be clear from Love Medicine that ceremonies and rituals have not disappeared, and the fiercely proud claim to Indian identity of many characters ensures that it, too, remains. What I am questioning is the viability of the author's and critics' prescriptions for

Most of the hope that attends June's homecoming must be deferred onto her son Lipsha, since she does not survive the first chapter. Mixed though it be with other stories (those of Marie, Lulu, and Nector, mostly, with Albertine another important figure), Lipsha's journey towards self-knowledge becomes the book's keystone (to apply Erdrich's bridge metaphor). Before Lipsha confirms his father's identity in the last chapter, he teeters between self-pity (as seen in his diatribe about his missing, abusive mother, but also when Grandma Kashpaw calls him "the biggest waste on the reservation"(230)) and self-confidence about his unique abilities, including "the touch." His touch makes people feel better, and some even pay him for it, but while it appears to be only a kind of massage, he invests his gift with mystical power: "It's a thing you got to be born with. I got secrets in my hands that nobody ever knew to ask"(231). Here, Erdrich foretells the biological connection to Lipsha's trickster figure father, Gerry Nanapush, for both men possess traditional Native American powers. But in the story "Love Medicine," Lipsha's attempt to use traditional Ojibwa healing medicine goes terribly wrong; the episode shows the difficulty Erdrich's characters have in surviving and in surviving as Ojibwa, for their old means of living often conflict with modern ones.

Lipsha attributes this conflict, half-comically, half-seriously, to a lost understanding of how to appeal to Ojibwa gods: "Even now, I have to wonder if Higher Power turned it back, if we got to yell, or if we just don't speak its language"(236). He mixes historical perspective and religious belief (implicitly satirizing white attempts to do likewise), applying his Grandpa's theory that God was going deaf to the negative events in Love Medicine and Ojibwa history in general: "How else to explain the times my

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continued survival (cultural or otherwise); Flavin wraps the book rather too easily into the context of America at large.

touch don't work, and farther back, to the old-time Indians who was swept away in the outright germ warfare and dirty-dog killing of the whites"(236). Lipsha's epistemology (handed down implicitly to him by his Grandpa) can be considered an Ojibwa or Native one, despite the humor in Erdrich's description of it. It serves Lipsha inasmuch as it emboldens him for potential political struggle in addition to providing a divine explanation for the shocking downfall of his people due to white, western conquest: "Oh yes, I'm bitter as an old cutworm just thinking of how they done to us and doing still. So Grandpa Kashpaw just opened my eyes a little there"(237). He resolves not to rely on God or government because of their previous failures: "maybe we got nothing but ourselves"(237).

This decision leaves Lipsha with the desire to use his "touch" (a special Ojibwa gift not tainted by the powers he rejects) to help others, especially Grandma and Grandpa, whose long marriage has been haunted by Nector's affair with Lulu Lamartine. His worldview causes Lipsha to view Grandma's own gift of intuition as particularly Indian, despite intuition being a general phenomenon: "She knows things. Although she will not admit she has a scrap of Indian blood in her, there's no doubt in my mind she's got some Chippewa.... Someplace in the blood Grandma Kashpaw knows things"(240). He argues that love medicine, like Grandma's intuition, is a Chippewa gift: "These love medicines is something of an old Chippewa specialty. No other tribe has got them down so well"(241). The appeal to genetic knowledge (Grandma's blood) is unusual for Erdrich, whose characters usually appeal to "cultural" explanations (like love medicine being handed down through generations, like Grandpa's view of God and government being passed on to Lipsha). Lipsha, as is typical for such a divided character, finds himself torn

between the two explanations. In this case, he turns away from an elder's potential advice ("I knew the best thing was to go ask a specialist like Old Lady Pillager"(241)) because of his fear: "I was afraid of her, like everyone else. She was known for putting the twisted mouth on people, seizing up their hearts"(241). Clearly, old time traditions come in helpful and harmful varieties, making it difficult to know when to celebrate them and when to let them die.[34] Here, Lipsha's fear of traditional powers leads him to fall back on himself.

While much of the community's knowledge of each other comes from gossip in Love Medicine, "things I'd heard gossiped over"(241) do not equate to helpful traditional knowledge for Lipsha. He loosely assembles bits and rumors he has heard about medicines, uses his own rather immature understanding of love, and makes a plan involving goose hearts. In an irony characteristic of Love Medicine's black humor, Lipsha forecasts the results of his mixture of self-reliance and misunderstood traditions: "If it's true that the higher feelings of devotion get lodged in the heart like people say, then we'd be home free. If not, eating goose heart couldn't harm nobody anyway"(242). Erdrich reinforces the value of relying on others—the very love medicine Lipsha applies incompletely to his Grandpa—by emphasizing Lipsha's failing to follow what he knows of traditional wisdom: "I told myself the old superstitions was just that—strange beliefs"(245). This leads to his fateful decision to feed his Grandpa store-bought frozen turkey hearts; Nector Kashpaw eats the heart, though he mistrusts his wife's reasons for serving it, practically to spite her: "She knew that he knew that she was working

[34] The appeal to tradition as a solution for contemporary problems generally includes only positive traditions (i.e. love medicine but not spousal abuse or hexing). The appeal to family as a positive value correlates to this. Lipsha has some very negative experiences with family (especially King), making it difficult for a reader to embrace family as a concept.

medicine.... 'All right, skinny white girl!' She had got Grandpa mad. Oopsy-daisy, he popped the heart into his mouth"(249). He taunts her with the fake love medicine, and she slaps him on the back; Nector chokes and dies. While the interplay of Grandpa and Grandma Kashpaw is partly responsible for the death (which has its own logic given the wayward direction Nector's life takes in old age), Lipsha's narration makes evident that he blames himself. When Grandpa seems to come back to visit Grandma, Lipsha attributes this not to his own doing (positive or negative), but to the sheer power of love: "Love medicine ain't what brings him back to you, Grandma.... He loved you over time and distance.... It's true feeling, not no magic"(257).

It would be just as inaccurate to say that Nector dies because Lipsha failed to follow traditional rules for love medicine as to claim his spirit returns for that reason. His "true feeling" transcends any tribally based solution. Such a reading would also ignore Lipsha's own insight into the potential for harm in tribal cures he gains from his knowledge of the old Pillager woman. Nor does Lipsha's failure diminish Erdrich's depiction of him as one who forms bridges between people and traditions (though she doesn't complete this depiction until the last chapter). Instead, Erdrich makes clear his failure comes from his arrogant belief in the rectitude of his knowledge. Lipsha fears and mistrusts both traditional Ojibwa medicine and non-Ojibwa forces like religion and government. His grandfather's death drastically alters his worldview, as his grandfather's view of religion previously had: "You see how instantly the ground can shift you thought was solid. You see the stop signs and the yellow dividing markers of roads you traveled and all the instructions you had played according to vanish.... I was scot-free now, whistling through space"(252). But Lipsha doesn't experience anomie

only. The safeness of his old knowledge is gone, replaced by the certainty of death: "It struck me how strong and reliable grief was and death. Until the end of time, death would be our rock"(253). This new realization (really just a negative perspective brought on by his Grandpa's death), combined with the arrival of his Kashpaw relatives, makes Lipsha want to give up on family altogether.

Though "Love Medicine" emphasizes failure and death, there are some signs of the recovery he will eventually make in the final chapter, including his Grandma's acceptance of his failure (she tells him, "you was always my favorite"(257)) and Erdrich's foreshadowing of later road imagery (the road markers disappear when Grandpa dies, but Lipsha will find good roads after finding his father). Tonally, the combination of confidence and grief Lipsha feels in "Love Medicine" sets up a balance between the death of June and family squabbles in "The World's Greatest Fishermen," which highlight failure more than celebrate culture, and Lipsha's homecoming in "Crossing the Water." What is less evident is whether Erdrich preserves or celebrates anything specifically Ojibwa in "Love Medicine" that might be the core of future attempts to preserve Ojibwa people. As in the first chapter, someone dies: June despite her woods lore, Nector because of an unhappy convergence of events. June's death brings together family members, but King and Lynette fight with the others and ruin the pies, shedding a negative light on family. Nector's death brings home all of the cousins who teased and devalued Lipsha, souring him on family, even as the return of Nector's spirit seems to prove to Marie that he loved her. Similarly, Marie's love for her adopted grandson reassures Lipsha of the power of love, but this power does not extend to hold the whole family together, leaving their survival in doubt.

In the 1993 edition of Love Medicine, "Crossing the Water" follows two new chapters, "Lyman's Luck" and "The Tomahawk Factory," stories which develop the character of Lyman Lamartine, advance the friendship of Lulu and Marie, and look forward to events in other Erdrich novels (most notably The Bingo Palace). Like his younger cousin Lipsha in "Love Medicine," Lyman becomes a resistance figure in "Lyman's Luck," but he presents a much different view on the celebration and survival of culture. Erdrich strengthens the political content of the novel by having Lyman fail at running a factory (when the tribal members revolt against making cheap knock-offs of Indian artifacts), then lash out against a "they" (whites generally, the federal government more specifically) that hinders Ojibwa chances for success. He joins federal law that allows Indians to run casinos with a new perspective on gambling as something that "fit into the old traditions"(326). Lyman himself seems scarcely to believe this interpretation, which fits his needs rather too conveniently. The potential boon to the Ojibwa from Lyman's dream originates not from cores of Ojibwa culture, but from peculiar historical happenstance. Through "one of history's small ironies"(327), he envisions a chance for economic survival for his people by taking advantage of "retired white people who had farmed Indian hunting grounds"(327). Erdrich's water imagery, used primarily to posit a circularity or flow between life and death (especially in the depiction of June's last day and Henry Lamartine Jr.'s death), takes a surprising turn at the end of "Lyman's Luck" as Lyman dreams of the flow of cash to Indian coffers: "He watched them picking up their markers, heard the numbers *rolling* off the announcer's tongue, saw the revenue *trickling* and then *rolling and flooding* into the tribal bank accounts. He saw the future, and it was based on greed and luck"(328; emphasis added). Ojibwa survival will depend on a

combination of "old traditions" of games of chance that are not uniquely Ojibwa at all and, in an irony Lyman relishes, the greed of whites to obtain even more. Lyman himself transforms from an idiosyncratic individualist to a political figure looking out for the good of others, suggesting a bridge between the Lipshas of "Love Medicine" and "Crossing the Water."

"Crossing the Water" contrasts two sets of fathers and sons and brings full circle, albeit with mixed results, Erdrich's meditation on the value of home and origins for Ojibwa survival. First seen on the reservation at the time of June's death, King Howard Kashpaw, Jr. now hides in his own home, avoiding his father and focusing on a bathroom border decoration depicting women carrying jars: "always they came out in single file again. They never stumbled. They never had to steady their jars. Their tread calmed him. Below the cracked tiles they walked in seamless gowns"(329). The decoration represents an order and steadiness Howard's life with King, Sr. and Lynette lacks. His father moans about Gerry Nanapush breaking out of prison and hunting him down, while Lynette scolds him: "She said his father could only think about himself. She screamed until the women on the wall trembled"(330). While Erdrich does not quite claim anywhere that a solid family life guarantees success, happiness, or survival, she does condemn selfishness in many places. Lynette and King's inability to help each other or even be willing to try forecasts their failure; at the same time, Erdrich holds out hope to the reader in the form of the women on the wall, who keep carrying their burdens despite the family argument: "The miracle was that they stayed put together, flowing forward, moving around him in a circle"(330).

Howard will get no help from his home life, so he starts to distance himself from it. Hiding in the bathroom with the alternate family represented by the jar-carriers is one step, but more importantly, Howard chooses to dissociate himself from his father's name. He chooses to go by his middle name at school and delights in writing his new name and thus fixing his new identity: "the children went up to his desk and used his Magic Marker to write their names in the center of their hearts.... PERMANENT, it said on the marker's label. 'That means forever,' said the teacher when Howard asked. 'It won't erase.' 'Good,' said Howard"(330). In the story of Howard's name change, Erdrich melds the theme of family's failure with the importance of being sure in one's identity, which sets up Lipsha's quest in this chapter. Howard looks at his new name on the paper heart: "something moved inside of him. He felt a jolt of strangeness. For a moment he was heavy, full of meaning. Howard was sitting there. Howard was both familiar and different"(331). Howard feels his new identity biologically, suggesting a greater importance for Lipsha's search for his father.

Lulu tells Lipsha that her son Gerry Nanapush is his father, motivated by a desire to do right by Lipsha and her desire to "gain a grandson"(336). That she and others have withheld the information for all of Lipsha's life sends a mixed message about the importance of family and origins. On one hand, Lipsha has developed into a smart, helpful, sensitive (if odd) young man without knowing his real origins, thanks to the love of Grandma and Grandpa Kashpaw, who try to raise him as family. For one so young, he has lived a full life (as he describes himself, "Lipsha Morrissey, who'd learned so much in his short life"(337)). On the other hand, Lipsha's extended family (and the larger tribe as well) has created a discourse of illegitimacy around Lipsha that undermines his

identity and thus robs him of the vitality Howard gains from his identity. He responds to Lulu with the knowledge he has gained about himself from others: "my blood mother wanted to tie a rock around my neck and throw me in the slough"(335). Lulu begins the unraveling of discourse around Lipsha's genealogy: "That's what you always been told"(335). To regain a more stable identity, Lipsha must confront others' conceptions of him, even those whose opinions he doesn't value, like "King who had hounded me with dim conceptions"(343).

Lipsha chooses to listen to Lulu because he believes the information might help him, but again Erdrich shows that knowledge of origins can guarantee nothing: "Lipsha Morrissey who was now on the verge of knowing who he was. I was confused"(337). Despite his being scared of Lulu, he listens and learns Gerry is his father; the scene contrasts pointedly with Lipsha's refusal in "Love Medicine" to learn from the equally scary Pillager woman. The new knowledge, which "could make or break"(337) Lipsha, first scares him away from the rest of his family; he thinks, "More than anything, I resented how they all had known"(339). He blames "mass confusion"(338) for his theft of money that will send him to the Twin Cities. His confusion even leads him to join an alternate family, the Army. A recruiting poster of "two grinning boys"(339) attracts him like Howard's bathroom decoration family. A short time hanging out with grizzled Native American Vietnam and World War II veterans forecasts his bleak future: "I would be a veteran like these guys.... Not much in that, less than nothing"(340). The conclusion that "This here was yesterday's action army"(340) sends him on a quest to find his father.

In this episode, Erdrich points to a disparity between the government-imposed order of the Army's artificial family and the potential in knowing one's authentic family, though she does not dilute in any way the strength of Lipsha's extended familial bond with his grandparents. Lipsha has no guarantee his father will offer him anything, and the reader must wonder what potential value the quest for the father holds. Lipsha will not replace his grandparents with his father, and Gerry's incarceration puts a damper on the possibility of them starting a fruitful relationship. Yet the very chance of adding another piece to his identity, which should be daunting given the confusing array of identities Lipsha has had to juggle already, excites him. He even spends time being pleasant with his half-brother King in order to locate Gerry. Now that he knows his parents' identities, Lipsha is at ease with the once-intimidating King: "I didn't even care to flaunt that I belonged. Belonging was a matter of deciding to. I decided I belonged.... I was a real kid now, or halfway real"(348). Still, these decisions only make sense given the biological warrant for Lipsha's belonging.[35] His sense of authenticity supports a new confidence. Lipsha even begins to tie his knowledge of cards to his newly discovered genealogy: "I learned to crimp from [Lulu] before I ever knew she was my grandmother.... The blood tells. I suppose there is a gene for crimping in your string of cells"(349). He questions King about Gerry's personality, as if the shape of his father's life will genetically determine his own future: "I wanted to know what kind of seed I had sprung from"(350).

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[35] As Walter Benn Michaels argues in linking cultural identity to racial identity, for cultural practices to belong to a group to the extent they have a right to it (he uses the example of African-Americans having a right to black music, but Lipsha's sense of belonging fits too), "there must be some special relation between race and culture such that racial identity counts as importantly determining cultural identity"(Michaels 129). Lipsha has always performed the same practices as the rest of his extended family, only without a known genealogy; now he can make himself belong by doubling Ojibwa practices with verifiable Ojibwa birth (to paraphrase Michaels' description of Slim Girl in Laughing Boy, 126).

When Gerry arrives, fleeing the law, the long-missing father quickly assesses the situation without letting King in on the familial secret. This helps Lipsha and Gerry to work together at cards to win back the car bought with June's insurance money. Fittingly, Lipsha wins by dealing himself "a perfect family. A royal flush"(358). Lipsha is now the son of Miss Indian America and a Chippewa hero; iconically, at least, they are the perfect family, thought practically speaking they do not really form one. Howard aids Gerry's escape from the police. Just as Lipsha gains the chance to grow close to his father, Howard tries to turn his in. As the police call at the door, Howard runs out yelling, "He's here." But Howard does not mean Gerry, and Lipsha gets a chill when he sees this: "that was what scared me most. Him screaming his own dad's name. 'King's here! King's here!'"(359) Howard ends up playing dead when the police fail to take his father away, as if he cannot abide living with King any more. Meanwhile, the trickster figure Gerry has disappeared.

Lipsha ends up in a better position than King, taking the car to go look for his father. The car's resemblance to June ("nicks and dents in the beautiful finished skin," the "racy invert line of the hood"(360)) embodies the strange family reunion that closes Love Medicine. Without really knowing where he is going, Lipsha begins driving "the tangled highways"(360), which represent the twisted skeins of genealogy, in a "general homeward direction"(361). Gerry's surprising emergence from the trunk sends the family not home (though their reunion implies the togetherness of home) but to Canada, where Gerry can elude police. There is promise in the reunion and even the suggestion that knowing one's origins can be empowering. Gerry helps Lipsha, for instance, by telling him a genetic flaw in their hearts will get him out of the Army: "You're a Nanapush

man.... We all have this odd thing with our hearts"(366). However, the Army would have discovered this much during a routine physical, reducing the significance of Gerry's information from something that saves his life to mere fatherly sharing. Since Gerry has been absent from Lipsha's life, these shared moments do matter, but they do not generate the will or the means for Lipsha (or anyone) to survive. Because the father-son reunion works well structurally to close up loose ends in the book, it is too easy to read the ending as redemptive or celebratory. In a novel where long periods of time spent loving others (loving "over time and distance"(257) as Lipsha characterizes Nector's love for Marie) constitute the power of family, Gerry and Lipsha's brief time together does not create family.[36] Only biology links them.

David Murray reads Gerry's involvement approvingly within the context of other Native American novels, where positive father-figures are in short supply: "Louise Erdrich's concern for the ambiguous legacy of Indianness is powerfully addressed in generational and family terms, notably in Love Medicine, where the father, unlike the failed figures of so many novels, actually himself represents a positive blending of past and present which can help his son"(Murray 96). This reading resonates with the style of Love Medicine, in that Erdrich uses blending and bridging metaphors to suggest ways for modern Ojibwa to continue being Ojibwa in a hostile world; however, the novel's

[36] An interesting corollary is Gerry's relationship with his wife, Dot Adare. In "Scales," Gerry impregnates her through jail bars and pantyhose and later escapes prison to see baby Shawn. Critics have pointed out quite rightly that Erdrich uses these scenes to make Gerry a trickster figure like his namesake Nanabozho; for example, Catherine Catt ("Ancient Myth in Modern America: The Trickster in the Fiction of Louise Erdrich," The Platte Valley Review 19 (1991), 71-81) argues that his exploits give "hope to those who know about him"(77) and tries to link Lipsha's fate to Gerry's trickster abilities: "As Lipsha's meditations end the novel, it appeals likely that Gerry's ability to survive will be carried into the future"(77). Less emphasis has been placed on how little time Gerry spends with any of his family (and Catt does note that the Trickster is traditionally "lawless and anti-social"(75)). At best, his political battles redeem his absenteeism. At worst, his actions paint him as irresponsible. Gerry's primary value derives from his symbolism, not actual deeds, making it hard to believe that he increases anyone's chance of survival but his own.

concern with genealogy and family life demand more actual fathering from father figures like Gerry. Clearly, Howard's rejection of King indicates King is a poor father, consistent with his generally poor character, but what does Gerry do to make him any better? Like Lipsha's mother June, Gerry works one way as a literary device and another as a political symbol. June's death is a catalyst for the stories in the novel, but it also shows the failure of Erdrich's cores of culture to sustain Ojibwa life. Similarly, Gerry's reunion with his son wraps up the story line of Lipsha's confusion, conferring genealogical legitimacy and making it easier for Lipsha to return to the reservation. Lipsha thinks, "To be a son of a father was like that. In that night I felt expansion, as if the world was branching out in shoots.... I felt the stars. I felt them roosting on my shoulders with his hand"(366). Erdrich appeals to a vaguely Native American belief in the connection to the universe in describing Lipsha's feeling of completion and expansion, and his return home complements this. The novel ends with Lipsha's thoughts on driving back to the reservation. He remembers that an ocean once covered the Dakotas "and solved all our problems"(367), but concludes, "the truth is we live on dry land"(367). His words would seem to imply that henceforth Lipsha will confront the realities of life instead of daydreaming, but the language of home is laden with sentimentalism nonetheless: "A good road led on. So there was nothing to do but cross the water, and bring her home"(367). The reference to him finally succeeding in getting June (figured here as the car) home completes the opening chapter's failed promise, but Erdrich has already stripped "home" of much of its power.

Practically speaking, Gerry's continued flight from the law and by extension his family weakens the value of home and origins for continued survival. Gerry declares he

will visit his wife and daughter in Canada, but this will not constitute a home: "I won't ever really have what you'd call a home"(362), he tells Lipsha, echoing Call's sentiments in Lonesome Dove. His commitment to Indian causes (represented by his membership in AIM and his standing up to non-Indian authority; see 341) suggests how he can help Lipsha and others, but his constant running counteracts his usefulness. He will remain on the run, and Lipsha will return to a home lessened by his father's perpetual absence. He learns from his father that they are both "cons," for example, but reflects, "since we were splitting up, that did not give me a whole lot of consolation"(365). Whatever poetic language Erdrich applies to the reunion, the separation offers no consolation. Lipsha learns what kind of "seed" he comes from, but also realizes that neither family biology (inherited traits like his bad heart) nor family politics (June's claiming King and not Lipsha) guarantee success or failure: "The son that she acknowledged suffered more than Lipsha Morrissey did"(367). Given the very tenuous relationship between family stability and survivability in Love Medicine, Erdrich's call for Native writers to celebrate contemporary survivors and cores of culture promises nothing.

In the end, Love Medicine leaves readers with no solutions to the problem of survival for modern Ojibwa that Erdrich depicts. Many of her characters' core values, the foremost of which is the value assigned to home and family, are shared with most other cultures in the world. When the "love medicine" of Lipsha and others works to bring people together to live successfully, its efficacy does not derive from any specifically Native American ritual or essence. Erdrich celebrates the Ojibwa "cores of culture" even where these hold no promise for future survival.[37] Instead, her characters

[37] These core values don't actively harm the culture, either, but their inefficiency calls into question the value of celebrating them.

value "home" and Ojibwa identity on the principle that it belongs to them alone (and has not been lost "in the wake of the catastrophe" that befell the peoples native to the hemisphere). Even the plot of coming home, so central to the book's structure, has two outcomes, June's and Lipsha's. Erdrich's survivors succeed independently of how much is Indian about them, just as some of them fail despite being quite Indian (according to the book's own measure of this). As Scott Sanders writes, "If you were drawing a graph of what remains distinctly Indian about them, the curve, as it passes through our time, would be heading unmistakably towards zero"(Sanders 9). Love Medicine does detail the lives of contemporary survivors, but provides no essentially Indian medicine that can insure the survival of future Ojibwa or non-Ojibwa.

CHAPTER 5

The Father One Cannot Acknowledge: Genealogy and Identity in Nash Candelaria's Memories of the Alhambra

Jose Rafa, the protagonist of Nash Candelaria's Memories of the Alhambra (1977), takes to extremes the concern of some Mexican-Americans to prove the value of their stock by establishing blood ties to Spain. Like Frank Dominic in Rudolfo Anaya's Alburquerque, Jose Rafa concerns himself with tracing his genealogy beyond New World encounters to the Old World of Spain; indeed, he travels all the way to the monument to Hernan Cortes in Merida. His long journey from home results in his death but fails to settle the matter of his identity, though his last thoughts tentatively make him "A new race. The New Mexican."[1] Candelaria presents Rafa's memories as ultimately false and replaces them with a new world identity that, while it has new world memories, foregoes the lure of the past. Through Rafa's failed quest, Candelaria exposes the folly of tracing genealogy beyond the New World encounter that produced Chicanos; through the reflections of Rafa's son Joe, Candelaria presents the Chicano as a new race, with all the problems that attend racial thinking.[2] If in its main plot, the novel devalues notions of racial purity, at its limits, it reestablishes them in the form of the Chicano. Thus, Candelaria's genealogy of Mexican-American life denies the possibility of a pure European past for any Chicano, but does not deconstruct the integrity of the new race it posits, leaving intact an essence that would explain Chicano life. Memories of the

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[1] Nash Candelaria, Memories of the Alhambra (Palo Alto: Cibola Press, 1977), 173; all subsequent references to the novel will appear in parentheses in the text. Candelaria spells the name Jose without an accent over the 'e,' and I have preserved his usage.

[2] Much of what Candelaria argues for Chicanos applies to Mexicans generally, but his novel is so concerned with people who are located in New Mexico and California that it would be a disservice to elide the differences between Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the book.

Alhambra thus serves as a document supporting the Chicano Movement, but can also be read in the context of the other works under consideration as a meditation on national and ethnic group identity.

Candelaria prefaces his quest novel with an oft-used quotation from T.S. Eliot's "Little Gidding": "We shall not cease from exploration/ And the end of all our exploring/ Will be to arrive where we started/ And know the place for the first time"(Candelaria 5). Candelaria uses the stanza as a combination of tease and moral: his protagonist Jose Rafa does not really arrive where he started (figuratively or literally), nor does he know the place (his home, be it New Mexico or Los Angeles). Just before his death, he knows only that he has found a false answer by looking for his heritage in Spain. His insights into belonging to the New World are muted and fragmentary. While Jose does not fulfill the promise of Eliot's words, Candelaria does filter his failure through son Joe's consciousness, suggesting that the next generation will be more self-aware. If Jose's search for his identity in the past fails, at least Joe will have a more realistic idea of his own identity. Politically speaking, Candelaria favors Joe's awareness of himself as a Chicano, a new world personality, over Jose's self-deluding genealogy. At the same time, Joe's own conception of Chicano identity runs the danger of essentializing a composed identity by turning it into "a new breed"(184), fixed to a certain biology.

This plotting device defers the promise of Chicano identity onto the next generation; combined with Eliot's quotation, though, it also suggests that the quest will never end. A. Robert Lee has suggested that readers looking for a bold political statement of Chicano identity may be disappointed by Candelaria's pacing: "If, at times, Candelaria has been felt to go too slowly, to risk a certain inertness, he cannot be faulted

for ambition. His fiction seeks nothing less than to remember a whole multicultural ebb and flow in the making of *chicanismo*"(Lee 329). Candelaria captures the quest for identity, but hints at more than presents the end result, making Memories of the Alhambra much less utopian fantasy (like Anaya's Alburquerque) and more a tragedy.

The opening and closing of Memories of the Alhambra focus on the aftermath of a father's death. This simple structuring device allows Candalaria to present attitudes as they change through the generations. The novel opens with Jose's terse thoughts on his father's passing: "The patriarch was dead"(7). Jose's use of the very formal "patriarch" (instead of a familiar form like "father," or a possessive like "my father") distances him from his family and positions his father as an almost omnipotent ruler. The stuffiness of Jose's description reveals his estrangement from his father, extended family, and at the utmost limits, his people or race. Now that the patriarch is gone, Jose's life opens up to new possibilities, but also new problems. He feels "on the precipice of a crisis"(7). Losing his father reveals to him a need to understand his own past and to be more than the simple farmer his father was.

Jose reflects as he drives from the modern metropolis of Los Angeles to his old home, Albuquerque (named "Albuquerque, New Mexico"(7) in a show of Jose's anxiety about the smallness of his origins compared to the larger world of Los Angeles), and specifically the section named Los Rafas (for his family). Albuquerque has changed from his boyhood into a metropolis, but "[o]ne thing had not changed. The dust"(7). The dust links the physical setting (the arid desert, but also the cemetery where the patriarch is being interred) to the history played out there; dust represents not just the passing of one man, but all those who have passed before. It also represents poverty and the primitive,

for though Albuquerque may be a modern city, the Rafas' home is found down a "rutted way so covered with dust that you would not believe it was ever paved. A road one did not see. A road that one could feel and breathe"(9). The vital connection he feels with the road foreshadows his failure to recognize that he belongs to New Mexico, not Spain.

Against the broad backdrop of lives past, Jose's family engages in petty squabbles which, it soon becomes clear, typify their family's behavior. Siblings argue over who belongs in the lead car during the funeral procession, and Jose's sister Juana tries to mark him as an outsider: "You weren't here all the time he was sick. You were in California getting rich. So why should you care whether or not you're in the first car?"(8) Jose returns their desire to push him away with his own desire to get away: "He glanced past his wife with a fleeting look of desperation, of frustrated entrapment"(8). He has been away since he and his wife "left Albuquerque forty years ago... to get away from all this. Yet the place would not let them alone"(9). Clearly, Jose leaves Albuquerque the first time to escape the petty squabbles of his family, who are depicted consistently as small minded and jealous, even arguing during the funeral "like dogs quarreling over a bone"(9). Moreover, Jose escapes literally and figuratively from his past, and Candelaria has his protagonist connect his family's small-mindedness to the fate of all New Mexicans. Jose aligns himself with California and the new, leaving behind old New Mexico.

Through Jose's perspective we see the rural lifestyle of the other Rafas as simple but not noble. His brother Carlos covets the land he may inherit: "There was avarice on Carlos' face. Even his feet rested tenderly on the ground so as not to despoil the precious land which seemed more valuable than life to him"(9). Jose's cousin and friend

Herminio now provokes not camaraderie but pity: "Jose felt the touch self-consciously, seeing the rich texture of his suit in contrast to his cousin's calloused paw and threadbare sleeve"(10). Jose acts condescendingly at times, but he shows that his family has some self-awareness of their poor behavior. His sister Juana declares a need to rush home, implying that others will take objects from her father's home before she can. Jose confronts her: "You mean they'll steal everything before you get your hands on a share?"(10) He reads her thoughts and smiles "to let he know that he knew. She looked away from him. Thieves, his expression said. Goddamned Indian thieves"(10). The tacit accusation of racism cuts two ways, for if we read the Rafas as being of pure Spanish blood (they seem to think this, but it's rather unlikely), they are descended from thieves who stole Indian land generations before; if we see them as mestizos, they are hating a part of themselves and demonizing their Indian roots.[3]

Though he acts disapprovingly, Juana's attitude mirrors Jose's own, for he too is ashamed of his family and will racialize its flaws by seeking a purer heritage in Spain. As he tells his wife, "These are not my sisters, my brother. Look at their brown, greedy faces. Listen to their accented speech. We're not members of the same family. We're not even members of the same race"(12). Candelaria exposes the deep illogic of his racial thinking, for Jose is convinced that "He was *someone*"(12) and that tracing his genealogy "back to the root of things, to the beginning—to the conquistadors"(12) will prove it, but he also disavows his immediate family: "These pretenders he had thrown out of the house were not his family. Not his siblings. He was more than that"(12). One

[3] Jose's denial of his Indian heritage, which would make him like every other Mexican more than it would make him "Native American" (which is only approached as a possibility in the novel when Jose thinks of Pocahontas as an ancestor (173)), confuses the reader about the truth of their identity. Candelaria does suggest that even pureblood Spanish-Americans should adopt a new world identity (Chicano/a), but also has Jose remember his Indian heritage late in his quest (172-3).

might expect that Jose would reflect instead on how he had made something of himself despite his humble origins; instead, he hopes to show he was always something because of his roots while, paradoxically, his siblings (with the same heritage) are nothing. He makes the mistake Michel Foucault cautions against in his description of genealogy as historical method. Offended by the dust of his home and behavior and brown skin of his siblings, Jose seeks something pure in his past: "Jose looked past his mother... past the apple orchard toward the river. But his thoughts carried him farther. Across the ocean to the source, the beginnings. To a place he had never seen that was some secret, essential part of himself"(13). A. Robert Lee calls this "his dynast's dream of 'pure' Castilianism"(Lee 329). Foucault writes that genealogy "opposes itself to the search for 'origins'"("Nietzsche" 77). Foucault reads Nietzsche as challenging the notion of *Ursprung* (original, original basis) because he sees it as "an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities"("Nietzsche"78). Foucault argues that this pure past is an illusion, that identity springs from a series of historical accidents, but Jose's disgust drives him on his impossible quest of finding origins that will never be able to explain why he differs from his family. Nonetheless, Candelaria uses Jose's self-hatred to illuminate a certain type of Chicano thought that defends itself against the insult of Anglo America by aspiring to its own imperialist past.

In wife Theresa, Candelaria combines Jose's longing to escape his dusty origins through the appeal to long forgotten ones with a typically American desire to climb the social ladder. Her family has "lived in New Mexico for over two hundred and fifty years... [y]et Theresa did not feel that it was home"(13). She also distances herself from

recent immigrants from Mexico to California: "These were not her people, these latter day migrants from below the Rio Grande River, these Chicanos who huddled protectively under the shelter of common language and common appearance"(13).[4] Even though she doesn't feel at home in New Mexico, she nonetheless feels a Daughters of the American Revolution-type pride in the duration of her family's life in what is now the United States. Her pride joins with Jose's distaste for his own family to move them to California, rejecting a free house on the Rafa land. In California, she wants to live not in "Frijole Flats" but with an "everybody else"(16) she defines implicitly as non-Mexican. She dreams of assimilation with Anglo-American society not because it seems racially superior, but because it seems less primitive. She looks back on the transformation she longed for as a newly married woman: "No longer content to be a brown-skinned chula of the ranchitos, but a modern woman"(16). She envisions both her race (and the color that symbolizes it) and her position in life changing; modernity is clearly raced as Anglo for Theresa.

Her son Joe (significantly he's not Jose, Jr.) embodies her efforts to become more modern. Candalaria depicts him at "his suburban ranch house"(17) surrounded by modern conveniences like telephone and automatic dishwasher. Joe works as a filter for us to see Jose's change and ambivalence about being Mexican-American: "Joe understood his father's feelings about the family. Hadn't he had them too?"(17) A feeling from "a deep hidden place"(17) tells him to be ashamed of his New Mexico relatives. Most of his distaste for them springs from their treating him as an outsider, and

[4] Theresa seems to be misusing the word here, though the reasons for doing so are arguable. Either she lacks a grasp on the word's definition (recent migrants would not be Mexican-Americans at all, but Mexicans, especially since she highlights their migrant, not immigrant, status), or Candelaria wants to show solidarity among people of Mexican descent.

Joe responds by racializing and degrading them: "browner even than he, with their Spanish-accented English"(17). They close him off with their secrets, and he finds reasons—his father's reasons—for staying away.

However, when Jose disappears after the patriarch's funeral, Joe reacts with disdain for his father's obsession: "Conquistadors! Joe thought. Son of conquerors. Bullshit!"(18) Jose leaves his wife and country based on the promises of a fraud who sells phony genealogies, abandoning his real family for a fantasy heritage. Joe tries to restore the family by visiting the genealogist, Alfonso de Sintierra ("without land"). Sintierra affects gentlemanly behavior and appeals to Joe's assumed interest in being a gentleman with important lineage by appending "de" to his name; Joe refuses the addition: "'It's Rafa,' he said firmly. 'Not de Rafa'"(20). Joe answers Sintierra's musings about his family's roots with his own humbler alternative: "'de Rafa. Sevilla? Barcelona? Madrid? No. Barcelona.' Now Joe did smile. 'Beanfield, New Mexico. By way of Tortilla Flats, California. 'I was born in Los Angeles. My parents are from New Mexico.'"(20). The exchange reveals that Joe is more at peace with his origins in the New World than Jose, who, Joe thinks, would be frustrated could he not "place" Sintierra: "Not so much a failure in a guessing game but more an unanswered mystery about something vital to his own sense of knowing where he stood"(20). Joe's acceptance of his identity means he doesn't need to compare himself to others, nor improve his own genealogy. Jose, however, goes to Sintierra because he places "value" in "[k]nowing those threads of relationship to one's noble forebearers [sic]. Having the certainty that one sprang from noble stock. Such knowledge was priceless"(21). This is worthless information to Joe, but Jose and others go to Sintierra to convince themselves

of their importance. Joe dismisses the appeal to royal Spanish lineage by applying historical perspective: "But we lost.... And losers don't get many pages in history books"(22). Having descending from Spanish royalty will not bring back those parts of Mexico lost to the United States over the years; it will not help Joe or any other Chicano, but even Joe sees that the desire for the downtrodden to belong to something could make them believe Sintierra's flattering lies.

Jose's trip to Mexico to track down leads secured by Sintierra yields mixed results. At first, he feels "this was his place to be what he considered his true self"(23). His self-conception seems mistaken here, too; his true self was the self who recoiled at his siblings' behavior and station in life. Part of his calm in Mexico comes not from the place itself, but from the fact that he has escaped home so successfully. For he is an outsider in Mexico, too, as a cab driver recognizes: "the senor doesn't sound like a Mexican"(24). Among these strangers, Jose's memories unravel. His early life resembles that of a Willa Cather pioneer, "[s]cratching a living from the high desert earth that was luckily blessed by the life-giving waters of the Rio Grande"(24). Candelaria contrasts this typically western American story with the unease Jose feels regarding his nationality. New Mexico had not been a state long in his school days, and he remembers, "The only sense he had of country was in the song they learned in school, 'My country 'tis of thee'"(25). While one teacher confuses the students with questions about their nationality (which some take to mean ethnic background), a new teacher pleases Jose by erasing England and Spain as nationalities: "'Young man,' she said, 'If anyone ever again asks you your nationality, say AMERICAN!' She patted him on the back"(27). For a child whose Anglo classmates' smug self-confidence is daunting, the teacher's dream of

assimilation holds strong appeal; it includes Anglos and Mexicans as equal partners despite their different economic and political stations. World War I (in which Tomas and Carlos serve) reinforces Jose's United States nationalism: "Jose was proud of his older brother.... He'd show those Huns"(29). Though Brother Tomas fights for the U.S., he sees that an onslaught of Anglo settlers threatens "Hispano" farmers' self-sufficiency. Just as Theresa views modernizing as Anglo, Tomas warns Jose, "The time of the Anglo has come, even here on the ranchitos. After two hundred years of isolation, our ways are going. You have to be ready to take your place in the new world"(30). Tomas does not preach assimilation, but adaptation; he envisions his brother as retaining Hispano identity even while doing Anglo-American things.

Jose thinks he can find "a new life" in Mexico City, but "the morning brought frustrations"(31) as the alien place hinders his investigations. He tries to read signs of Aztec history that make no sense and give him "an uneasy fear"(32). The disparity between the mightiness of the Aztec god Tlaloc (represented by a huge statue) and the downfall of the Aztecs before the conquistadors causes cognitive dissonance: "The awesome Tlaloc did not match the downtrodden Mexico he knew, and this incongruity made him doubt his own perceptions"(32). Jose has long allied himself to history's winners, the conquistadors, so he finds the reminder of past Aztec greatness puzzling. The happiness of these "downtrodden" people also confuses him. In the United States, he (and his son) were well-off but still seen as second-class citizens; here, young boys play freely, "uninhibited by the thought of Anglos about"(32). In looking past Mexicans for the purity of the conquistadors, Jose has missed out on crucial differences between the U.S. and Mexico. His dream of finding a noble genealogy has blinded him to key facts,

and he nearly has a heart attack when his contact (Sintierra's cousin) tells him he is chasing a lie: "Liars. Every last one of them.... He makes a good Norteamericano, that one. Shrewd"(33).

His high blood pressure, linked to the pressure he feels to prove his own "blood" or lineage is "high," forces him to bed. His dreams confuse him because he still wants to reject his Chicano identity: "Mexican, the voice in his deep dream kept whispering. Mejicano. Chicano"(35). He thinks back to high school now, a world "for Anglos, or for Spanish-Americans who were trying to be like Anglos"(35). His brother Carlos's vision has come true, but the Hispanos (not those "who were also going to be farmers"(35)) don't seem to be retaining any identity that is not also Anglo identity. In Jose's recollection, Hispanos are only farmers; once they become like Anglos (educated), they lose their Hispano identity. Jose recalls the tension between old and new ways, Anglo and Hispano: "In the world he wanted he was a stranger. In the world he rejected he was at home"(35). A race riot pitting Anglos against Chicanos embodies his inner tensions. During it, Jose divorces himself from Mexican identity while working for an Anglo drugstore when he blames "Mexicans" for stealing ham he had given his cousin. Herminio's light skin makes him appear white, and he and Jose both find themselves in between groups, a position Jose describes as "loco": "It's like I can't be either one. Can't be at home either place. In the middle. Nowhere"(39). He pits himself against Anglos only inasmuch as they make it difficult for him to succeed; he opposes other Chicanos much more vigorously because they place the preservation of their identity above their desire to succeed in the Anglo world. Above all, Jose's concern about the riot's issues is

personal, not political; that is, he cares more about how the chaos (and what it represents of everyday life) affects him than about the power differential it exposes.

Recovering from his heart episode and his dream, he continues looking for answers, though he also begins to see his quest as folly: "It had been madness to begin with, rushing off to a foreign country to find himself"(41). His deep desire to find a true self he has lacked exposes a dilemma. Either he is mistaken in his quest (and has been himself all along, which Candelaria stresses), or he has been living a lie as a "counterfeit who could only be redeemed by the coin of the realm found in another country"(41). He recognizes he may just be running away from his life (not running to anything), but desire pushes him on: "Madness to start. Madness to *not* start"(41). If Candelaria makes Jose seem daft for taking so long to see what should be obvious, he also stresses how strongly Jose feels the "raging compulsion"(41) to find some grounds for his superior self-image. From the point of view of a Chicano activist, the ends of Jose's quest are clear from the start; Candelaria's project allows him to balance the politically effective (the consolidation of identity under the rubric of "Chicano") with the dramatization of individual inner struggle. If the answers Jose reaches for at the end (and which son Joe already knows) were easy to come by, that would lessen the Candelaria's depiction of how the intensity of the pressure on Chicanos to assimilate to Anglo-American culture.

Gomez, his guide in Mexico City, conceives of Mexicans as pure Indians, innocent of the taint of the conquistadors. He marks off an Indian "we" from the Spanish to describe the conquest: "They not only raped our bodies, but also our souls"(42). Before the foundations of Mexican identity, namely twin conquests by Cortes and the church, he sees his people as already Mexican. Yet he also contradicts himself by setting

off Mexicans from the foolish Indians who accepted the new gods and doomed themselves to subservience to Spanish power. Jose confronts Gomez about his identity, and the answers are politically savvy if genealogically naïve: "'What is your heritage? Isn't it Spanish?' 'No, senor.' 'Indian then?' 'No, senor!' 'Then what?' 'Neither, senor. I am a Mexican!'"(44). Jose cannot accept this view of things, but the impression he gets from visiting religious sites confuses him, too. He sees strong similarities between the poor and religious of Mexico and those of New Mexico, despite their differing histories. He knows the Spanish conquered Mexico, but he sees few racial signs of Spanish there. Despite the evidence, he still cannot connect himself to any Indian heritage: "We Spanish beat them. We were conquerors. Yet look what happened. Our institutions won, but our people lost"(44).

The influence of Spain seems to have disappeared because the Mexicans don't consider themselves Spanish (and not even Indian); still, Jose misses these clues that would help him sort his own identity. Ultimately, the racial and cultural impurity of Mexico (its non-Spanishness) drive him away. A cantina shooting scares him; Mexico comes to represent disorder, and Jose seeks order. Another dream presents answers to his quest that he is not ready to accept. In this dream, he sees himself borne in a coffin during an Aztec ceremony. The "stoic Indian"(50) leader gives Jose a look of recognition, which Jose rejects. Through dramatic irony, Candelaria depicts Jose as walking away from the answers to his genealogical probing: "Mexico was not for him. This was the wrong place. The hell with the missing links in Mexico. To Spain! To the beginnings of the exploration of the Indies. And of himself"(51). As Robert Lee says of Rafa's choice to remember Mexico's "conquistador heroism"(Lee 330) but not the

murder in the cantina or his own arrest by the border patrol, "His, in other words, is selective memory, the wished-for over the actual"(Lee 330).

As he reaches Spain, it becomes more clear that Jose is fleeing his typical middle-class problems, "a pushy wife" and a son "who went off instead in some direction Jose did not understand"(142). He tries to think instead of the Spain of his dreams, but the reality disappoints: "Madrid. Another airport," "Bustling. Crowded. Old. Undistinguished. Like any large city"(142), "Madrid was just another big city"(144). The people, of course, are different because he has imagined them as like himself, brown-skinned. Instead, he sees "Few dark complexioned. No heavy Indian features. Just Anglos. Like—like probably any other European.... He could have been in Germany for all that it mattered.... Certainly not in the Los Rafas of his dreams"(144). So strong are the misguided impressions that underlie his self-conception of being Spanish, he has difficulty adjusting to the real Spain. Seeing a monument to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, "a madman and his servant fool"(143), he dismisses it, then sees its appropriateness: "Only here.... But then he thought about his mad, foolish self alone in the world"(143). Don Quixote's foolish questing perfectly mirrors his own, and he understands this; still he wonders, "Where are the monuments to the conquistadors?"(146) He expects the Spanish to remember those who left Spain because, from his perspective, they matter. Hunting down a book of passengers to the West Indies, he shows himself more like Don Quixote jousting at windmills: "His was an important book. Didn't they know that? Why—It should be on display somewhere. Prominently. In a glass case flanked by guards. Floodlighted. A burglar alarm in case anyone tried to tamper with the bullet-proof glass"(150). His frustration mounts as he

apprehends that not only do the Spanish not care about him, they don't even care about the important things he cares about, like the settlement of the Americas by important Spaniards like his presumed ancestors.

Spain confounds him in other ways as he continues his vague search for "some thing" where "future, present, and past converge"(153). He tries to make a connection between his boyhood and the Spanish countryside, as if his youthful play resonated with Spanish history and landscape. He tries to share his memories with a fellow Spaniard, his tour guide Benetar: "I would ride [the horse] through the fields playing Spaniards and Moors. Or maybe I was a conquistador defeating the Indians"(154). Benetar does not react as Jose expects; Jose thinks every Spaniard must share his dreams of conquest (as if they are racially grounded), but Benetar replies, "I am of Moorish descent"(154). Benetar has his own sentiments about the past, as Jose observes when some nearby guitar music moves Benetar to tears. He looks "as if the melody had captured his soul and transported it back to that beginning place where feeling once again joined the mind so that they were one"(157). Music performs as Jose wishes his quest would, to link his thoughts and feelings. Benetar explains his reaction to the song, which is Moorish: "I never expected to hear that song in this place.... It is called 'Recuerdos de la Alhambra.' 'Memories of the Alhambra.' ... It takes me back. Back. To when my people ruled this country"(157). Jose sees that Benetar feels in Spain the way he feels in New Mexico: both are descended from former conquerors whose reign has long since ended. At first, he thinks defensively of Spain ("Well! My people rule it! ... Conquerors! Conquistadors!"(157)), but then reacts to the personal drama: "he saw only this sad old

man next to him. 'That was a long time ago, senor'"(157). Jose tries to get Benetar not to focus on past losses, but the past weighs heavily on both of them.

Benetar's reflections offer Jose a glimpse into unknown corners of Spanish history and reveal a different way of viewing loss. He describes the conversion of Moors after La Reconquista: "All they lost was their religion—their souls.... My family was one who carried with them through the centuries the memory of the grandeur that was Moorish Spain"(157). Some families retain the old ways, and others convert; in either case, the people still have an identity, albeit a changed one. Spain and its various people have changed over time to the point where speaking of their essences is farcical. A. Robert Lee notes, "Spanish racial purity, quite as much as its Hispano-American offshoots, has been an illusion from the start"(Lee 330). After 500 years, Benetar remembers his Moorish roots, but accepts the changes. His father converts to Christianity, Benetar converts back and even moves temporarily to Africa. However, just as Jose's home is New Mexico and not the old country, Benetar returns: "Now I am coming back to Spain. After all those years I realize it is my home"(158). Benetar's sentiment is observably genuine and moves Jose to question his search and his memories themselves: "I don't know if it's a real memory or not. Maybe it's just the memory of a dream"(158).

The two men compare the various exiles Spain has produced, including themselves and contemporary Spanish workers who migrate to Germany. Now, however, the fact of migration—the need to migrate and the harsh reception given migrants in the United States—angers Jose. Now separated from his racial pride, his nationalism takes a hit: "for Jose, going to the fish cannery in California had been like a young Spaniard

going to Germany to build roads. Another language. Another culture. The same prejudices. *But in his own country.* That was what had galled him most"(160). Jose has mostly buried his feelings about his own country betraying him because of his presumed ethnicity, focusing instead on his individual gains. While his son Joe (see below) sees the injustice of U.S. prejudice towards Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, Jose has sheltered himself from these memories by replacing them with false memories of Spanishness. Benetar's conversation haunts him even in his dreams. Benetar presents a thesis that people of the New World should be able to solve old racial conflicts: "You have the chance in the New World to bring them together—Spanish, Indian, Anglo"(162). Jose reacts with virulent racism and self-loathing: "I am Spanish. A son of conquistadors. Maybe we can get together with the Anglos, but with the Indian dogs—never"(163). The voice of Benetar challenges his blindness: "what about your grandchildren? They refute your denial"(163). Jose sputters, "No.... Never. Never"(163) before waking up and reestablishing his racial purity for himself: "I'm in Sevilla. No Moors here, leading back to Africa. No Indians either. No taint of those dark races that pollute the blood and make a man a slave. I'm Spanish. Pure Spanish"(163). He brushes off the residue of the dream that suggests the Spanish were conquered, too.

Too many possibilities in Spain lead him away from finding a clean link to the conquistadors. Despite many roadblocks, he still believes in a pure origin: "Perhaps I shouldn't have started this crazy search.... As if I was never meant to discover the source"(166). He finally meets a bookseller who directs him to another part of Spain, "the country of the conquistadors"(165). He imagines Extremadura will be his promised land, the homeland that will answer all his questions. Again he dreams of being a

conquistador, but this time dreams of killing Indians who turn out to be his brothers and himself (168-9); the dream presents conquest as equal to murder. Once he finally views the statue of Cortes in Merida, Jose understands the dream and the dark side of conquest. The statue stands in a depressingly poor area, not in a place of honor. Jose does not feel at home in the home of conquerors: "he felt that pang for home.... But this dismal place only gave him pain, only gave the lie to his hope that finally he would find home"(173). Cortes's body, he learns, rests in Mexico, though "There were no monuments to Cortes in Mexico. Only a memory of infamy. A kind of awesome, grudging accord one gives a rapist whose victim gave you birth. The father one cannot acknowledge"(173). Jose's words show the dishonor in Cortes's actions and the impurity of historical memory. The attempt to blot out the rapist father indicates how slippery identity is, how likely one is to focus on the positive and try to fix it as truth. As Foucault writes of doing genealogy, "The search for descent is not the erecting of foundations: on the contrary, it disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified"("Nietzsche" 82).

His thoughts of Cortes and the conquest of Mexico soon bring Jose to admit to himself that he is also Indian. As he thinks of the Mexican perspective on Cortes, he begins to share it: "your mother was—He did not want to think the next words. They popped out anyway. Malinche.... An Indian. And you, child of the Old World and the New, are Mexican"(173). His denials now compete with his acceptance, for he wants to hang on to the glory of being "Pure Spanish. Conquerors"(173) while acknowledging as possible ancestors, "Pocahontas. Or Desert Blossom. Mestizo"(173). Jose feels the truth of his genealogy; like other Chicanos, he is the product of the old and new worlds, part

European, part Indian, part conqueror and part victim, though neither identity is purely conqueror or victim anyway. His genealogy brings him no satisfaction, characterized as it is not by unadulterated accomplishment, but by rape, mixed bloods, and chaos. Instead of "the grandeur of history"(174), he finds "less than the home he had left for this journey. The fear came to him that he would go on like this forever—unfulfilled"(174). Jose dies in Spain while calling out for wife Theresa and home, for he acknowledges that New Mexico is his home, whatever his heritage. Candelaria leaves the quest unfulfilled with the suggestion that the accidents of history disallow the possibility of purity. Though Jose's death suggests a metaphysical answer to his questing (an equation between home and death), Candelaria continues the story through Theresa and Joe, adding to the political dimensions of the novel as well.

While Jose quests, Theresa's memories supply background reasons for his behavior. She and her husband both feel out of place in New Mexico and struggle to fit in California. Jose's family "assaulted her life"(67) whenever they visited. Unlike Newt in Lonesome Dove or Lipsha in Love Medicine, who seek more family ties, she wants to flee such connections to the past. After losing a child, she stays with her grandmother, Nana, in rural northern New Mexico (a retreat that greatly resembles the idyll in Cordova in Alburquerque). She tries to understand her husband's flight by understanding her own ties to the past. Nana creates appeals to heritage that resemble Anaya's in many ways. She places her family in New Mexico from the time "when the Spanish first came from Mexico"(69), implying a purity of blood for her family that probably is illusory.[5] Nana

[5] Martha Menchaca writes that when the Spanish moved into New Mexico in 1598, people of color (non-Spanish, i.e. mestizos and afromestizos) "participated in the conquest of the indigenous peoples they encountered"(67). This included more inter-marriage, making Hispano claims to pure Spanish blood

claims that her people remained the same through Spanish, Mexican, and American control, though modernity's intrusion now leads the young people away to cities to become "like Anglos"(71), a process already begun in Jose and Theresa's youth. While Nana acknowledges the great changes wrought on Hispanos by Anglo culture, she believes in a preservable core identity that can only be racial: "Nothing good can come of trying to be something you're not"(71). Nana also instills a deep faith in Theresa, though Theresa's faith is founded more in herself than in God or religion.

Though her grandmother advocates that people remain the same, Theresa wants more than a simple rural life. Her various trials, including the intrusions of her in-laws, the loss of the baby, and Jose's work-related depression, deepen her faith in her dreams of success. When she gets pregnant again, they seek a new life in California: "There was ample time. Yet her spirits soared. It was time to strike out, to seek more. More than her parents. More than her Nana and her little mountain home.... It was time to leave home and claim a new life"(76). Her dreams complement her husband's, and both seek to leave behind an identity at once Chicano and poor for the chance at something more. If enriching themselves means becoming less Chicano (or not Chicano at all), Theresa and Jose abandon their ties to New Mexican identity.

Several times, Theresa finds that their American roots don't matter in California. Candelaria presents an episode from the past when Jose disappeared, rounded up by immigration police arresting and deporting Mexican workers before payday. The police condescend and spout racial epithets at Theresa for appearing Mexican: "They're never Mexican.... It's Spanish. Hah!"(124) Jose treats his Mexican co-workers with more

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possible but unlikely. See Martha Menchaca, Recovering History, Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).

dignity, but his refusal to see his resemblance to them aligns him with the Anglo police: "They were nice for Mexicans.... I'm glad I'm not a Mexican"(126). While Theresa deplores the deportation of the Mexican workers on the grounds that "they're people just like us"(126), Jose rejoices in the citizenship that protects him: "I'm an American.... Those people came from another country. They were here illegally. Lawbreakers"(127). The scene allows Candelaria to show Jose's selfishness in conflict with Theresa's religiously motivated altruism, but neither one ultimately sides with the non-citizen Mexicans any more than with their own families.

While Candelaria uses Theresa's thoughts to add to his depiction of Jose's abandonment of Mexicanness, he uses Joe to critique both parents. Despite their plans for him, Joe doesn't share many of their values (Jose's investment in Spanish identity, Theresa's piety); as Theresa puts it, "To see yourself reborn, with another chance to set things right, then to see that reborn self go off in another direction"(140). This other direction more closely represents Candelaria's commentary. Joe judges his father's latest flight (to Mexico and Spain) harshly: "the only real thing that his father ever did... was to run away"(77). Though Candelaria presents Jose's struggles as personal, he makes Joe a surrogate reader who views them as political. Thus Joe reads his father's desire to run as derivative of the oppression of Chicanos: "Ay, raza suffrida. Suffering race"(77). His family memories include cousin Dandy's emergent Chicano nationalism, later to influence the grown up Joe. Dandy places racial, ethnic and national identity in the context of power. These markers of identity matter not by themselves, but in relation to other groups: "One of their weapons is what they call you. So they can steal from you and not feel guilty about it"(78), he tells Jose. As one who has tried to get along with the

powerful Anglo businessmen, Jose hesitates to view them so harshly: "What counts is how they treat you"(79), he argues, holding out hope that racism is personal rather than systematic. Dandy feels a new identity can be a political statement, while Jose views identity mainly as a way to separate himself from the rabble. Both, however, would prefer to be called "New Mexican"; as Dandy puts it, "We're a new race. Not Mexican. Not Spanish anymore. More than just Americans. We're New Mexicans"(79). Such subtleties are lost on Joe's cousins, who continue to persecute him for being less Mexican than they. Like his father reacting against the insanity of Mexican rioters chasing the light-skinned Chicano Herminio, he responds with a reminder: "Whatever I am, I'm the same as you!"(80) He does not avoid his identity and even defends it.

Unlike his father and cousins, Joe recognizes complexities to identity, recognizes that not all Chicanos or Anglos behave one way. When his father sees differences between himself and other Chicanos, he figures he must not really (i.e. racially) be like them. Joe also finds himself in the middle of competing groups, but his encounters with non-Anglo, non-Chicanos allows him greater perspective. Though he defends his Mexicanness by fighting (he refers to his "fighting years"(83)), he also makes friends with non-Mexicans, like Catholics, Jews, and Blacks. He thinks, "He supposed that in New Mexico a Jew might be considered an Anglo, but somehow it didn't make sense to him"(83). He recognizes the political battles behind ethnic and religious identities, but rejects the "us vs. them" politics of his cousins, who would even call Blacks Anglos. "So who did that leave to be an Anglo?" he asks, and his answers preserve some divisions even while making allowances that not all Anglos are alike: "The 'enemy.' Who were Protestants. Non-minority. And some of whom were unaccepting"(83). His "some of

whom" leaves open the possibility of viewing racial and ethnic others as politically positioned (and capable of making choices that would change their relationship to the 'other') rather than racially bound and determined to preserve power differences.

His fighting forces him to transfer to a parochial school, which turns out to be a blessing in disguise. Like the Mexican children in Mexico City playing without a thought for Anglos, he loses his "reasons to fight"(86) once all his peers are Catholic, for "he didn't consider his fellow Catholics Anglos"(86). He broadens his circle of friends first in Catholic school and again at the public high school. It helps that Joe sees common ground where his father would see differences even between him and his own family: "There were even some Anglo friends.... But here, too, they were like himself.... Vices and virtues had no ethnic exclusiveness"(87). Joe expands his mind further at college, but balances himself between his father's refusal of Mexicanness and the anger of campus "politicos." He doesn't join radical Chicanos protesting for economic and political equality, but sees "their pain. It was no different from his own pain"(89). His sense of balance, reinforced by years of being in between competing identities, causes him to reject the radicals who directed "their personal compasses to the false north labeled 'outcast'"(89). Yet Joe feels free enough to answer "Si" when asked by a Chicano activist if he is "Mejicano"(92). Thus does Candelaria present Joe as the practical, middle-class Chicano, aware of his heritage and distinctiveness, but living and struggling along with others who were more alike than different: "Yes, he thought. American. Mexican. Human. Ape descendent son of God. Yes. Yes. Yes"(92).[6]

[6] The format of his affirmation mirrors that of Quentin Compson's rejection of the south in Absalom, Absalom.

Jose's hopes that his son will improve his status and Joe's more even-handed perspective on identity cause father-son conflict. Joe thinks of his son as "The first Rafa not to be born in the beanfields. To be born in a city"(112), again connecting the rise to modernity with the flight from Mexicanness. Jose drives away Joe's Mexican girlfriend Isabel with questions about her background that position her as inferior: "I told her we were Spanish. Real Spanish. Descendants of conquistadors. Not that so-called Spanish from south of the border. Indians with Spanish names"(106). He adds, "I won't have you marrying a Mexican!" Joe is disgusted by his father's overt racism, but interprets the actions as intended to help Joe see that his social station made marriage to a Mexican impossible. For their part, Isabel's family also rejects Joe, apparently because of their own sensitivity and pride. Joe thinks, "His parents had left New Mexico to get away from that maddening entanglement. Now was he going to marry into the same sort of thing? Bullshit!"(104) Joe's idealistic way of treating all people equally runs up against firmly entrenched racial attitudes on both sides. Though his mother and father may see him as representing their new life (his mother insists, "You're your own hope. It's just you.... Not your father nor your mother no whomever"(113)), they and others still pressure and entangle him with their attitudes. Again Candelaria plays out the slow march towards changed attitudes towards Mexicanness.

After Jose dies, Joe gets the final thoughts on the meaning of his father's quest. He sees "Hispanic pride"(180) as one motivation, the desire for non-Anglos who lacked power in the United States to possess something of value that could not be taken away. His father wants to be one of history's winners, whatever that says about the character of his ancestors (though ultimately he sees Cortes's conquest as rape). Joe puts this desire

in the context of "the forgotten promises of America"(181), including equal treatment for all. Where his father seeks to show he belongs in the United States by appealing to genealogy, Joe sees belonging as a right to be supported in the abstract without appeal to specific racial histories. He acknowledges the right of Chicanos to be considered Americans and the use of "Mexican" to denigrate their citizenship: "Decades after the homes in which they had lived for almost two hundred years had become part of the United States, they were still not written about as Americans. Much less Spanish"(182). Joe actually finds it easier just to admit he is Mexican that to explain to the ignorant that this also means Spanish; thus he avoids "the knowing smile. That said: 'He's ashamed of being a Mexican'"(183).

Through it all, however, Joe returns to an understanding of himself based on race. In complicating his father's wishfully simplistic genealogy, Joe merely adds another racial identity, namely Indian, to the mix. He envisions his mixed identity as making him "brother to all the other Hispanos"(183) based on "common roots"(184) traceable to Spain and native Indian cultures. He calls Hispanos "The new race. The way of the future"(184), but this identity never escapes being linked back to its roots. Joe's Anglo wife Margaret gains a measure of acceptance from his extended family that shows how far they have come in their thinking from his youth: "You're not really like an Anglo"(191), an aunt tells her, "You're just like one of us"(191). This behavior fits in with the philosophy Joe learns in college (in which only a few Anglos are the enemy), which would preserve racial and ethnic divisions while "rewarding" good behavior. At the same time, opening the family up to Margaret offers ambiguous hope for future inasmuch as it acknowledges that her positive behavior (i.e. marrying Joe and all that

implies about her character politically) has no essential connection to any racial identity. If an Anglo can be "one of us," Candalaria suggests, then the things one does (which confer identity) are independent of a prior identity. Using the words "Anglo," "Hispano" and "us," however, show that change comes slowly, as the old divisions are kept in place.

Joe's thoughts closing the book link landscape to generational change: "Though the slowly changing landscape, life runs it deep, familiar course"(191). Though the appeal to the power of the landscape makes Memories of the Alhambra resemble Anaya's Alburquerque, Candelaria does not suggest an eternal connection between Chicanos and the land of New Mexico, but rather constant change. Joe puts change into perspective in describing his Uncle Carlos's adobe house: "He felt from it a solid, heavy inertia that said: This is where I belong. No stone castles as in Spain on this new frontier, but the earth itself. Leaving no monuments after man has gone"(190). Belonging, Joe realizes, is always temporary. Despite the adobe's inertia, time will wear it back into the earth. Monuments take on the power of marking identity, but identities change, leaving monuments that tell incomplete stories, as the statue of Cortes stands neglected, or the Alhambra points to a long-gone Moorish Spain. Jose dies unsettled and unhappy because he sought monuments to false memories. Joe and his contemporaries hold on to their identities because of outside pressures, Candelaria suggests, not because of their investment in these specific identities. Memories of the Alhambra works as a Chicano text[7] in that it depicts the struggles of people identified and identifying as such, but it also opens itself up to the broadness of time's erosion of monuments to identity, indeed to the futility of tracing identity at all.

[7] We might add that it constitutes itself as a document of the Chicano movement, for all its hesitation on the issue of establishing identity.

CHAPTER 6

The Politics of Origins in Leslie Marmon Silko's The Gardens in the Dunes

In her celebrated and widely taught novel Ceremony, Leslie Marmon Silko suggests that healing the witchery unleashed by the assault of Europeans upon America will require knowledge of both European and Indian traditions. Her medicine man Betonie relies on old paraphernalia like "medicine bags and bundles of rawhide" but also non-traditional, Euro-American items like Coke bottles and Santa Fe railroad calendars.[1] While her protagonist Tayo has been trained by the U.S. military to view the Japanese as enemies during World War II, he has visions linking them and him, as Betonie acknowledges, "You saw who they were. Thirty thousand years ago they were not strangers"(124).[2] The witchery brought by "destroyers," Native Americans and others who "see no life"(135) when they look at the world, manifests itself in the sickness that Tayo feels. The ceremony of the witchery also proves the inter-relatedness of all living beings (including the Earth); just as thirty thousand years ago, all humans were one, so will they be ultimately: "the lines of cultures and worlds were drawn in flat dark lines on fine light sand, converging in the middle of witchery's final ceremonial sand painting. From that time on, human beings were one clan again, united by the fate the destroyers planned for all of them"(246). Once Tayo understands this pattern that connects all things, he is cured: "he had never been crazy," he thinks, "He had only seen and heard the world as it always was: no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and time"(246).

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[1] Leslie Marmon Silko, Ceremony (New York: Viking), 120-1. Future references will be given parenthetically in the text.

[2] Tayo's insights resemble those of Anaya's Joe during the Vietnam conflict in Alburquerque.

If Silko's Ceremony promotes a vision of all cultures being united with no boundaries, Gardens in the Dunes (1999) presents us with a much different set of problems regarding the boundaries around and between identities. The solution to the problem of witchery in Ceremony lies in combining different cultures, even if the witchery itself is mostly defined as white (inasmuch as there are also Indians who are part of the witchery, but they are the exception) and/or European. Whether drawing connections between Tayo's conflicts with Japanese soldiers and Indian-white conflict at home, or portraying his mixed-blood heritage as a blurring of identities with neither one ultimately to be denied or excluded, Silko is presenting endgame strategies that involve reaching out to other cultures, including their characteristics found in the divided self. Tayo's multiracial heritage, in particular, suggests not a politics of borders, with cultural identities carefully delineated and separated, nor even the creation of an indigenous, racially mixed identity as we find in the work of border theorist Gloria Anzaldua. Rather, it gestures backwards to a pre-cultural moment, and forward to the end of witchery promised by the ceremony, when the only division among humans (the only division we might call political or cultural, ignoring these terms for the moment as applied to human-nature relations) is Respecter of Life versus Destroyer.

Gardens in the Dunes explores intercultural conflict and appreciation, but ultimately seems to suggest that the modern problems (imperialist violence, sexism, destruction of the planet) encountered by her characters and by turn of the century society in general can be solved by a return to the homelands and a retrenching of original identity. To a greater extent than in Ceremony, Silko goes back in time, presenting her characters as they discover their respective cultures' myths of origins. As she did in

Almanac of the Dead, she also opens up her scope to include more non-Indian perspectives and stories, including for her main white characters a "return" to Europe. Throughout the travels of her many characters in the Southwest, east coast, and western Europe, she provides them with ample chances to discover the similarities among their cultures, with the garden performing the main symbolic function of indicating that all peoples are alike (that in the last accounting, all humans plant gardens, but also that all humans need to eat, need beauty, need to cultivate gardens to assure survival).

In this much (this mutual recognition of the importance of gardens as a symbol of life), the novel seems to present a way of thinking about culture comparatively that would in the last reckoning eliminate the concept of culture. That is, if Silko's characters could just confront, like Tayo, the artificial boundaries that prevent their mutual understanding, they might find a way to live peaceably together. After presenting the Sand Lizard people's need and affection for gardens, she shows that gardens have functioned similarly for Euro-Americans and Europeans. The comparisons would end in a realization that there were no grounds for difference, and therefore no grounds for "culture." But Silko puts her characters through a next step that re-draws those boundaries between cultures and gestures towards establishing a politics based on what is often called "difference multiculturalism"(Goldberg 7). This turn towards the politics of separation occurs even though her portrayal of two "cultures"(broadly, Indian and European) that once held in common "origins myths" involving gardens and a veneration of female fertility figures actually seems to invite a "critical multiculturalism"(Goldberg 7). Tracing Silko's depiction and differentiation of different "cultures" in Gardens in the Dunes will reveal a politics of culture that ultimately divides rather than uniting (as in Ceremony) and that

posits a common ground among different characters, but ends up separating them again into different cultures.

The stakes involved in these cultural politics go beyond Silko's novel and include the other novels under consideration. As I tried to suggest in the introduction, the fields of Chicano, Native American, and Western American literatures have held themselves aloof from each other, rarely venturing across disciplinary lines (until recently) for cross-group comparisons. Disciplinary boundaries have been preserved despite the fact that many works in these fields concern the same geographical and socio-political territory. Silko's encounters between Euro-Americans and Native Americans illustrate the proverbial "contact zone" of recent thinking on culture, showing how groups form their own identities in contrast and conflict with other groups.[3] It might be argued that the subject of Gardens in the Dunes is not Sand Lizard culture (the tribe is fictionalized after all) but the meaning of culture itself, or how culture works to fix differences. Silko opens her novel to the possibility, in fact, that differences marked as cultural mask a fundamental sameness shared by all people, though ultimately her characters' affections for the marks of their own culture anchor them within those cultural boundaries.[4] While Silko presents a common ground on which her characters could potentially meet to de-culture[5] their understanding of self and other, a common ground which could model a

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[3] The now-commonplace term "contact zone" comes from Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (New York: Routledge, 1992) 4. My use of the term is meant as suggestive rather than proscriptive; for a critique of Pratt's term, see Scott Michaelsen, The Limits of Multiculturalism: Interrogating the Origins of American Anthropology (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999) 196 n.7.

[4] The characters, white and Indian, tend to have a pride in their cultural traits whether they view their own group as superior to others or merely equal, but different.

[5] To de-culture would be first to understand culture not as a way of explaining their fundamental identity, but as a way of categorizing, fixing and even commodifying identities that keeps people separated, and then to de-emphasize identity formation itself. Michaelsen and Johnson describe "*de*-thinking—thinking backward—the status of the differences themselves and imagining a future not more but less complex or

way of understanding literature outside of ethnically grounded fields, she finally re-distributes her characters into the homelands that belong to them "originally."

Silko previously displayed her investment in a cultural separatism in her attack on "white shaman" poets like Gary Snyder. In "An Old-Time Indian Attack Conducted in Two Parts," Silko evinces a commitment to race as underlying culture and identity even as she condemns the racism of white anthropologists and poets.[6] According to Silko, these white writers operate under the "racist assumption" that "through some innate cultural or racial superiority," they have "the ability to perceive and master the essential beliefs, values and emotions of persons from Native American communities"(211).[7] From its roots in anthropology (she mentions Boas and Swanton), this assumption has flourished in romantic writing about Native Americans in which white authors pretend to "inhabit souls and consciousness far beyond the realms of their own knowledge or experience"(211). In trying to defend the image of Native Americans from these "white shamans," Silko displays her own racism by completely separating white and Indian consciousnesses. She attributes the white inability to inhabit, understand, and write about Indian consciousness in part to experience, but also to innate characteristics. In other words, it won't matter if a white writer gains the experience to write about Indians; he

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mixed. This means forgoing the 'saving' of cultures, and instead destructuring one's sense of them"("Border Secrets: An Introduction" 10).

[6] Leslie Marmon Silko, "An Old-Time Indian Attack Conducted in Two Parts," The Remembered Earth, Ed. Geary Hobson (Albuquerque: Red Earth Press, 1979), 211-215. References to this article will be given by page number in the text.

[7] Another assumption she criticizes is that native prayers, chants and stories are public property ripe for the plucking of ethnologists and poets; for an analysis of Silko's views on this debate in Native American writing, see Paul Beekman Taylor, "Silko's Reappropriation of Secrecy," Leslie Marmon Silko: A Collection of Critical Essays, Louise K. Barnett and James L. Thorson, Eds. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 23-62.

will still be incapable of doing so.[8] Alongside her charge that whites possess a racist assumption about being able to understand other cultures, she posits her own racist belief in the impossibility of this understanding. The "power" to "inhabit any soul," she tells us, is a white idea (and not really a power since white are powerless to do what they claim to do), "restricted to the white man"(212).[9]

In a later interview, Silko changes her tack and takes offense at the amateurism of these white shamans rather than their appropriation of Indian materials. She explains that the inability to understand other cultures is a personal failure, not a racial one:

> There was a whole white shaman movement, and it was so bogus, it was such a complete joke and a kind of con game. These were like followers of Snyder. They weren't even working; they couldn't have gotten to a deep level of fear, love, hate. They didn't have the artistic capacity to ever reach that level, even if they'd been writing about themselves and out of their own cultural experience.[10]

While she bases her defense of Indian culture for Indians only (which resembles Louise Erdrich's mission to preserve Indian "cores of culture" against the ravages of Western imperialism) partly on artistic integrity in this interview, she also suggests her belief that artists should write about their own culture rather than borrowing from other traditions.

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[8] Silko's language is balanced between a warning (a "don't do this" or "you can't do this, it's not right") and a charge of inability (you are unable to do this because of who you are); the tension between these two meanings reveals Silko's anxiety that Indian consciousness is open to understanding by others, however much she might protest that whites are incapable of understanding Indians.

[9] Given in the context of anthropological writing as they are, Silko's comments strongly resemble Vine Deloria's early remarks on anthropologists and Indians. See Deloria, Custer Died for Your Sins (1969; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), especially "Anthropologists and Other Friends."

[10] From Kim Barnes, "A Leslie Marmon Silko Interview," The Journal of Ethnic Studies 13, 83-105. Rpt. in "Yellow Woman": Leslie Marmon Silko, Ed. Melody Graulich (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1993) 53. Future references to the reprinted version are given parenthetically in the text.

While in "An Old-Time Indian Attack" she dismisses the artist's ability to inhabit the consciousness of others as a white racial fantasy, Silko wants (as a writer) to keep open the possibility that artists can capture the important experiences of others because these are shared among different peoples: "I think that it's possible that the most deeply felt emotions, like the deepest kind of fear or loss or bereavement or ecstasy or joy, those kinds of deep, deep, deep level feelings and emotions, are common in all human beings"(Barnes 52). Though she wants to reserve certain privileges of representation for true artists (i.e. not "nitwit white shaman" "prancing around thinking that they could appropriate that level of experience"(Barnes 53)), she also wants to preserve culture as a sort of birthright reserved to those on the inside, those who share this culture originally.[11]

Because non-Indians writers cannot and should not try to appropriate Indian experiences, she advises them to seek their own myths and not borrow Indian ones. Her specific attack on white poet Gary Snyder arises from his using "Indian poems" (Silko borrows the phrase from Louis Simpson) as a way of understanding his own identity rather than using his own background. Silko displays a deterministic belief in the value of origins in her description of why whites should look to their own myths and experiences: "I value the truth. We are taught to remember who we are: our ancestors, our origins. We must know the place we came from because it has shaped us and continues to make us who we are"(213). Like Anaya, Silko associates a transcendent truth with place. In this formulation, there is seemingly no escape from the

[11] Her description of writing about other genders (for her, male characters) provides an interesting corollary. While she has experienced many male experiences because the Laguna people allow men and women to "range freely"(Barnes 54) between their respective worlds. She blames "this particular stupid, great middle-America society" for the "segregation of the sexes that we have in America" (Barnes 55) that prevents other artists from depicting the other gender. Gender differences are not "inherent" but determined by "particular place in time"(Barnes 55).

determinations of place: no migration to another place that could affect identity, no contact zone in which one could share experiences with the "other," no way even of theorizing bicultural identity. This last matter should be important to Silko, who after all claims white, Laguna, and Mexican heritage, but in setting the Native American beyond the understanding of the non-native, she makes it impossible to think of related issues, such as how her own mixed origins and migrations may be relevant to her identity.[12] She generally claims Albuquerque as her home, but lives in Tucson. Her mother was from Montana; her father's family (the Marmons) moved to the southwest from Ohio after the Civil War.[13] If "the place we come from" "continues to make us who we are," what happens when one moves away from one's origins (say, moving from Albuquerque to Tucson or Alaska, or moving to New Mexico from Ohio)?[14] Place of origin alone cannot explain Silko's identity, much less that of any of the many peoples (Laguna, white, Mexican) she claims as hers.

Instead of theorizing how migration and inter-group contact may change identity and complicate the notion of origins, she fixes white and Indian roles in place (literally and figuratively). She contrasts an Indian connection to place and lore with Anglo-American disconnection.[15] Her own family history (like her fiction and unlike her

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[12] Silko treats the Mexican as "other" from the perspective of her Native characters rather than as another kind of Indian; see the example of Charlie Luna in Gardens in the Dunes.

[13] See Robert M. Nelson, "A Laguna Woman," Leslie Marmon Silko: A Collection of Critical Essays, Louise K. Barnett and James L. Thorson, Eds. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 15-22. Though his research tends to emphasize Silko's Laguna heritage (over her Anglo and Mexican heritage), Nelson does describe Silko as from a "cultural intersection"(16) and the Marmon family as deeply entwined in the history of Euro-American and Laguna contact (17).

[14] The consequences of her thinking are too far-reaching to explore more fully here, but I will mention a few problematic areas: African forced migration, Indian removal, and Mexican migration to and from "Aztlan" or the southwest United States. All of these cases require thinking beyond "the place we came from" to determine a "who we are" that Silko's formula does not provide for.

[15] Silko uses the term "Anglo-American" as a catch-all for "non-Indian, non-Mexican," but the term itself complicates her notion that origins determine identity. Americans can be Anglo-American without being from England, or speaking English, or even being white. Her ability to classify a group of people as

polemics) is more complicated. Robert M. Nelson writes, "The story of the Marmon family at Laguna is a story of outsiders who became insiders and of insiders who became outsiders—a story about the arts of cultural mediation, from both sides of the imaginary borderline"(Nelson 17).

Yet in "An Old-Time Indian Attack," there is not only no mediation, there is no possibility for it. Writers like Snyder and William Eastlake are simply unable to understand Indian ways, making their attempts to mediate two cultures offensive and harmful. Silko demonstrates an understanding of the Anglo-American writers' desire to write about and approach their own understanding of the Native American; she admits that when one asks whether "knowledgeable, sympathetic" white poets might be allowed to write "Indian poetry," "[t]he answer is complicated"(213). Rather than describe criteria for extending this right (or ability) to some poets, she turns to the implied question of why white poets should be interested in Indian matters when they have their own origins. She turns white sympathy into part of her attack, blaming the Anglo-American tendency "to cast off familial and geographic ties; to 'go West, young man,' to change identities as easily as changing shoes"(213) for the whites' failure to adhere to their own traditions. In seeking out truths from another culture, she writes, "they violate a fundamental belief held by the tribal people they desire to emulate: they deny the truth; they deny their history, their very origins"(213). Since knowing one's origins equates to truth for Silko, casting off one's origins to study another's equates to lying. If for most writers it is difficult if not impossible to understand Anglo-American identity without

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Anglo-American implies for them a shared identity that only comes from their position in the United States and not from their origins anywhere else.

recourse to their relationship with Native Americans[16], for Silko the rejection of even an attempt at this understanding forms the ground for understanding Anglo-American identity. After all, she concludes, "writing of imitation 'Indian' poems... is pathetic evidence that in more than two hundred years, Anglo-Americans have failed to create a satisfactory identity for themselves"(213).

The search for Anglo-American identity (which is of interest, one presumes, to Silko because of her own part-Anglo origins) must begin not with the Anglos' relationship with the Native, but with Anglo roots, especially as focusing on the non-American origins of Anglo-Americans will highlight that "at best, the Anglo-American is a guest on this land"(215). Silko even comes close to admiring the goal described on the jacket of Snyder's book Turtle Island, to make "the rediscovery of this land and the ways by which we might become natives of the place, ceasing to think and act [after all these centuries] as newcomers and invaders"(215). It is still difficult to conceive of how Anglos will re-conceptualize themselves while keeping their invader past in mind without reaching out to the non-Anglo. Silko's goal ("to fight bitterly to regain control of the occupancy and land that was taken"(214)) depends on white writers leaving Indians alone in order to come up with their own new myths (which paradoxically will help them become natives, inasmuch as Silko accepts this part of Snyder's blurb, without understanding the previous natives). Since Silko believes two hundred years in America have not added any new myths to help describe Anglo identity, she encourages them in

[16] As I argued elsewhere about Rudolfo Anaya, delving into this relationship allows writers to perform a critical genealogy on the nation's stories about itself, bringing the unspoken or erased into the open.

this enterprise.[17] She quotes Snyder, "Gary Snyder once said to me, 'you must create your own new myths.' That is good advice to follow"(215). Silko's advice in "Old-Time Indian Attack" does not seem to guide whites to any new myths generated by their encounter with Native Americans, for she permits no Indian topic to be written of (even by "sympathetic" whites), and she claims that Anglos have not created "a satisfactory identity for themselves" here, so one might conclude that she wishes for Anglo-Americans to seek truth in their European origins.[18]

Gardens in the Dunes also displays a marked equivocation about the truth of one's origins and contact with the other. Silko takes on the task of representing characters of many cultures not her own (white American, English, Italian, African-American, South American Indian, Caribbean), yet having demonstrated deep commonalities (not just the feelings and emotions she mentions above, but forms of worship and structures of belief), she calls in the end for separation of different cultures. Furthermore, even in its equivocations, the novel validates the culture concept. The opening chapters seem to establish Silko as a "critical" or "resistance" multiculturalist. A critical multiculturalism, Peter McLaren writes, rejects the "conservative" and "liberal" forms of multiculturalism for stressing sameness and a common culture and also rejects the "left-liberal" form for over-emphasizing differences. McLaren believes these other forms of multiculturalism depend on essentialist logics instead of interrogating the role of history, ideology and

[17] The contrast between her viewpoint and that of Anaya and Candelaria is stunning. Both Chicano writers mentioned emphasize that years of contact with the ground of the new world are enough to "place" New Mexicans in the new world, whatever their origins.

[18] For Chicanos to follow her advice would be to make the mistake of Frank Dominic (in Alburquerque) and Jose Rafa (in Memories of the Alhambra) in seeking truth in the purity of origins (which don't exist of course).

power in creating identity (McLaren 53). To the extent that Silko establishes the role of history and power in determining identity, she practices critical multiculturalism.

In the first portions of her novel particularly, Silko examines some historical situations that contribute to identity. The encroachment of whites on Indian lands, including the establishment of the reservation system and government-run "Indian schools," forces her Indians to shore up their own identity. Whether they want to be Indians or not does not matter when whites insist on racial divisions as a technique of domination. Further divisions (and thus a multiplication of identities) occur as some Indians join the white world. Silko's depiction of the ghost dance movement and the prophet Wovoka shows how historical events affect identity, though these events also throw pre-existing cultural differences into relief. Paiute visitors arrive with tales of Wovoka, who has talked to Jesus Christ in heaven and carries the message that Indians should dance together for the sake of self-preservation. The ghost dance movement uses familiar cultural practices and emerges historically because of the power imbalance between whites and Indians. As the Paiutes explain, "Jesus was sad and angry at what had been done to the Earth and to all the animals and people"(23). The Sand Lizards, like several other tribes in their area (Paiutes and Shoshones), are historically agricultural, so the appeal to the earth's destruction speaks directly to their very existence. The vision of what will happen if the Indians dance addresses their historical concern with the loss of land and power: "The winds would dry up all the white people and all the Indians who followed the white man's ways, and they would blow away with the dust"(23). Indians can cross cultural borders and become like whites; this indicates that neither culture nor race fully determine one's identity.

The clash of white and Indian civilizations forms a major theme of the novel, but the characterization of different tribes shows that cultural differentiation has a pre-conquest history, too. Her fictive Sand Lizard people's historical relationship to the warring Apache helps determine how other tribes see the Sand Lizards. Not racial characteristics but choices determine their identity. Grandma Fleet explains that Sand Lizards would fight back when the Apaches used to raid the Sand Lizards' villages, "but then, instead of fighting to the end to crush the Apaches and make them slaves the way the other tribes did, the Sand Lizard people used to stop fighting and let the Apaches get away"(48). Neither Silko nor her characters comment explicitly on the efficacy of this strategy, but Silko implies that she favors the survival of culture over mere survival in the joy Grandma, Sister Salt, and Indigo take in their particular cultural formation: "Yes, the Sand Lizards were different"(49). They preserve their differences irrespective of their usefulness: "When Indigo asked why the Sand Lizard people stayed there [the dunes], if it was easier to grow plants close to the big river, Grandma Fleet laughed. Sand Lizards did things differently than other people"(48).[19] In fact, while there seems to be no reason to preserve their differences from other Native American groups who aren't attacking them (as there clearly is a reason to distinguish them from the Apaches or whites), they hold on to their practices for the sake of difference: "Sand Lizards didn't mind if others found them odd; that's how they distinguished themselves from others"(48).

[19] Silko adds that the farmers by the river must deal with white authorities, a hassle the Sand Lizards would like to avoid, but she undercuts this rational explanation with the Sand Lizard insistence on difference for its own sake. Here one begins to see the fetishization of origins as an explanation for identity over the historical factors mentioned above.

Silko takes great care in distinguishing her fictional creation, the Sand Lizard people,[20] and her descriptions of their cultural practices introduce her themes. From the first page, Silko depicts gardens as sources of life and refuges from trouble. Against the background of U.S. soldiers and Indian police who break up ghost dance gatherings, the "old garden terraces in the dunes"(13) represent both timeless peacefulness and historical means of survival for the Sand Lizards. Silko also use the garden motif to balance specific cultural differences based on place with the universal dependence on gardens for food. The seclusion of the Sand Lizards' gardens makes them safe from intrusion and makes them a sort of tribal secret, comparable to a ritual; Silko's in-depth descriptions of how the Sand Lizards get plants to grow in deep sand compound the depiction of the gardens as a sacred, ritualistic place. Grandma Fleet passes her knowledge of gardens on to Sister Salt and Indigo with specific lessons about honeycomb as "good medicine" and broader historical lessons about the garden as their original homelands: "Grandma Fleet told them the old gardens had always been there. The old-time people found the gardens already growing, planted by the Sand Lizard, a relative of Grandfather Snake, who invited his niece to settle there and cultivate her seeds"(14). Grandma traces her people's history back to the beginning of time; therefore, whenever her people return to the old gardens, they are returning to the very place they became the Sand Lizard people. The cultivation of plants comes to represent the raising of children and organization of tribes,

[20] Silko identifies herself as Laguna; born in Albuquerque, she has long resided in and written about the Tucson, Arizona area. Ceremony, Storyteller, and Almanac of the Dead do not feature fictional Indian tribes, and Silko's desire to fictionalize a tribe at this point in her career (1999) is a subject ripe for speculation. Her sensitivity to giving away tribal secrets (see Paul Beekman Taylor's treatment of this subject, "Silko's Reappropriation of Secrecy," Leslie Marmon Silko: A Collection of Critical Essays, Louise K. Barnett and James L. Thorson, Eds. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999) 23-62) may be responsible, and this forms a theme of Almanac of the Dead. It may simply be that Silko desired a greater freedom in depicting a people than historical faithfulness allowed her. The fictional Sand Lizards are contextualized by actual tribes.

or culture itself. Silko uses plant growth, hybridization, and transplantation as metaphors for civilization, contact, and migration.[21]

Though the principal of the garden represents timelessness (because people always need gardens), the gardens and the world around them do change. Grandma tells that some Sand Lizards abandoned the old gardens to live along the river, but that "the old gardens could be counted on for sanctuary"(15). Therefore, when "the aliens" (whites) come with "disease and fever," the Sand Lizards "return to the old gardens"(15). This historical return prefigures that of several characters who return to homelands to restore their identities. The pull of homelands is so strong that Grandma, after an invasion by white prospectors scatters the group, imagines the very plants calling for the Sand Lizards to return: "How lonely she had been, grieving for her husband, for the others, while all around her the plants they had tended, and their houses, seemed to call out their names"(16). Later, after Grandma's death, the girls will imagine the gardens are advising them not to leave in search of their mother: "it was as if the old gardens and Grandma Fleet herself were telling them, 'Come home. Don't go'"(58). While this mystical connection would seem to suggest something essential and unchanging in the Sand Lizards' make-up, Grandma's stories also feature choice and historical contingency. Only some of the "old-time people" choose to settle at the gardens; no racial or essential component guides them. Sand Lizard must warn her children to share, which locates conflict and contingency even within this origins myth.[22] Some of the Sand Lizard people left after "their numbers increased" and "joined their relations who lived down

[21] As should become clear throughout my discussion, the garden symbolism works on both levels of Silko's depiction of cultures as 1) importantly different and 2) hiding a fundamental sameness to all people.
[22] Were Silko attempting to suggest a racial, essential component to the Sand Lizard people, the possibility that they would divide themselves by not sharing (i.e. by wielding power over one another) would not exist.

along the big river"(15). The gardens remain sacred in their stories, and the Sand Lizards remain Sand Lizards even if they leave the gardens. It seems the mere memory of the previous settlement at the dunes—the event that makes them Sand Lizards in the first place—can preserve their identity, though there is no guarantee it will.

This identity becomes more tenuous over the years as Sand Lizards leave the old gardens; transplantation or migration does not always work, and identities do not travel well. Though memories and stories of the old gardens can help departed Sand Lizards remain Sand Lizard, integration with other cultures makes this unlikely. Ultimately, only Grandma, Mama, Sister Salt (and later Indigo) remain. Silko suggests that the practices of other groups take over, making the departed less like Sand Lizards. They join reservation families and lose their old identity: "A few remaining Sand Lizard people married into other tribes on the reservation at Parker. Grandma Fleet said she would die before she would live on a reservation"(17). Once again, Silko places the survival of culture over individual survival, though she tempers this judgment by arguing that the reservation Indians would not survive long without their own gardens. When Grandma takes Sister Salt and Indigo back to the gardens, she keeps them alive by passing on survival lore; the tribe stays alive as an entity only to the extent that they continue to insist on their Sand Lizard identity (which they do, as I discussed above). In fact, their isolation at the dunes threatens to make them disappear if only because they cannot survive without new members. As Sister Salt grows into womanhood, she ponders expanding their family by having a baby, a way to increase the tribe's size without including outsiders. Sister longs for any company, though she keeps Sand Lizard

survival in mind: "she began to wish someone, anyone—except white men or Indian police—would come"(57).

By emphasizing the tribe's closeness to nature (they barely eke out an existence at the dunes and offer sacrifices to nature for ensuring their survival), Silko can associate the Sand Lizards' survival with the survival of mother earth itself. The lessons imparted by Grandma Fleet (passed down from the original Sand Lizard) become lessons in how everyone should treat the planet (these include "Always greet each plant respectfully"(14) and "Don't be greedy"(15)). At times, their existence is almost idyllic or utopian, though the specter of invasion always remains. As a mother figure, the earth takes care of the Sand Lizard people, who must reciprocate by taking care of the earth. Life at the gardens must appear desirable to the reader for Silko's message of respect for the planet to take hold; there must be some payoff for living as the Sand Lizards do, and there must be reason to mourn its potential loss (and to long to return, as Indigo does throughout her journeys). Silko contrasts the agricultural world of the dune gardens with the capitalistic, commercial world of the train depot, where Indians are both commodified (by travelers who "capture" them through photography) and devalued (treated as inferior to white workers and travelers).

This commodification speaks not to some essential failing of the southwestern Indians, but to the "role of history, ideology and power in creating identity"(McLaren 53). Again, such historical explanations suggest Silko writes from a critical multiculturalism rather than "left-liberal" inasmuch as she stresses historical reasons (even if these include the choice to be different) for their differences. She adds to this sense in her depiction of white Mormons whose culture resembles the Native

Americans'. Unlike other whites in the novel (especially Hattie and her extended family), the Mormons share with the various Indian groups a belief that the Messiah has returned and roams the western United States. The history of Mormons in the west has many parallels to Indian history, aligning Mormons more closely with Indians based on practices than with other whites. Power relations (including a power struggle between the old and new church) help determine Mormon identity. As the U.S. government continues to persecute them, Mormons either cling steadfastly to old practices (for the sake of retaining their identity) or change due to pressure: "Grandma Fleet thought maybe the other Mormons got tired of resisting the U.S. government.... For years and years, the U.S. soldiers chased Mormons when they weren't chasing Indians"(38). The "old Mormons" (those not in favor of reforms that would bring the church into compliance with U.S. law) even "believed they were related to the Indians"(44). She doesn't elaborate on this as a biological or historical relation, but allows that the worshipful behavior and persecution by other Christians and the U.S. Government of the Mormons make them something very close to relatives (albeit still "relative," having a relation, but not the same). During the dancing, "the Mormons looked like all the others"(29). Their banding together with Indians suggests forms of resistance to the dominant power in the west and shows that cultures are formed in relation with other cultures (and not from an essence).

Authority figures try to show and maintain their dominance by destroying the gardens of a white Mormon friend of Indigo's grandmother, Mrs. Van Wagnen. Van Wagnen and other traditional Mormons set themselves against the soldiers and against the new Mormons; she finds an ally in the Indians and accepts their Messiah as her own.

Her actions make Mormon culture a series of choices rather than a fixed identity determined by birth. Silko sets up a dichotomy regarding the use of power familiar to readers of Ceremony, with whites and Indians on both sides. For Indigo, the preservers and lovers of life seem powerless against the destroyers, whatever their race: "If this was what white people did to one another, then truly she and the Sand Lizard people and all other Indians were lucky to survive at all. These destroyers were out to kill every living being, even the Messiah"(61). The banding together of Mormons and Indians against white officials and Indian police speaks to the historical developments that arrayed forces of all races and cultures against like groupings. Mentioning the potential death of the Messiah raises the stakes for Silko's critique of environmental destruction, as well, equating killing the environment not with progress (as the narrative she works against would have it) but with Armageddon.

After the soldiers and police break up the ghost dance of the Mormons and Indians, Sister Salt and Indigo are sent to the Sherman Institute, an Indian boarding school. Robert M. Nelson reports that Silko's paternal grandfather, Henry Marmon, went to the Sherman Institute; her great-grandmother Marie Anaya Marmon (a Keresan) and great-aunt Susie (a Laguna) both went to Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania (Nelson 16-7). While her own family's experiences with the government schools clearly did not make them less Indian (whatever the schools' goals), Silko lends this power to her fictional depiction of the historical Sherman Institute. The authorities send Indigo to the school because "[t]here was hope the little ones might be educated away from their blankets"(67) and into Euro-American society. Indeed, when Indigo arrives, the school has succeeded in making children from other tribes into whites, ready to exert their new

powers over Indians who are still Indian: "Cocopa and Chemeheuvi girls her own age who had already lived at the boarding school for three years were in charge of new students; only their skin looked Indian"(67). She also describes a matron "who looked Indian but behaved like a white woman"(68).

Indigo suffers three months at the Institute. The episode suggests different potential reactions to the government's attempts to make over Indians and different repercussions for change. Merely being away from their place of origins kills some students: "[S]he had watched three girls from Alaska stop eating, lie listlessly in their beds, then die, coughing blood. The others said the California air was too hot and too dry for their Alaskan lungs, accustomed to cool, moist air"(68). Other students and adults adapt to what Silko consistently characterizes as "white" ways, from the Chemeheuvi and Cocopa girls to the Pomo matron to the boys who help the white superintendent. Silko accounts for the different reactions partly by another appeal to Sand Lizard uniqueness; the other Indians mock Indigo: "They wanted to make her cry because she was from the Sand Lizard people with their odd ways"(70). This does not, however, account for the Alaskan Indians' deaths. Silko ascribes these to environmental differences, suggesting the brutal consequences of forced migration (and prefiguring her later reversal of the long white migration from Europe to American through Hattie's return to Europe).

Given the emphasis on Indigo's origins at the gardens in the dunes, her negative reaction to the school does resemble the Alaskan Indians' rejection of their new environment. Still, white institutions like church and school are more threatening and alien to Indigo than the new environment. She at least thinks that the school will kill her by trying to assimilate her to white ways, and so she escapes to the Palmers' garden. The

garden is hardly a wild space (nor is Indigo's home at the dunes), but it offers her refuge from the pressures of the government school. That Indigo and Hattie meet in the garden is important because it reinforces the theme that gardens sustain life through sustenance and the beauty of variety, something the two women will grow to find in each other, and because it establishes gardens as the common ground of all humanity. Silko also uses gardens, plants, and transplantation to comment on human cultures and migrations. Introducing Indigo into the family of Edward and Hattie Palmer allows Silko to examine critically how such historical matters as 19th century botany and its participation in colonialism and global capitalism mold individual and cultural identities.[23]

Hattie and Edward's reactions to Indigo derive from a combination of their relative power over her and individual character traits (through which Silko comments on white society at large).[24] Hattie possesses views atypical of her place in educated, upper-class white society, but as a 19th century wife, she is also largely influenced in her attitudes by Edward. Silko reveals Hattie's independent side through Hattie's master's thesis, which uses Coptic scrolls to argue that "Jesus had women disciples and Mary Magdalene wrote a Gospel suppressed by the church"(77). Through Hattie's research interest in marginal, suppressed topics, Silko makes her open to understanding, accepting, and even adopting views that may contradict her own. She reacts sympathetically to Indigo's loss of her mother, but also to her plight at the government school. Hattie's mistrust of institutions extends to the government's treatment of Indians: "She wondered

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[23] Denise Cummings has analyzed how Silko critiques western civilization through Edward's belief in science, on which I will have more to say below. See Cummings, "'Settling' History: Understanding Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony, Storyteller, Almanac of the Dead, and Gardens in the Dunes," Studies in American Indian Literature 12.4 (Winter 2000), 65-90, especially 84-6.

[24] In one of Silko's many reversals in the novel, Indigo will ultimately triumph over both Palmers; in establishing their characters, however, Silko gives them definitive advantages Indigo lacks—formal education, knowledge of the world, and wealth. These do not end up helping them survive in the new world.

what the school fed the Indian children. Did they feed the children the tribal foods they were accustomed to?"(73) She shows her sympathy towards the Indians, but from a position of difference (and superiority) from them; Indians need different foods because they are different, Hattie thinks. Her belief in preserving cultural differences (as opposed to assimilating others) makes her similar to Indigo and Silko. At the same time, Hattie is a sort of blank slate, open to other possibilities. Through her encounters with various others (Indians and Europeans), Hattie slowly abandons many of her own beliefs.

In the meantime, however, Edward's opinions, representing modern western science, still influence her. In some ways, Silko tries to present Edward as somewhat sympathetic, someone blind to how damaging his cultural bigotry can be, as a scientist often too wrapped up in classification and experimentation to examine his role in imperialism. He cannot conceive of himself as a destroyer, but we are meant to ascertain that he is when, for example, he speaks from the colonizer's perspective in calling Indians "wild."[25] Edward views Indians as culturally inferior, though they can be "civilized" in the Indian schools and can help in his gardens: "Edward said the Indian students were quick to learn civilized ways. In the summer, when he was not away on an expedition, Edward hired two or three Indian boys to help with the weeding and mowing"(72). Silko's quick passage from "civilized ways" to the physical labor the Indians contribute sums up Edward's view that Indians can be civilized and assimilated (the two are the same to him) to the extent that they are willing to work for him.

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[25] Again, Silko makes gardens and agricultural knowledge stand in for civilization. As I state above, Indigo's home at the gardens in the dunes is no more a wild space than the Palmers' highly organized English-style garden or their orange groves. Edward's characterization of Indians who cultivate gardens as he does as "wild" further establishes his blindness. His opinion can hardly be taken ironically since the careful reader will expect it, but Silko does seem to be using this dramatic irony (Edward indicting himself without knowing it) to critique western science's lack of self-awareness.

Furthermore, while much of Edward's agricultural work seems to be productive and even creative, Silko characterizes through the destructive imagery of weeding and mowing.

Edward's investment in "modern" science represents a major theme through which Silko contrasts the development of Euro-American and Native American cultures and it deserves further analysis. The characterization of Edward as a 19th century man of science implicated in the violence of emergent global capital further suggests Silko is performing a "critical" or "resistance" multiculturalism, analyzing power relations and ideological differences from a historical perspective. She fills his Riverside office with artifacts from his travels, cultural capital removed from all context: "bows and spears and arrows bristled out of pottery jars painted with serpents and birds. A strange carved mask with a frightful expression gazed at [Hattie] from another corner stacked high with colorful handwoven textiles"(76). Edward has collected objects that represent other cultures; the contrast between the traditional weapons and tools and Edward's scientific instruments (not to mention the context of his large estate) supports Edward's feelings of superiority (especially as he has captured these objects). James Clifford describes western collecting as a "marking-off of a subjective domain that is not the 'other,'" "an exercise in how to make the world one's own"(218). Though he claims that gathering objects is "probably universal" (Clifford 218), in its Western incarnation, the connection between anthropology and modern art has meant the appropriation of "exotic things, facts, and meanings"(221). Yet Edward's sense of collecting objects from other cultures is not yet modern like those Clifford describes. The modernists, Clifford argues, appropriated objects of the other to show how similarities between tribal "fetishes" and modern art meant that artifacts from disappearing cultures could help renew the modern

west.[26] Their efforts appeal towards a common humanity to be discovered in the objects of the defeated other; Edward's collection is pre-modernist in that there is nothing in common between his scientific instruments and the other's artifacts. For Edward, the objects represent his conquest of the other, not a reminder of his shared humanity with them.[27]

Edward's botanical work extends Silko's critique of western science. The flora of other lands fascinate Edward in part because of their difference from flora he knows; in this much, Edward represents a weak form of contemporary difference multiculturalism and is somewhat sympathetic.[28] More importantly, Silko continually imbricates his aesthetic and scientific interests with global capital and the power differentials it maintains: "Edward's special interest was in aromatic grasses and plants, which were always highly prized by horticulturalists and gardeners. Edward traveled to places so remote and collected plants so rare, so subtle, few white men ever saw them before. He added these rare treasures to his growing collection"(78). Perhaps because he himself does not bring the items to market, Edward does not consider himself as a merchant (much less an imperialist). Nonetheless, he exploits the appearance of mere aesthetic interest in foreign lands and plants for financial gain. In his stories of expeditions to far-off lands, "he portrayed himself humorously, as the innocent tourist hell-bent on disaster.

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[26] See Clifford's chapter 9, "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern," 189-214. He argues that modernist "pioneers" (he uses quotation marks to ironize their claims of originality) discover in primitive art specimens "new dimensions of their ('our') creative potential"(195).

[27] And Edward will continue to reject signs that he shares his world with others, as in his rejection of the "primitive" European fertility figures in Italy.

[28] Combined with his will to exert power over others (people and scientific objects are equal to him), Edward's division of cultures becomes the sinister underpinnings of 20th century imperialism. For example, he continues to insist that Indigo be trained as a lady's maid, even as Hattie grows to see her as a member of the family. I am not suggesting that Silko has the same goals in the difference multiculturalism she ultimately advocates at the end of Gardens—far from it. Nonetheless, the logic of separation encouraged by Silko can be and has been used in the way Edward uses cultural separation—a tool for classification and domination.

The tourist identity was the disguise he adopted to confuse the customs officers. Some foreign governments were quite unpleasant about the export of valuable roots stock and seeds"(79). Of course, Edward's collection of foreign specimens depends on his and his country's relative power over other countries; his photographic capture of "interesting subjects"(86) resembles the commodification of the exotic through the photography of Indians at the Needles train depot.[29] Finally, Edward's two main concerns with specimens reveal much about the workings of science and capital. First, rarity of plant specimens will make them more valuable on the market. Second, the disappearance of non-western cultures (their rarification) makes them more exotic, but also indicates the degree to which their resistance to empire has faded. Edward puts his interest in Indigo's people in these terms: "[H]e was actually interested himself in rare or extinct Indian cultures"(122). Living Indians may be able to serve him in the garden, but dead or disappearing cultures are far more valuable as a sign of his (and his culture's) power.[30]

Edward's science thus functions to separate him from the other, particularly through the distancing technique of making the other his object of study. As Denise Cummings has argued, Silko makes Edward blind despite his many scientific instruments for seeing: "The epistemological failure of Western science and technologies renders Edward blind; he can never 'see' and, consequently, dies trusting in a quack's 'scientific cure' for an illness he endures"(Cummings 85). His failure to see what Hattie ultimately sees (the resemblances between old European snake worship and veneration of female principles) makes him comparable to Silko's targets in "An Old-Time Indian Attack,"

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[29] The details of Edward's expedition to the Para River are too numerous to mention here, but solidify the connection of science and imperialism and foreshadow his theft of citron cuttings from Corsica

[30] The trope of whites preferring dead Indians is familiar from Erdrich's "The Plunge of the Brave" in Love Medicine and Vine Deloria's Custer Died for Your Sins.

while Hattie seems to follow the advice Silko gives Gary Snyder. Within her own tradition (which we might broadly call modern Euro-American Christianity), she researches signs of the importance of feminine principles in the early church. In contrast to Edward's scientific collecting, which distances and differentiates him from the other, Hattie's work reveals similarities between some Christian and pre-Christian European beliefs and Sand Lizard (or Native American more broadly) beliefs, such as "the equality of the feminine element"(99) and the connection of "female spiritual principle" and the "Snake, the Instructor"(100). After her thesis is rejected by her graduate committee, she begins to question the institutions that perpetuate their brand of Christianity while suppressing their own traditions. As I suggested above, once Hattie starts to reflect more on the suppression of old European beliefs by the Church, catalyzed by Indigo's companionship, she begins to see important, basic similarities between European and non-European traditions.

In the Parts One and Two, set entirely in the southwest, Silko performs the work of a critical multiculturalist: analyzing the historical and ideological sources of differences among Indian tribes, and between whites and Indians. Once she removes Indigo and the Palmers from California, however, and moves them to the East and to Europe, she begins to de-emphasize her focus on ideological power relations as determinant of different identities (i.e. colonizer/colonized or civilized/wild) and to focus on Hattie's slow-dawning discovery of a fundamental similarity between her culture and Indigo's, a discovery which contains the potential not only to alter radically her view of how history affects culture, but also to force the question of culture itself. As the family travels in England, Italy, and Corsica, Hattie begins to connect her academic interest in

Christian female mystics back to pre-Christian religions of "old Europe," which emphasized a female fertility principle much like Indigo's people do.[31] The exposure to her people's traditional beliefs sparks Hattie's interest in returning to Europe, which she eventually does.

While still in the United States, Hattie has a dream that foreshadows her discovery of pre-Christian European religious beliefs. She dreams of "sitting on a strange flat stone in front of the church door"(163) with her Aunt Bronwyn. The dream is significant for several reasons. First, it temporarily removes Hattie from her current surroundings, namely Oyster Bay and white New York society. Silko portrays east coast society as alternately superficial (in Susan Palmer's love affairs and destruction of her gardens)[32] and idealistic (Hattie's father's interest in helping the poor makes him another sympathetic white character, his philanthropic interest in science balanced against Edward's selfishness). Hattie's dream takes her away from the hubbub surrounding her sister-in-law's party and towards more important spiritual concerns. The dream also sets up Silko's more complete depiction of pre-Christian European stone worship in the chapter to follow. Hattie's subconscious during the dream is more open to suggestion than her waking mind; her dream reveals her readiness to accept the stone veneration of her Aunt Bronwyn. This and subsequent dreams during her visit with Bronwyn

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[31] Silko establishes the importance of female fertility principles in the early sections, both through Grandmother Fleet's lectures on agriculture and the story of how the original Sand Lizard planted her seeds at the gardens when asked by her Grandfather Snake to settle there (14-5). More broadly, Silko makes her novel gynocentric, with the male characters basically uncreative appendages for the procreative female characters.

[32] Indigo also notices many fields that have not been planted for a long time: "Where did white people get their food if they didn't plant these fields?"(165) Her question points out the disparity between wealthy east coast families (who buy their food through the market and don't need to use the land fully) and Indigo's people (as well as many whites of the time). East coast whites are interested in gardens, of course, but their wealth makes it possible not to plant all their land with food crops. Ultimately, Silko celebrates Indigo's interest in the purely aesthetic appeal of some plants, but never loses focus on the importance of their use-value.

eventually result in her re-connection to the sacredness of life, a shift that opens up the novel to the possibility that all people are fundamentally alike.

Bronwyn represents an advanced version of Hattie. She has already "left the church" and moved to England "to live in seclusion and study the prehistoric archaeology of the British Isles and old Europe"(165). Bronwyn actively keeps alive an ancient tradition in Europe of stone worship, a practice frowned upon by encroaching Christianity (just as Wovoka and his followers are suppressed in the U.S.). Her religion celebrates life and abundance, like the myths of the Sand Lizards' origins. The former, Christian garden of the cloister Bronwyn occupies had "severe plain lines and sparse plantings designed to mortify the soul"(240), while her new garden is more properly multicultural: "The kitchen garden was the modern garden as well, she explained. Plants from all over the world"(240). While in the light of Edward's botanical contributions to global capitalism we certainly might read Bronwyn's garden as just another symbol of colonial appropriation of objects from other cultures, Silko encourages us to see Bronwyn as akin to the Sand Lizard people, protecting an ancient belief system against encroaching modernity, while also infusing her garden with various new specimens designed to increase its vitality. And unlike Edward, for whom the Earth and indeed some cultures are dead things to be studied or experimented with, Bronwyn believes "plants and trees had individual souls"(242) just as humans do, and Bronwyn certainly seems to live in harmony with nature, for her cows are "quite at home" in her front room (236).

Bronwyn's affinity extends to stone structures as well as plants and trees. She prefers Bath's older buildings to its recent attempts to improve commerce by widening Bath Street and adding "ghastly faux colonnades"(234). Old stone represents the

authenticity of Celtic origins, while modern renovations become a betrayal of origins. She criticizes the excavation of earth and removal of trees to make "more mansions of gigantic misproportions built for business tycoons from London and Bristol"(235). Her concerns parallel the story of Indigo's Sister Salt, who ends up working near a dam construction site in California; in both locations, the geography, including plants and stones, is drastically altered in the name of progress. The similarity between Sister and Bronwyn's concerns makes Bronwyn a surrogate family member; her views come much closer to Indigo's than any other non-Indian in the book. Her efforts to preserve locations and hear "the history and tales about Bath and the surrounding countryside from [the] fervent defenders of old trees and stones"(241) resemble the scenes where Grandma Fleet instructs Indigo how to take care of the earth. Even Bronwyn's call to her cattle connects her to Indigo's family: "The calls were lovely and made Indigo think of the old gardens and Grandma Fleet and Mama and Sister Salt"(238). Predictably, Edward treats Bronwyn's religious and architectural beliefs with polite derision.

Bronwyn shares her concerns for the removal of trees and stones and advocates pre-Christian beliefs in, among other things, worship of toads "as incarnations of the primordial Mother"(241). Throughout her lessons, Bronwyn emphasizes the authenticity of origins over the adaptation of new ways; this characterization seems to be Silko's way of showing what would happen should Euro-Americans follow her advice to Gary Snyder and look to their own (pre-New World) mythology for their identity. She influences Hattie greatly, in large part because Hattie's beliefs in suppressed feminine principles prepare her to accept pre-Christian versions of these beliefs. After days of touring ancient sites with Bronwyn, Hattie has a life-altering epiphany. She sleepwalks through

the old garden and finds herself surrounded by stones arranged as if a church and sitting on the stone she dreamed about at Oyster Bay. She sees a beautiful light and feels a deep joy (248). The continued recurrence of the dream will convince Hattie of the truth of its message: she belongs in Europe, the place of her origins. Even the next day, the remembrance of the transcendent experience "caused Hattie to weep again with the joy she felt with all her being"(249). In Corsica, she shares a similar epiphany with many others, including Indigo, while viewing an image of "the Blessed Mother," Mary on a schoolhouse wall (318-9).[33]

Influenced by Bronwyn's close connection with the earth, her growing awareness of her culture's lost roots in old European mythology, the extravagance of her sister-in-law Susan's transplanting of huge trees (a scene described as if the trees were bleeding), and by Indigo's homesickness, Hattie realizes she belongs not in Riverside with the spirit of her dead mother, but in England. The opposite side of the great joy she experiences in discovering her true origins is the terrible violence implicated in anyone's removal from their place of origins. While thinking of the mistake she made in removing to California, "Suddenly she realized they must help the Indian child return to her sister and mother! This was all wrong! How foolish she had been!"(249) Though the first thing Hattie thinks of after the epiphany is separating herself from Indigo, a separation I will discuss below, she simultaneously recognizes Indigo's need to be with her own people and that she *is* Indigo's own people. The first realization clearly serves Silko's underlying difference multiculturalism since it insists on Indigo's alterity and Hattie's inability to give her the community she needs; however, the second realization, that common myths

[33] This image of the life-giving mother combines Catholicism and pre-Christian worship of female fertility principles; as such, it appeals to Indigo and to Corsican Catholics. The church leaders, however, are unhappy with the people's devotion to the reoccurring image.

of origins link Europeans and Indians, opens the novel to a different possibility, albeit briefly.

The possibility is that, coupled with Silko's critique of 19th century science's complicity with imperialism, a critique will arise of anthropology's formalizing of its methods of differentiation of cultures, which has been linked to imperialism by writers like Vine Deloria (in Custer Died for Your Sins). The purpose of anthropology, Scott Michaelsen writes, "is to stabilize the differences"(Limits xviii) between cultures, to preserve "culture" as the object of anthropology. In most of Silko's novel, we can see that sciences like anthropology and the discourses that surround them (such as Edward's interest in the dead Indian cultures) are destructive, since in creating "cultures" (and the concept of culture can only be understood if there are multiple cultures to classify), these sciences create hierarchies and exclusions every bit as destructive as other facets of imperialism. Discussing the anti-anthropological bent in Vine Deloria, Michaelsen writes, "Deloria understands Amerindians... as particularities or as endlessly complicated bricolages that cannot be disentangled either practically or intellectually. To be human, he seems to argue, is to be, in the end, nonidentifiable at the level of group identity"(Limits 5); a group may come to be something, "But to name it is to kill"(Limits 5). During part of Indigo and Hattie's travels in Europe, their co-discovery of similarities between their "cultures" threatens to strip away their sense of essential group differences.[34]

[34] This discovery has an important analogue later in the book when Indigo shares her discoveries about European snake and stone worship with Sister Salt. Told of the moving, talking stones at Aunt Bronwyn's, "Sister nodded; she believed that"(454). Told of a medusa figure, "Sister was interested but not shocked: Grandma Fleet always said humans were capable of sex with anything"(455). However "new" these archeological discoveries may seem to Hattie or Edward, Sand Lizard cosmogony has already comprehended them as universals: "Grandma Fleet always said snake girls and bird mothers were everywhere in the world, not just here!"(455) Modern white belief is made to look provincial and

In a garden in Italy, the group comes across statues revealing the old European veneration of snakes, Edward tries to repress the connection Hattie is beginning to feel between her and Indigo's beliefs: "The child was from a culture of snake worshippers and there was no sense in confusing her with the impression the old Europeans were no better than red Indians or black Africans who prayed to snakes"(302).[35] By this point, we are familiar enough with Edward's lack of insight to make our own connections: the evidence of European snake worship means exactly what Edward fears. Europeans are no better than anyone else, but instead fundamentally the same as others.[36] Though Hattie supports her husband's opinion here, she herself is definitely confused and ends up rejecting Christianity in order to study the old religions that fascinate Bronwyn and her friend Laura. Everywhere she visits, she seems to encounter a "presence"(281) that lets her know she belongs in Europe. This confusion of cultures opens up the possibility in Silko's work for a critique of culture as a concept, for the similarity between the two worship practices could render impossible the identification of any human at the group level. After all, if all groups worship snakes and pass down similar myths of origins, nothing at the group level can distinguish them from each other.[37]

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incomplete for forgetting its own past; Sand Lizard belief seems universal and all-encompassing by contrast.

[35] That is, Hattie and Edward view them for the first time. Their guide Laura, a friend of Bronwyn's, is quite familiar with pre-Christian religion. It's important to remember that the old pagan religions are alive in Europe, forming a competing discourse, not a dead one.

[36] The power differential among different cultures is explained in critical multiculturalism through analysis of history; here, Silko gestures back in time to a pre-history when essential differences among people, if they existed, would manifest themselves. That the groups' pre-historical myths and practices resemble each other should eliminate any possibility of essential differences as enumerated by difference multiculturalists.

[37] Silko's paperback publisher, Scribner Paperback, tips her hand on the back of the book. The first paragraph of their blurb reads, "A sweeping, multifaceted tale of a young Native American pulled between the cherished traditions of a heritage on the brink of extinction and an encroaching white culture, *Gardens in the Dunes* is the powerful story of one woman's quest to reconcile two worlds that are diametrically opposed"(n.p.). Though Indigo is physically pulled away from her traditions, she makes no gestures towards accepting non-Native culture; she discovers nothing that her culture does not already contain. At

But Silko does not pursue this possibility, and as the novel returns to America, the ground laid for a critical multiculturalism gives way to a difference multiculturalism. Throughout the journey in Europe, Hattie opens up to the myths in her own history, enabled by her upbringing (her studies, her father's radicalism), her growing mistrust of Edward's character and beliefs, and by Indigo's influence. She even grows to treat Indigo not as a future maid whose "docile willingness to serve must also be cultivated"(309), but as a friend or family member: "She realized she loved Indigo dearly"(392).[38] Given how close Hattie grows to Indigo (while growing apart from Edward), one expects their friendship to remain close back in the United States. Furthermore, Hattie has begun to shed all connections to her past life. She demands a divorce from Edward. She casts off former beliefs in religious dogma: "She realized she no longer believed"(374). She does not settle into her home in Riverside: "As soon as she'd obtained the information and the permission to return with Indigo to Arizona, they would be off again. In any case she did not wish to remain in the Palmer house any longer than necessary"(376). A beam of light in her bedroom reminds her of the new (old) beliefs she picked up in Europe through her visions of light: "How beautiful and perfect it was—there was no need for anything more, certainly not her attachments to the past"(377). Her recollections of the light make her feel connected to the earth (the chief metaphor used is gravity) in a way that illustrates Silko's environmentalism and politics

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most, she discovers cultural conflict, but this obtains between cultures and not inherently in any of them. The other side of the blurb (the "one woman's quest") suggests that Hattie tries to reconcile white and Native American ways, which she never does, nor are these worlds "diametrically opposed." Silko certainly opposes Respecters of Life and Destroyers of Life, but members of both groups can be found among whites and Indians. Instead of presenting a vision of her two protagonists finding some common ground, Silko cordons each one off in her own original tradition, as I argue below.

[38] Interestingly, though Hattie is old enough to be her mother, Silko does not suggest a mother-daughter bond. For her part, Indigo remains friendly but aloof from Hattie, content to share her company since she has no other choice, but not desirous of remaining with her.

of origins. The recollections make Hattie feel she belonged in Europe, close to the earth but also to her ancestors: "She experienced a gravity of well-being and peace as she gazed at the glow; later she felt traces of that odd gravity from the old stones Aunt Bronwyn protects; it was the same gravity exuded by the carvings in her possession"(424).

The importance of closeness to one's homelands impresses itself upon Hattie, for her sake and Indigo's. She certainly pushes for returning Indigo to her home and family quickly out of concern for Indigo, but also because she has abandoned all her own anchors to people, places, and beliefs. She briefly seems to believe that she will find her own place by returning Indigo to hers: "Hattie felt a flicker of anticipation and excitement at setting out for Indigo's homeland in parts unknown. It was just the change she needed"(378). Similarly, Indigo has a dream of returning to the old gardens, and "even Hattie was in the dream—she carried water from the spring in a big gourd balanced on her head"(393). If Hattie's divorce from all parts of her former life suggests she will successfully transplant herself into Indigo's homelands, Indigo's dream seems initially to encourage this move.

Hattie is at a loss upon reuniting Indigo and Sister Salt. She feels pride for having taken care of Indigo, but now discovers "how alone she was"(410). Silko's description makes Hattie an outsider: "But she loved Indigo with all of her heart; without the girl she didn't know what she would do. Hattie watched from the doorway as the girls chattered happily inside, laughing all together. It was clear how much Indigo's homeland meant to her"(409). Hattie uses "Indigo's homeland" in a way she could never describe her own homeland, given her migratory existence. It highlights Indigo's solid placement in space

and Hattie's separation from her origins. Hattie's incipient interest in old European religion and archaeology (which, combined with the references to stone worship, itself become religion) suggests she might find a cure to both her loneliness and her anomie by returning to her original homeland, Europe.[39] The reception of Indigo's sister also impresses upon Hattie that she doesn't belong with Indigo: "She knew she was an intruder here.... Indigo's sister didn't' trust her"(438).

While Hattie makes plans to help Indigo and her sister, she draws the ire of local whites, who (like Edward) favor absolute separation from Indians. Though Indigo's friends do not welcome Hattie as Indigo does, Hattie still considers herself close to them. Her concern for them, mixed with their lack of interest in her, isolates her from Indians and whites alike. In this newly marginal position, she observes racist behavior that was transparent before: "Hattie noticed the buggy driver was acquainted with the trader and his wife; all the white people here seemed to know one another. 'Strength in numbers,' she supposed, since whites were outnumbered by Indians here"(412). While the Indians treat Hattie to nothing more than a few impolite stares (which seem natural given their experiences with white police and slavers), town whites treat Hattie as a race traitor. For daring to cross boundaries between the two groups, Hattie is punished when the driver assaults and rapes her. The price of her drifting becomes apparent to Hattie first as she vows not to return to her parents' home: "No, she'd rather wander naked as Isaiah for years in the wilderness than go back to Oyster Bay to endure the stares and expressions of sympathy"(452). This doom is visited on her literally through the assault: "She'd been found wandering naked and dazed beside the road near Topack.... [S]omeone had beaten

[39] The home above the riverbed more accurately belongs to Indigo's Chemeheuvi friends; the pull of Indigo's original home is strong, too. She thinks of her old home in parallel fashion to Hattie's thoughts of Europe: "She had been thinking of the old gardens more and more"(448).

her head with a rock, then left her for dead beside the road"(456). Silko presents the vow and the naked wandering just four pages apart, as if to highlight Hattie's gift of foresight, gained when she abandons the false beliefs of modern western civilization for original, old European beliefs. Silko suggests literal punishment for those who cross boundaries between groups; here she is far from those critical, historicist accounts of multiculturalism that advocate hybridity.

Hattie's personal involvement in Indigo's life derives from the admirable motivation to help a friend, and not from a condescending philanthropy (like that of the government or Edward in his quest to help Indigo by making her a maid). Still, her actions in remaining part of Indigo's life after Indigo returns home cause her punishment. In part, Silko uses the assault to critique white society for its violent attitudes even towards other whites who deal equitably and intimately with Indians.[40] Silko's depiction of Sister Salt, who also rejects Hattie, is gentler. After she and Indigo are reported to the government authorities for living in the wrong place (the Chemeheuvi girls' home can not be theirs: "they didn't belong there"(453)), they prepare to return to the dunes. Sister thinks of Hattie's recent displacement: "Sister felt a little regretful for the mean feeling and thoughts she'd had about the white woman who was so generous to her sister and her"(453). However, personal feelings do not win over Sister's accumulated beliefs about the "other," and she convinces Indigo that Hattie's friendship can only be temporary: "[S]omeday she wouldn't come back.... As Indigo listened she realized her sister was right; Hattie couldn't live there and she couldn't come month after month or year after year"(447). Yet the reason for this is nothing more than received wisdom,

[40] As always with Silko, there are exceptions to her broad sociological characterizations, such as Hattie's lawyer, Mr. Maxwell. He is not a virulent racist, though he is cognizant of the dangers of boundary crossing and warns Hattie against traveling alone.

"Stories Grandma told, about a long time ago"(447) when local Indians temporarily made money working for Mexicans, then lost that windfall when Apaches killed the Mexicans. This would hardly seem to constitute a theory of why two groups can't live together, but the power of stories makes Sister's—and eventually Indigo's—decision final.

On an individual level, Silko makes her Native American characters sympathetic and understanding when they reject someone and makes whites violent and surly. On a political level, though, the result is the same: the two sides are kept apart. The government even enforces the separation by regulating where Indians are allowed to live, i.e. not in town where whites live. On one hand, this authority seems cruel, as it separates Indigo and Sister Salt from their Chemeheuvi friends. On the other hand, the Sand Lizard girls do want to return to their original home at the dunes. Here, government policy works rather ambiguously.[41] Silko critiques their violent methods in breaking up the ghost dance, but agrees with their philosophy of enforcing separation of white and Indian as long as the Indians can remain at their ancestral homes. Since homelands are a source of strength and sign of legitimacy in Silko, her Sand Lizards will gain by returning to the dunes, while white invaders will still be far from their original homes.

Silko also turns the assault into something symbolically positive for Hattie inasmuch as it firms up her decision to leave America entirely; this decision helps complete Silko's separation of white and Indian. Hattie treats the assault less as a warning than a sign of rebirth. Though "left for dead"(456), the aftermath feels like new

[41] Overall, Silko is critical of how the government forces patrol borders but not necessarily of the fact that this force keeps whites off Indian land, at least temporarily. Other Native American writers are less ambiguous, especially when dealing with tribal groups that have been forcibly removed from their ancestral homes. Silko shows the pain of removal in the beginning of her novel when the girls are taken from their home, but allows them to return at the end. This option is not open to characters in other Native American novels.

life starting. She begins her new life naked as a baby, with "fresh blood"(457) symbolizing the pain and promise of childbirth. When the pain is too much, she sinks into "the gray light"(457) so reminiscent of the light in Bronwyn's garden and the Corsican schoolyard. Her rapist steals her beloved carved gemstones (symbols of old European religion): "In a way, the loss of the carvings was worse than the outrage done to her body.... [I]n their presence Hattie felt cherished in the way her father loved her. Now they were gone"(458). The stones, literally pieces of the land, have a loving presence; they make present her European homeland. They function as an earth mother, complementary to the love of Hattie's human father; their importance highlights Silko's advocacy of close human relationships with the earth, not just conceived as political unit ("place" or homeland) but in its geological sense.[42] The loss of the stones spurs her not to find a new life in America, but to return to the homeland where she found them.

Hattie is not one to be intimidated, so we must not read the assault as scaring her away. Rather, it confirms for her what Sister has already decided, that she belongs elsewhere. White society in Needles is no more a home for her than Oyster Bay: "[I]t wasn't terribly different from the way it was done in Boston. Now it was clear to her, she could never return to her former life among the lies. She had to leave at once"(459). The Sand Lizards take care of her because no one else will. She remains with the Sand Lizard sisters long enough to help make preparations for the return of the Messiah. As in the beginning of the novel, the Messiah's visitation promises a utopian togetherness for all humans similar to the convergence of fates in Ceremony. Several tribes join together to

[42] Silko strengthens this depiction through Edward's adventures with meteor stones. He visits a site where meteors have struck the earth and Indians have treated it as a deceased child: "The burial objects with the meteorite—the tiny stone bead necklace and the toy whistle—were intended for a child"(403). Grandma Fleet's teachings also appeal to the connection of humans to the heavens: "Grandma Fleet said the stars were related to us humans. The twins agreed"(417).

dance and sing, and "in the presence of the Messiah, all languages were understood by everyone"(465). Despite the importance of homelands elsewhere in the novel, during the dance, all people can "trail their feet gently to caress Mother Earth"(465), in hopes of making their utopian unity real. Hattie also witnesses more holy light in the dawn before the Messiah's arrival: "the lemon yellow light was the same color as the lost carnelian carved with the waterbirds. The crushing pain was gone and her head felt clear; all her sense were alert for the first time since the assault"(468). Furthermore, she feels the "dancers' prayers saved her life"(471). Their beliefs are her beliefs, she realizes, and seem to transcend their cultural differences.

However, Silko cannot allow Hattie to stay. There will be no exploration of what would happen were the white townsfolk's worst nightmares of border crossing to come true. Aided by the U.S. army, the Apache police come to break up the event because of Hattie: "the police and soldiers came to break up the Indian gathering because of her—because they came looking for her there"(470). In addition to breaking up the dance, the police bring Hattie's parents, there to pick up Hattie. Hattie's long stay among the Indians and her Indian garb seem like signs of dementia to them; she is forcibly removed. Before heading back to Oyster Bay, though, Hattie gets her revenge on Needles.[43] She slips away from her father at the train station and burns down half the town. Like her reawakening to old European religion, like the dawn before the Messiah comes, this act takes on religious significance symbolized by light: "Little wings of flame gave off a lemon yellow low that recalled the lost carving of the waterbirds. What a lovely light the fire gave off as she warmed her hands over it"(473). The "wings of flame" suggest

[43] In another form of revenge fantasy in the book, the houses of Christianized Indians who harass the Chemeheuvi girls and Sister Salt are consumed in a flood caused by the army corps of engineers as they dam the river.

angels, and the flames "snaked"(473) house to house, in another religious reference. Hattie finds the destruction beautiful: "the reds as rich as blood, the blues and whites luminous, and the orange flame as bright as Minerva's gemstone"(473). Silko gives the act her imprimatur by referring to Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, though the destruction cannot guarantee new life for the people of Needles.

Hattie and Indigo find happiness in going their separate ways. Hattie starts a new life in England, and a trip "to Scotland to visit the old stones"(475) confirms her new religious commitment. Through Hattie's move back to the old country, Silko reverses centuries of European migration to the Americas.[44] Indigo and Sister Salt happily return to their homelands at the dunes. They discover desecrations similar to those that Aunt Bronwyn describes in England: "Strangers had come to the old gardens; at the spring, for no reason, they slaughtered the big old rattlesnake who lived there; then they chopped down the small apricot trees above Grandma Fleet's grave"(476). While the Destroyers of Life are still destroying, life finds a way, and the apricot tree rebounds: "growing out of the base of one stump were green leafy shoots. Who knew such a thing was possible last winter when they cried their eyes sore over the trees?"(476) The old snake, resonant with the religious beliefs of Native Americans and Europeans, symbolic of persistence, also finds a new form, in an ending much more unambiguously utopian than the similar endings of Love Medicine and Alburquerque: "Old Snake's beautiful daughter moved back home"(477).

Taken together, the revenge fantasies of flood and fire that punish whites and assimilated Native Americans alike, the successful return of the Sand Lizards to the

[44] Her solution to what we might call the "European problem" for Native Americans resembles Harriet Beecher Stowe's dispatching of the newly-freed George Harris to Africa at the end of Uncle Tom's Cabin.

dunes, and the reverse migration all suggest that people should stay in their places. In the white sympathy for the Indian plight of the 20th century that inspired the white shaman poets lambasted in "An Old-Time Indian Attack," Silko saw an abandonment of white origins. She blamed their desire to seek myths of other cultures on the Anglo-American tendency "to cast off familial and geographic ties; to 'go West, young man,' to change identities as easily as changing shoes"("Attack" 213). In place of the migration that so many (including Anaya, McMurtry, Erdrich, and Candelaria) see as an essential part of the human experience, she calls for a return to original homelands, as if these could be simply repopulated by the original dwellers, be they whites or Native Americans or Chicanos. Native Americans who assimilate or even just act meanly are "just like white people"(446), as Indigo accuses her sister. Similarly, the problem with Euro-Americans in Gardens in the Dunes is that they are not European enough. There is no new identity, no American Adam, no attempt to reconcile European origins with hundreds of years in a new land (which is how Rudolfo Anaya and Nash Candelaria approach Chicano identity). Silko presents a politics of authenticity stemming from origins and earth; as she says in "An Old-Time Indian Attack," "at best, the Anglo-American is a guest on this land"(215). The striking similarities among different groups' myths of feminine fertility principles, human-animal interbreeding, and stone and serpent worship—which seem to posit a human commonality at the most basic level—are cast aside. Silko comes close to suggesting that people are all basically alike, only they can't live together, and migration only confuses the issue.

Scott Michaelsen reads the meaning of migration for culture in the work of David Theo Goldberg: "He posits, then, a world of original differences, quickly usurped by

migration-driven hybridity, but he imagines that this process has not gone far enough: 'we' are still to much like ourselves—we need more relation with others—and a critical multiculturalism will massively expand the heterogeneous effects of migration"(Limits 16-7). Silko gestures the opposite way: we are in danger of becoming like others, and a difference multiculturalism must counter the effects of migration by segregating groups from each other. Silko's politics are perhaps best understood in the context of Native American claims for tribal sovereignty, including claims about land ownership. As Chadwick Allen explains, Native Americans might best be served not in imagining new identities and resisting years of colonially enforced segregation (in Gardens in the Dunes, we see this in Silko's ambiguous treatment of tribal police; see above), but in accepting, even demanding a return to, terms set down in treaties. Allen suggests Native Americans "might *re-recognize*, rather than deconstruct, the authority of particular colonial discourses, such as treaties, for their own gain"(Allen 18). Native Americans signed real, binding treaties with the U.S. government, but postmodern notions of identity that have deconstructed Indian identity have also damaged the validity of their land claims. They have responded not with ambivalence about identities, but with re-affirmation (even to the point of essentialism).[45] Where the authorities (the U.S. government) soon disavowed treaties, Native Americans sought not to refigure them (as Homi Bhabha's work argues colonized peoples must do to colonial discourse), but to reify them: "Instead, this disavowed discourse is reified—reclaimed from impotent abstraction and once again rendered concrete"(Allen 19).

[45] Allen appeals to the work on blood/memory in N. Scott Momaday, but Silko's tropes of connection to the land work as well. See Allen, 16. I am skeptical that this deconstruction has so wholly damaged land claims, but clearly confusion over Indian identity can obscure issues surrounding treaties.

While understandable, several problems emerge from such a politics. There can be no guarantee that reification of (racist) colonial discourses about the Indian will help restore treaty promises, but the continuation of racism at individual and societal levels is virtually guaranteed by it. Impoverishing rather than enriching notions of racial and cultural identity holds the promise of ending the damaging exclusions that Silko puts a positive spin on. Her difference multiculturalism encounters the same risks as critical multiculturalism and guarantees nothing. As David Johnson and Scott Michaelsen write, "Judged as a politics, what such a narrative [multiculturalism], or model of both a present and an ideal future, necessarily leaves behind as a trail of debris is an opening for virulent forms of differentiation—on both sides"("Border Secrets" 9). Differentiation by culture can never merely strengthen one's conception of oneself and one's culture, since by its exclusions it always leaves open the possibility of discrimination: "multicultural or liberal notions of difference are also, at one and the same time, fuel for a rhetoric of dislike or even hate. One can always read a narrative of differentiation either way, depending on one's political sensibilities"("Border Secrets" 9). Finally, given that outside of utopian thinking, differences will always invite hatred, Silko's separation of cultures back into their original formations seems like a poor solution to their problems.

Weighed against the risks of continued racist discrimination, Silko's politics of origins measures up poorly. While her utopian gestures towards the commonality of all people seem to promise an ultimate togetherness—even the dethinking of culture as a force of differentiation—her separation of characters by their origins leads only to more division. Similarly, I would argue that basing literary disciplines on identity formations, as in "Native American literature," runs up against the limits of differentiation by culture.

Isolating Native American writing as "Native American" opens it up for attack; indeed, any attack upon such a formulation could be conceived of as racist since the very grounds on which Native American writing are being discussed are racially defined. Any field conceived this way begins with difference rather than commonality and runs the risk of reifying difference rather than analyzing it.

Even by placing Gardens in the Dunes in the limited context of the other works I have discussed, we can see a number of common concerns and different approaches to them. Against the eternal rootedness of the Sand Lizard people and Silko's suggestion that Euro-Americans look to their ancient roots, we have the rootlessness of Anaya's Frank Dominic and most of McMurtry's characters. In McMurtry's hands, no settlement is permanent, and people will always wander as part of their human condition, forsaking all origins. The Chicano characters of Anaya and Candelaria's texts invest much of their self-conception in carefully constructed new world, American identities, partly characterized by "recent" arrival, but also by the connections to the earth shared by Silko's heroines. Anaya's Abrán searches for a utopian sense of himself as inheriting Aztlán even in the company of his Native American companion Joe, whose presence always threatens to undo the "puro indio" indigeneity of Anaya's Chicanos. Like Candelaria, who uses Joe Rafa's distance from his father to demonstrate ambivalence about the value of measuring one's self against one's ancestors, Erdrich presents a broad spectrum of possible results of historical and familial connections. Her Lipsha returns home to seeming wholeness after reconnecting with his father, but the specter of his mother June's failed homecoming hangs over the whole novel, dampening the value of homecoming and of whatever in the book makes Ojibwa identity Ojibwa. Interpreted

only in the context of the ethnic or regional groupings in which they are often placed, these texts appear to affirm the sense of identity of their main characters and identity as imagined by the critical practitioners of each field; thus Silko's sisters or McMurtry's cowboys might be seen as representative ancestors of their respective peoples, their stories emblematic of their descendants' history. Yet taken in each other's company, as co-inhabitants of the common ground of the American West, one sees signs in all of these novels of the "details and accidents that accompany every beginning"(Foucault 80). In place of the "distant ideality" Foucault sees in the metaphysician's search for pure origins and which critics in these fields prop up as their field-Imaginary, we would "discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents"(81). These accidents are the checks to the confident belief in the purity of one's origins, the inconsistencies in one's stories about one's genealogy, and their mapping, though it diminish certain established and cherished beliefs about each group's identity, is crucial to promoting mutual understanding. Such is the promise of a contextual criticism of these bodies of literature that are so important in narrating how the people of what is now the United States have defined and redefined themselves.

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