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Introduction

The Spirit of Place: Writing New Mexico

In her landmark text *The American Rhythm*, published in 1923, Mary Austin analysed the emergence and development of cultural forms in America and presented poetry as an organic entity, one which stemmed from and was irrevocably influenced by close contact with the natural landscape. Analysing the close connection Native Americans shared with the natural environment Austin hailed her reinterpretation of poetic verse as "the very pulse of emerging American consciousness" (11). A closer examination of *The American Rhythm* in light of emerging theoretical models in contemporary scholarship places Austin at the fore of an influential field in modern literary studies. Austin's work bears significant relevance to theories of place-based identity which have been productively developed in the work of Tom Lynch and other theorists. Such theories propose that inhabitants of a particular area are influenced by geographic and cultural aspects of that region and thus exhibit an identity unique to that landscape. Paradigms of place-based consciousness offer significant insights into the literary history of regions such as New Mexico and help to account for the distinctive cultural identity evident in this landscape today.

Since the age of colonisation, the territory of New Mexico has been exposed to a diversity of cultural influence. Early representations of the Southwest have been defined as "strategies of negotiation" between Anglo, Hispanic and Native populations, strategies that are particularly evident in the territory of northern New Mexico (Goodman xv). Throughout recorded history, Spanish, Mexican and Anglo forces have battled for control of this territory, resulting in a continuous redefinition of its political, geographic and economic boundaries. Historical events from the Mexican- American War to the rise of tourism have had a significant influence on the geographic and cultural identity of this region and have contributed to the cultural hybridity, the Anglo, Hispanic and Native mix which makes

New Mexico a unique space in the geography of the Americas. The existence of such a hybrid culture within the geographic parameters of the United States challenges perceived definitions of national and regional identity. As this thesis will illustrate, the contemporary identity of regions such as northern New Mexico have destabilised the notion of what constitutes racial purity in regions which are defined by diversity. Literature was one of the first mediums to address this diversity and as a result occupies a distinctive place in New Mexico's cultural history. An analysis of Anglo and Native writers from northern New Mexico will illustrate that these racial groups were influenced by the same geographic landscape. As such, their writing displays many characteristics unique to the region. In providing a comparative analysis of Native and Anglo authors from northern New Mexico, this thesis seeks to demonstrate commonalities of theme, structure and content. In doing so this research encourages a new perspective on New Mexico writing one which effectively de-centres contemporary notions of what the American canon should be.

Despite its location within U.S. national borders, the American Southwest has long been characterised by its foreignness, defined by its remoteness to the nation state. Since the era of colonisation the geographic and cultural parameters of this region have continuously altered and evolved, with the result that the Southwest remains an uncertain place even in the twenty- first century imagination. Scholars have long sought to define the region's geographical parameters and characterise its cultural identity. As James Byrkit asserts, "Nearly everybody who writes about 'the Southwest' appears to feel compelled, even obliged, to define it" (258). For early Anglo writers like Charles Fletcher Lummis and Erna Fergusson, this region was characterised by its difference to and alienation from Anglo American society. Lummis, in particular, identified the Southwest as "the United States which is *not* the United States" (1). For these writers, this region was defined along racial lines, with both Lummis and Fergusson prioritising a Native and Hispanic presence in the region.

Indeed in *The Land of Poco Tiempo*, published in 1893, Lummis all but omits any reference to an Anglo presence in the Southwest, instead choosing to focus on 'native' cultural groups like the Pueblos, Navajos and Mexicans, to whom he refers as "the real autochthones" of the region (5).

This problem of definition remains no less problematic for contemporary writers. D.W. Meinig characterises the Southwest as "a distinctive place to the American mind but a somewhat blurred place on American maps, which is to say that everyone knows that there is a Southwest, but there is little agreement as to where it is" (qtd. in Lynch, 381). To Richard Francaviglia, the Southwest can be defined as the region where "three major cultures- Native American, Hispanic and Anglo American- have interacted, and been in considerable conflict, for more than five hundred years" (qtd in Goodman xvi). According to Leah Dilworth, it is "not simply a place. It is a region of the imagination…on which Americans have long focused their fantasies of renewal and authenticity" (2). For Eric Gary Anderson, the Southwest represents "a home place…for a rich variety of Indians and non Indians, but is also stands restlessly and paradoxically as a place where alien, migratory cultures have been encountering each other and competing against each other for a very long time" (3). We have, then, a plurality of Southwests; multiple constructs of the same geographic landscape. This thesis examines the cultural construct of northern New Mexico in order to ascertain how geographic location, and the history of a specific region, influences cultural production. In choosing to examine authors of both Anglo and Native descent, this dissertation identifies shared characteristics in their writing, characteristics which not only establish connections between diverse racial groups, but also identify distinguishing features of Southwestern writing, thus supporting the notion that this literature should be recognised as an autonomous body of writing. [1]

[1] In choosing to focus solely on Native and Anglo writing from this region, this research does not seek to undervalue or ignore the contribution which Hispanic literature makes to Southwestern writing. Rather, by focusing specifically on

From Colonisation to Tourism: Regional forces at work in New Mexico

The unique history of northern New Mexico sets it apart from other Southwestern regions and from the rest of the American continent. Historical events, such as the Treaty of Guadalupe- Hidalgo and the rise of the tourist spectacle, account for the distinct cultural identity evident in New Mexico today. The treaty, which was signed in 1848, was instrumental in shaping the international and domestic histories of the United States and Mexico and played a particular role in shaping both the geographic territory and unique tri-ethnic identity of modern New Mexico. Under the treaty, Mexico ceded geographical territories to the U.S. in return for monetary compensation and the assurance of pre- existing property rights to all Mexicans in the conquered territories. The U.S. victory over Mexico also relocated the Texas border beyond the Rio Grande, resulting in the creation of a new international boundary. The re-drawing of these boundary lines had a significant influence on the racial identity of the region. Prior to the Mexican-American war, Mexicans living in the Southwest enjoyed superior racial status to the Native Indians they had subdued during the era of colonisation. However, the lands forfeited by Mexico in the treaty comprised almost half of its northern territories and Mexicans, who were granted U.S. citizenship after the Treaty, were suddenly relegated to the lower ranks of society as an Anglo presence in the region increased. Also, as the United States attained dominance in the newly acquired region, other nations inhabiting the same geographic space found themselves living in foreign territory, aliens in a land which had previously been their home. However, for the Mexican populace, a return 'home' to Mexico proved no less problematic. Prolonged isolation from the political and administrative centres of Mexico had forced Mexicans of the Southwest to adapt and evolve to fit their environment, resulting in the evolution of a new ethnic identity. As a result they were now estranged from the traditions of their homeland and considered foreigners by their own race.

Anglophone literature from northern New Mexico, this thesis analyses the specific relationship between Anglo and Indian culture, a relationship which has had a significant impact on New Mexico's identity throughout history.

In order to survive the unique cultural position in which they found themselves, these Mexicans adapted to the hybrid culture to which they were exposed, developing a bicultural mode of existence in the unstable third spaces of the borders between nations.[2] The terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo are an example of the systematic reorganisation and redefinition of the Southwest region and of the ensuing contact, clash and co-habitation of diverse cultures. Such disputes account for the presence of three diverse races within one distinct region, accounting for the unique tri-ethnic identity which characterises contemporary New Mexico.

The rise of the tourist spectacle in the American Southwest is also responsible for the unique cultural identity of northern New Mexico. This spectacle, which began with the arrival of the railroad, is recognised as one of the defining forces in the formulation of the region's culture today. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (later renamed Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway) was expanded into the Southwest territory to take advantage of the landscape's growing attraction to Anglo travelers.[3] Providing travel to many desired destinations, such as natural hotsprings and ancient Indian sites, the ATSF offered refined dining and luxurious accommodation provided by the Fred Harvey Company, which the railroad engaged in partnership in 1876. The popularity of the Southwest as a tourist destination can be attributed to Anglo society's perception of its exoticism, a feature which both the ATSF and the Fred Harvey company exploited in their effort to "sell the Southwest as a romantic destination" (Padget, *Indian Country* 2). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, this partnership'unveiled' the Southwest region and its Native inhabitants to the discerning traveller.

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[2] A primary example of this are the Penitentes, believed to be descended from the Flagellantes, a religious sect which flourished in Europe during the middle ages. The exact origins of the Penitente religion are much debated. However, it is thought that the practices of this society were introduced during the early colonial period and after dying out in parts of Mexico the sect flourished and evolved in rural parts of New Mexico which were cut off from civilisation.

[3] Previously used as a tool of colonisation and western expansion, the railroad was initially brought to the Southwest to capitalise on the burgeoning health industry of the 1880s and 1890s. Boasting a dry, hot climate, the Southwest was hailed as the ideal destination for those suffering from illnesses such as tuberculosis (Weigle).

The Southwest was described as an ideal holiday destination, a remote, undiscovered paradise, home to primitive cultures unique in their picturesque simplicity. Indians were presented as primitive representations of a mystic past which was rapidly disappearing in the face of western expansion and tourists were encouraged to witness this unique culture before it disappeared forever. In their endeavour to promote domestic tourism, the ATSF and Fred Harvey Company created advertisements claiming that Americans need not travel abroad to experience the exotic. The Southwest was promoted as 'America's orient', offering all the mysticism and exoticism associated with the east. At various stops along major ATSF routes, tourists were offered the opportunity to observe Indians crowding the platform selling jewellery, pottery and baskets. For longer stops along routes, Indian museums were built where travellers could gaze on ethnographic displays organised by the railway company. The purpose of such displays was to inform tourists about the Southwest's exotic culture and also, in the interest of commercialism, to encourage them to buy the objects exhibited.

The spread of the tourist industry across the American Southwest illustrates the unequal relations of power which have long dominated Anglo/ Native interactions in this region, relations which call into question idealised notions of tri-ethnicity presented in the work of early Anglo writers like Lummis, Fergusson and Austin. As Leah Dilworth asserts, early interactions between white tourists and Indians were "train-mediated encounter[s]", where Anglo visitors were given the opportunity to view representatives of Indian culture while remaining within the protection of the railroad and its employees (107). Addressing this issue at length in her *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past*, Dilworth discusses an ATSF promotional pamphlet which illustrates the protection offered to white tourists during these railway tours. The pamphlet depicts an encounter between a white family and a group of Indians during one of the stops along ATSF routes.

Tellingly, the family does not descend to mingle with the crowd on the platform, but views the spectacle from the safe surroundings of the train carriage. As Dilworth notes "That the family spectates from a protected, removed position, rather like a box seat at the theater, shows that the ATSF is not promoting the appeal of roughing it; the implication is that the tourists need not leave the train to witness the spectacle" (107). Popular pamphlets such as this illustrate that early encounters organised by the ATSF and Fred Harvey Company were predicated on presenting the Native primitive for tourist consumption, as Anglo passengers, both literally and figuratively, looked down on the cultural spectacle provided by the Indians selling their wares.

In her work *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt also critiques the unequal dynamics of power which emerged during the era of colonisation. According to Pratt, the forced interaction of cultures in what she terms "contact zones" was dominated by "conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict" (6). Like Dilworth, Pratt attests that the forced interactions between races were characterised by unequal power relations, an inequality represented by what she defines as the "seeing-man", a representative of an imperialist regime "whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (7). According to Pratt, the act of description involved in the construction of travel narratives placed a stamp of ownership on the object described, as the reader was only permitted to perceive the object from the describer's point of view. In her accounts of the African continent, Pratt notes how the explorer Mary Kingsley referred to the swampy terrain as "'her' swamps" (213). This for Pratt was just one example of colonial supremacy whereby travel writers interpreted and therefore defined and possessed the landscapes and cultures they encountered. [4]

[4] Kingsley's possessive reference bears striking similarity to that of early Anglo travel writers in the Southwest. Both Charles Fletcher Lummis and Erna Fergusson refer to the region as "our Southwest" in their writing. Similarly, in her article "A Bridge Between Cultures" Mabel Dodge Luhan asserts that "a new culture…will arise in our Southwest". Austin also uses this term when discussing the Southwest in "Regionalism in American Fiction". The prevalence of this term in Anglo texts from the Early twentieth Century illustrates Pratt's theories of colonisation and ownership whereby early Anglo writers laid claim to what they perceived to be the uncharted spaces of the desert.

Both Pratt and Dilworth criticise the imperialistic dominance of the colonising over the colonised, a dominance which is evident in the historical interactions which took place between Anglo and Native populations in New Mexico and one which is challenged by contemporary Native writers from the region.

The exploitative aspect of Southwestern tourism was compounded with the creation of the 'Indian Detour', which permitted tourists to move beyond a railway setting and enter the Southwest wilderness. The first Indian Detour, which took place in 1926, capitalised on the foreignness of the Southwest landscape, promising its participants "three days and three hundred miles of sunshine and relaxation and mountain air in a land of unique human contrasts and natural grandeur" (Weigle 238). On these expeditions, tourists were given the opportunity to see ancient Indian ruins and to visit Indian Pueblos where they witnessed Native festivals and dances organised by their tour companies.[5] The interactions and exhibitions offered and organised by the ATSF and Fred Harvey Company represent the economic and social continuity of the colonisation which has characterised Southwest history whereby Native cultures were manipulated and produced for a white audience. To an extent, the experiences offered by the Indian detours were mediated and controlled by Fred Harvey and the ATSF. During these tours, guides, or couriers as they were commonly called, were responsible for answering questions posed by tourists, thus 'interpreting' and 'explaining' Indian culture to Anglo society. The Indians encountered were not asked to provide answers nor were they consulted on the accuracy of the information provided. Native dances were presented as performances, evidence of ancient and mystic rituals known only to the primitive Natives. [6]

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[5] Although the creation of the Indian Detour is often attributed to Fred Harvey, Erna Fergusson was the first to promote this form of tourism. Her own company Koshare tours was purchased by Fred Harvey and the ATSF and she was employed to train the female detour guides.

[6] D.H. Lawrence referred to such performances as an "absurd spectacle" (Padget, *Indian Country* 170). Lawrence was taken to view the Hopi Snake dance by Mabel Dodge Luhan in 1924. One of the first Native 'attractions' opened to tourists, this

In his initial account of the Hopi Snake Dance Ceremony, D.H. Lawrence (1924) condemned the colonial power relations which dominated this event and others like it, turning the Southwest into a "natural circus ground" and Indian ceremonies into theatrical displays for tourist consumption (*Indian Country* 170).[7] According to Martin Padget, Lawrence's account of the Hopi Snake Dance criticises the tourist spectacle in the Southwest which "turned ceremonial practices into cheap theater" by "reading too much into the actions of dancers and the mythology behind their actions" (*Indian Country* 171).

In her analysis of the Southwest's history, Dilworth likewise acknowledges the destructive force which tourism exerted on Native populations. Accusing organisations such as the Fred Harvey and the ATSF of being "nostalgic not for what was actually destroyed but for an Indian that never existed," Dilworth asserts that these organisations created what they saw as iconic Indian culture for their white customers, regardless of how correct or relevant their representations were (78).[8] Although the popularity of the Indian detours waned during the Depression of the 1930s, their influence on the history of the Southwest region was profound. Through this form of tourism, the ATSF and Fred Harvey Company controlled how the American populace experienced and interpreted the landscape and culture of the Southwest, thus creating "a regional identity based on an aesthetic appreciation of Indian culture" (Dilworth 82). This regional identity exerts particular influence on the writers discussed in this thesis, both Native and Anglo.

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ceremony represents the exploitative aspect of the regions primary industry as thousands of white onlookers gathered to observe and applaud a ceremonial process which they could neither fully understand or appreciate.

[7]Although his initial account of the ceremony was later revised (at Luhan's insistence) Lawrence represents one of the few Anglo interlopers who recognised this tourist spectacle for what it was; an exploitation of Native tradition for Anglo entertainment.

[8] When the Hopi closed the snake dance to photographers and eventually to the American public, a group of Anglo businessmen formed an imitation group called the Smokis. Performing a replica of the snake dance, they focused on the spectacle of the event, completely ignoring the meaning behind the ceremony. The emergence and popularity of such groups illustrates that, in their ignorance, white Americans believed they could re-make the Indian in whatever image they choose, even going so far as to embody the savageness of the primitive themselves.

The extent to which Southwestern identity has been shaped by Anglo perception of Indian culture is exemplified by Mary Austin's *The American Rhythm* published in 1923. In this work Austin asserted that the basis for a renewal and revival of American cultural forms could be found in Native American life. Focusing on the Indians' connections to the natural landscape, Austin claimed that a new poetic consciousness was emerging on American soil. Referring to Native American poetry as "American experience shaped by the American environment", she emphasised the vital connection between geographic landscape and cultural production, asserting that the basis for this new poetic expression could be found in the connection between Native culture and the natural landscape (42). Analysing the patterns of Indian dances, Austin asserted that "Native rhythms develop along the track of the rhythmic stimuli arising spontaneously in the environment" (54). Characterising this connection between environment and cultural production as "the landscape line", she encouraged her readers to use Indian society as a model for creative expression (54). Crediting Walt Whitman with being one of the first Americans to recognise the potential of Indian culture, Austin encouraged "an emotional kick away from the old habits of work and society" in favour of "a new rhythmic basis of poetic expression" (9). In asserting that "verse forms are shaped by topography", Austin prefigures the work of modern theorists such as Tom Lynch who examine the relationship between natural landscape and cultural production (19).

In *"*Readings in Place: Recent Publications in Southwestern Literature and Studies*",* Lynch asserts that the Southwest region "is nearly always defined along the intersection of two axes, one cultural and the other natural" (381). In his more recent text *Xerophilia: Ecocritical Explorations in Southwestern Literature,* Lynch claims that these two axes are linked. Presenting a bioregionalist analysis of Southwestern literature, Lynch's work analyses the relationship between natural space and cultural production, thus offering his readers "an ecologically based form of place-conscious self- identity"

(*Xerophilia* 18). In *Xerophilia* Lynch proposes new ways of analysing and interpreting Southwestern culture, focusing on ecological and environmental factors which, he argues, exert a considerable influence on those who live in and write about this landscape. As such, his work suggests a way to approach the authors discussed in this thesis. When we examine the literature produced by early Anglo writers like Mabel Dodge Luhan, Oliver La Farge and Willa Cather in conjunction with that of contemporary Native writers from the same geographic landscape, significant similarities emerge, thus illustrating Lynch's theory that writers from the Southwest are "shaped by geography" (125). As this thesis will illustrate geographical and environmental influence supersedes racial identity in northern New Mexico writing.

When we apply paradigms of place-based identity to the work of the modernist generation of Anglo writers like Luhan, Austin and Cather it becomes evident that they were engaging with similar notions of geographical consciousness. Analysis of their writing illustrates that their work was, to a significant degree, influenced by the natural landscape of New Mexico. However, their writing is also influenced by the primitivist impulse which is a defining feature of literary modernism[9]. Primitivism, which can be broadly defined as "a belief in the superiority of seemingly simpler ways of life" has played a key role in defining the Southwest as a distinct cultural region and has proved of particular significance to the literature of northern New Mexico (Dilworth 4). The early twentieth century marked a change in society's attitude towards the American Indian, where the barbarous savage was replaced with an image of the Native as a peaceful child of nature.

[9] Writers and artists of the modernist generation conflated Indians with the land, which is a primitivist gesture, and should be differentiated from the Indians's own bonds to the land.

As Helen Carr asserts:

> The shift… from the violent to the gentle Indian was on one level a historical description, not of the Indians themselves so much as of American policy towards them. The Indian wars were over: the frontier had gone. At best the Native Americans were confined to their reservations, maintaining what they could of their traditional way of life…they now excited compassion rather than aggression. (*American Primitive* 194)

This change in attitude towards the Native American populace coincided with a growing disillusionment among EuroAmericans who believed that modern civilisation was dangerously fragmented, corrupted and destroyed by the rapid advance of modernity and technology. When World War 1 ended in 1918, the sense of potential which had been associated with changes in the cultural arts was replaced by a pervasive feeling of dislocation and loss. For many, America's rapid industrialisation entailed the relegation of cultural to capitalist values, a philistine downgrading of the arts. The work of modernists writing in the wake of World War 1 began to reflect a rejection of modernity and a renewed interest in older cultural values. Those seeking to escape this destructive materialism fled to cultural centres such as London, Paris and Florence. However, the widespread belief that the urban was synonymous with capitalism and materialism led to a rejection of cultural centres, both in the U.S. and across Europe. In America, as contemporary society's perception of the Indian evolved, dissatisfied individuals turned their gaze westward. In particular, the Southwest region offered Anglo expatriates a refuge from a malaised modernity. As Cline suggests, "In their search to escape America's crass commercialism and Europe's bleak war-torn wasteland, they [modernists] embraced an isolated region, rich with rare and unfamiliar cultural traits" (3). Disillusioned individuals like Luhan and Austin relocated permanently to New Mexico, a region which they believed offered both a refuge from the evils of modernity and an uncharted space on which they could place their own artistic stamp.

Encouraged by reports from influential individuals such as Frank Hamilton Cushing, Sylvester Baxter, A.C.Vroman and George Wharton James, EuroAmerican interest in the Southwest increased.[10] Flocking to areas like Santa Fe and Taos, Anglos like Austin and Luhan identified New Mexico as an "edenic alternative to Gilded Age America", and sought redemption and renewal through contact and interaction with the desert and its indigenous cultures (Auerbach 43). In *Explorers in Eden: Pueblo Indians and the Promised Land*, Jerold S. Auerbach posits that the Indian tribes of the Southwest offered Anglos "an elixir for their discontent with the world of modernity" as they "seemed to retain precisely what many Americans had lost and wished desperately to recapture: the (imagined) organic unity, spiritual wholeness, and moral integrity of premodern society" (6-8). Native tribes, such as the Pueblos of New Mexico, were perceived as superior in their simplicity, holding the key to the universal truth of survival in harmony with the natural environment.

The mindset of primitivism involved the construction of Indian cultures as 'other', marginal to EuroAmerican society. Indeed, in *Inventing the American Primitive*, Carr refers to modernist primitivism as 'otherism'. For her part, Dilworth suggests that primitivism is "a reactionary response. In the face of industrialization, it values the preindustrial. In the face of irony and alienated individualism, it values sincerity and communality…the primitive is imagined at a state somehow previous to modernity and therefore more real, more authentic" (4-5). This belief in the authenticity of Indian cultures allowed primitivists to construct a sense of identity in relation to the Native cultures they encountered and did much to develop contemporary perceptions of the Southwest as a regional other.

[10] Cushing, who lived among the Zuni from 1879-1884, claimed that they "revealed to me a mysterious life which I had little dreamed I was surrounded". Similarly, Baxter claimed that during his time at Zuni "We were away back in the centuries and living the life of the remote past" (Auerbach 26). Both Vroman and Wharton James also wrote similar accounts focusing on the exoticism and primitivism of Native culture and society.

The newly recognised state of New Mexico proved of particular importance to the primitivist movement as sites like Taos and Santa Fe emerged as popular locations for Anglo writers and artists. [11] The perceived exoticism of Indians and their culture attracted the attention of many influential writers, such as Austin, Luhan and John Collier. Believing that the Southwest held the secret to the redemption and renewal of American culture, such individuals did much to popularise the region as America's new Eden and its inhabitants as models for societal regeneration. Indeed, the primitivism promulgated by writers and political figures such as Luhan and Collier has played a major role in constructing New Mexico in cultural and ideological terms.

Carr argues that primitivism in the Southwest was often (unknowingly) used as an "instrument of oppression" (*American Primitives* 210). In their hope that an indigenous way of life offered a cure for the disease of modernity, Anglo interlopers were often guilty of imposing their ideals on the Indian cultures they encountered. Indeed, Dilworth claims that "as the Indian was 'written', Native Americans vanished" (187). Northern New Mexico offers, then, its own version of what Marianne Torgovnick analyses as "the way in which the west constructs and uses the primitive for its own ends" (18). In "A Tri-Ethnic Trap: The Spanish Americans in Taos", John J Bodine analyses Taos, New Mexico as a stereotypical cultural landscape of the American Southwest. In this article, Bodine examines the unequal social relations that developed between the three races inhabiting the area. He attests that "one would expect, as elsewhere, that the members of the two European derived groups would jockey for first place in the status structure…However the Taos Anglos weighing the elements of ethnic attraction have consistently placed the Spanish Americans on the lowest rung of the ladder" (146-147). Bodine claims that Anglos were drawn to the region of New Mexico because of the strong Native presence and "what they conceived to be their immutably mysterious culture" (146).

[11] The fact that New Mexico was not officially recognised as a state until 1912 contributed to Anglo travelers perception of its exoticness, a perception that lingered long after the regions' acceptance into the union.

This Anglo belief in the superiority of the Indian way of life, which significantly increased during the rise of the tourist spectacle, irrevocably altered relations between the three races inhabiting northern New Mexico and resulted in the creation of what Bodine refers to as a "Tri-ethnic trap". In his article Bodine asserts that the Indians and Spanish American's he encountered were "firmly held by the tri-ethnic trap of Taos, New Mexico" (152). His use of the word 'trap' offers an alternate interpretation of the unique tri-ethnic identity which characterises contemporary New Mexico in the work of early Anglo writers like Lummis and Fergusson.

Bodine's interpretation of Taos' social structure stands in stark contrast to portrayals by early Anglo writers, such as Lummis and Fergusson, who presented an idealised depiction of Southwestern culture. In their work both Fergusson and Lummis presented the reader with romantic portrayals of Native societies which flourished far from Anglo centres of power. In *The Land of Poco Tiempo* Lummis presents his readers with the following description of the Southwest landscape:

> It is our one corner that is the sun's very own. Here he has had his way, and no discrepancy mars his work. It is a land of quaint, swart faces, of oriental dress and unspelled speech; a land where distance is lost, and the eye is a liar; a land of ineffable lights and sudden shadows; of polytheism and superstition, where the rattlesnake is a demigod, and the cigarette a means of grace, and where Christians mangle and crucify themselves – the heart of Africa beating against the ribs of the rockies. (2-3)

Lummis' idealised description is similar to Luhan's depiction of Taos as "a beacon of light amid the postwar darkness" (Auerbach 105). Seemingly oblivious to the poverty and degradation suffered by the Taos Indians, Luhan presented them in her writing as "hosts of the life force" and "the favorites of the will of nature" ("A Bridge Between Cultures" 299-300). Anglo photographers and anthropologists writers also manipulated representations of Indians to reflect what they imagined Native culture to

symbolise.[12] Edward S.Curtis was guilty of removing evidence of Indian contact with Anglo civilisation, such as wristwatches and metal buckets, from his photographs. Similarly, painters employed by the ATSF and Fred Harvey Company omitted or added details to their work to reflect their perception of an authentic Indian culture.[13] Control was also exercised over what type of Indian was presented in pictures and drawings. Photographs depicting peaceful Indian men and women hard at work were popular in ATSF train cars and Fred Harvey dining halls. Pictures of Natives weaving and performing basket work were used to suggest that these tribes of the Southwest were peaceful, unlike the savage Plains Indians popularised in Hollywood films and in dime novels. Despite the fact that individual Anglos, such as Luhan, Austin and Collier, campaigned to protect and maintain Native rights, and worked to improve the social, legal and economic situation of Indians across the Southwest, they remained condescendingly paternalistic in their attitude. As Carr states, "Native American historians have argued that the problem with John Collier's New Deal was that, for all his good intentions, he failed to realise how much control he kept in his or the Governments hands, or how much he imposed his conception of Indianess on unwilling Indians: he failed to see that his paternalism was a continuation of the oppression of the past" (*American Primitives* 211-212).

[12] Susan Sontag refers to photographic representations of Natives at this time as "colonisation through photography" (Auerbach 82).

[13] Dilworth refers to one particularly obvious example of this, where a photograph taken of a Pima basket maker was reproduced as a drawing for the Fred Harvey Company. In the reproduction, significant alterations have been made. The setting has been changed to feature the desert background more prominently and metal cans in the foreground of the photograph have been removed. Furthermore, in place of a bundle of clothes, the artist has drawn a yucca plant, a shrub typically associated with the deserts of the Southwest and with Pueblo culture.

Rethinking Region: Contemporary Challenges to Historic Constructions of Culture and Identity in Northern New Mexico.

The romanticised portrayals presented by early Anglo writers, artists and anthropologists must be acknowledged as a troubling component in the construction of Northern New Mexican identity. Such manipulations account for the idealised notion of triethnicity which continues to exist in contemporary Southwestern culture, notions which are called into question by contemporary Native writers and theorists. The Indian authors discussed in this thesis contest the stereotypical notion of an idealised tri-ethnic community, instead presenting their readers with an insider's perspective of life in the unstable borderlands of northern New Mexico. Leslie Marmon Silko and Simon Ortiz challenge the violence and discrimination which, they argue, continues to dominate Anglo/Native relations even into the twenty-first century. Refuting the yet prevalent ideology of utopian tri-ethnicity, these writers reposition their Native worldview as centre, challenging Anglocentric paradigms and demanding that we foreground Native constructions of identity in cultural analyses.

In challenging the idealised depiction of Southwestern culture presented by early Anglo writers like Lummis, Fergusson and Austin, contemporary Native writers and theorists highlight an enduring issue in Native/white relations; that of self determination. Since the age of colonisation Native cultures have consistently been interpreted, defined and consigned to minority status by outside forces. Contemporary Native scholars reject this. Using language as an example, Ortiz refutes the notion that Native language, and therefore Native culture, has been subjugated and eradicated by colonising forces. Instead, he asserts that English usage by Native writers does not represent language loss but rather evolution and progression for both Natives and language alike. In choosing to write in the English language Ortiz claims that he and his contemporaries are ensuring the evolution and continuation of their culture and their traditions.

Writers Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird reiterate Ortiz's theories of adaptation and transformation. In *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writings of North America,* Harjo asserts:

> When our lands were colonised the language of the coloniser was forced on us. We had to use it for commerce in the new world, a world that evolved through the creation and use of language. It was when we began to create with this new language that we named it ours, made it usefully tough and beautiful. (26)

Both Harjo and Bird reject the notion of language and culture loss and instead argue that through literature, Native culture evolves and is strengthened. Since the Native American Renaissance of the late 1960s a significant body of criticism surrounding the field of Native American literature has emerged. [14] However, this field is today the province of Native theorists and critics who argue against the preconceived notion that Native culture is subservient to white. Instead critics like Jace Weaver, Daniel Heath Justice and Craig Womack prioritise a Native worldview, stressing the need for self determination in contemporary analyses of Indian writing. Theorists such as Elvira Pulitano have used the hybridisation of modern Native societies to argue against the viability of a nationalistic Indian identity. In *Towards a Native American Critical Theory*, Pulitano argues that "Whether we like it or not, Native American writing, in whatever language, is the product of the conjunction of cultural practices, Euroamerican and Native American; any claim to a radical cultural independence or autonomy is, therefore, untenable" (62). In *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism*, Womack refutes the notion that Native literature is inferior to an already established body of Western writing stating that "tribal literatures are not some branch waiting to be grafted onto the main trunk.

[14] Even the very title 'Native American Renaissance' illustrates the problematic power relations which dominate this field of literature. Kenneth Lincoln's term 'Native American Renaissance', while it may suggest a rebirth of Native Literature, in fact refers to a resurgence of interest in Indian texts on the part of white readers.

Tribal literatures are the *tree*, the oldest literatures in the Americas, the most American of American literatures" (6-7). This point of view is shared by Ortiz, who asserts that "There's just no American literature without the contribution, without the respect, without the acceptance of Native American literature as a basis. American literature is meaningless without that" (Manley 376). In prioritising Native culture over white both Ortiz and Womack contest the assumed and widely accepted subservience of Native culture, thus destabilising the notion of a hybridity which allows Anglo culture to assume an equal role.

Position papers such as Paul Jay's "The Myth of 'America' and the Politics of Location: Modernity, Border Studies and the Literature of the Americas" (1998), examine American writing within the context of historical events and challenge the Anglocentrism which continues to define the American canon. Citing Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, Jay claims that "the interconnected histories of Britain, Africa, the West Indies, and the U.S. locates the emergence of American literature and culture within a transnational nexus that helpfully dislocates our traditional fixation on the English roots of American identity" (167). By de-stabilising the very roots of the American writing, he argues for a revisionist view of a literary tradition which remains Anglocentric, despite a variety of cultural influences, both historic and contemporary. According to Jay American literature has been subjected to a series of remappings throughout history – African American, Feminist, Native American, Chicano, etc – and these revised interpretations have influenced our comprehension of the term 'American Literature'. Assessing the work of contemporary theorists like Gloria Anzaldúa, José David Saldívar and Carolyn Porter, Jay examines how this renewed interpretation of American literature can 'decenter' the dominant Anglocentric approach to American Studies. His work is particularly relevant to Indian writers Silko, Ortiz and N. Scott Momaday who oppose the dominant ideology that influence and assimilation only flow one way during the contact process.

Instead they assert that, just as European contact has had an irreparable effect on Natives, so Indian culture has also altered aspects of European society, including its language. Such theories support the concept of a communal body of writing from northern New Mexico as the continual interaction of Native, White and Hispanic ethnicities within this space has led each of these races to impact on each other, producing a cultural identity unique to this particular region.

The desert landscape of the Southwest has long exerted a significant influence on the cultures which inhabit its spaces. In *American Indian Literature and the Southwest: Contexts and Dispositions,* Eric Gary Anderson identifies this region as a distinct geographic space where physical and social borders are constantly in motion, making it a fertile region for the application of theoretical paradigms developed from border and postcolonial theory. Early perspectives in border theory held that the legal and literal border isolated regions and prevented cross-contamination of cultures, thereby delineating and delimiting societies and economies within distinct geographic spaces. However recent postcolonial theory has altered our perception of these barriers between civilisations and of the borderlands which surround them, positing that political history has created geographic borderlands which remain in a state of continual transition. Such theories have creatively complicated American studies, calling into question the notion of a centralised and national literature. According to postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Edward Soja, the permeable nature of borders between nations and races has formed a 'third space' where, over time, diverse cultures have met, clashed and blended.[15] This 'third space' of the borderlands is also considered by Chicano/a theorists Anzaldúa and Jose David Saldívar. Saldívar examines the U.S.-Mexico border as a paradigm of crossings and intercultural exchanges which is manifested in the cultural production of the region.

[15] Bhabha's representation of third space is a utopian construction of liminal existence. As such, his work has been criticised for its idealised depiction of interstitial culture which is in contrast to the inequality and violence which characterises borderlands life.

In *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* he analyses how "the discursive spaces and the physical places of the U.S-Mexico border inflect the material reality of cultural production" (ix). In *Borderlands/ La Frontera* Anzaldúa depicts the border as an open wound, "*una hierida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country-a border culture" (3). Anzaldúa presents the theoretical 'third space' as a lived reality, positing that the liminal zones of the borderlands have created a third country in which a new ethnicity has evolved. According to this writer the presence of three distinct cultures in one geographic location, the Southwest borderlands, destabilised the notion of a pure racial identity. Instead, she proposed that this Southwestern region could more accurately be characterised by its hybridity, which over time had evolved into a distinct cultural identity. Citing the Mexican philosopher José Vasconcelos, who envisioned a cosmic blending of the races to produce a 'hybrid progeny', Anzaldúa affirmed that "from this racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollinization, an 'alien' consciousness is presently in the making, a new *mestiza* consciousness… a consciousness of the borderlands" (77). Although Anzaldúa's work is grounded in the Texas-Mexico border region, such theories of third space and liminality are relevant to the literature produced in northern New Mexico.

This project aims to utilise border and third space paradigms in conjunction with more recent concepts of place-based consciousness. As Scott Slovik asserts in his foreword to Lynch's *Xerophilia*, the author's theory of place-based consciousness relies on an image analogous to Anzaldúa's open wound, that of "an actual and figurative membrane, a sensitive, porous lens through which experience passes in both directions" *(*xv). While acknowledging the work of border theorists like Anzaldúa, Lynch utilises a bioregionalist approach, positing that "our sense of identity may be constituted by the characteristics of our residency in a larger community of natural beings...rather than ...national, state,

ethnic, or more common basis of identity" (18). It is this perspective which makes Lynch's work vital to this research's consideration of northern New Mexico's cultural production. In *Xerophilia* Lynch examines the relationship between cultural production and the natural world, providing a new theoretical basis for examining literature produced within Southwestern spaces. Previous discussions of the individuals examined in this work, when they exist at all, have been defined according to racial parameters. Studies of Silko and Ortiz have rarely looked beyond their racial identity as Indian authors. Similarly, in the case of Luhan, academic attention has focused on the primitivism which dominates her writing. This thesis offers a new interpretation of such individuals and suggests new ways of reading their work. A renewed assessment of figures such as Oliver La Farge and Willa Cather will illustrate that these writers were engaging with issues of border experience and liminality long before such paradigms emerged in contemporary scholarship. An analysis of Luhan's writing will not only re-introduce this influential writer to contemporary debate but will also illustrate the "sensory immersion in place" which, according to Slovik, identifies her as a Southwestern author and links her writing to that of other New Mexico authors such as Silko and Ortiz (xiv). A re-examination of the work of these Anglo authors illustrates strong connections with contemporary New Mexican writers and, perhaps surprisingly, Indian authors from this region. By analysing the work of these writers in a comparative dimension, this thesis re-inflects our understanding of the literary identity of northern New Mexico.

Chapter One focuses on the work of Oliver La Farge, who is arguably the least recognised and critically appreciated author discussed in this thesis. Writing in the early decades of the twentieth century, La Farge addresses the issue of cultural interaction between the Indian and white worlds. His most famous novels, *Laughing Boy* and *The Enemy Gods,* engage with this theme and examine the consequences of such cross cultural encounters. However, even though La Farge was recognised in his time as one of the leading writers of his generation, his work has been bypassed by contemporary

critics. His writing has been denounced for its allegedly overly sentimental representations of Indian culture: as a result he has been unjustly conflated with primitivist writers such as Austin, Collier and Luhan.[16]

Despite the fact that La Farge travelled extensively in the Southwest, he did not settle permanently in the region until 1941. Consequently, he stood apart from the Anglo colonies which sprang up in Taos and Santa Fe in the 1920s and 30s. Arguably, the vogue for the primitive which pervades the work of these authors did not colour La Farge's perception of Native culture to the same extent. Indeed, he expressed considerable contempt for primitivist literature, singling out Luhan as a particular example of the destructive primitivism which characterised Anglo expansion in the region during the early twentieth century. In his own writing, La Farge condemned Luhan's treatment of Indians and depicted her as a representative of Southwestern Anglos who had "an instinct for escaping reality" (*Raw Material* 153). Unlike many Anglo authors writing at this time, with the exception of Luhan, perhaps ironically, La Farge was deeply involved in Indian politics and so was aware of the manipulation and exploitation which characterised Indian / Anglo relations.[17] As a result, his writing engages with issues of liminality and border existence as it applies to minority cultures. This chapter will re-examine La Farge's work in light of contemporary paradigms in border theory and in conjunction with contemporary texts from the Southwest region.

Following on from this re-evaluation of La Farge, Chapter Two will address the position of Mabel Dodge Luhan in contemporary American Studies. Despite producing a significant body of writing following her relocation to the Southwest in 1917, Luhan remains almost as unappreciated as La Farge,

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[16] I am aware that by including him in this thesis, I am also discussing La Farge's writing in relation to these other Anglo authors. However, as the subsequent chapter will illustrate, I highlight significant distinctions between his work and the primitivist discourse produced by Luhan and Collier and instead relate his writing to contemporary authors like Ortiz.

[17] This is not to suggest that Luhan's role in Indian politics was insignificant. Rather, both these authors differed from the prevailing Anglo presence in the Southwest at that time.

even if her name is mentioned more often, usually in anecdotal or biographical contexts. Her personality has eclipsed her work, causing many literary historians and biographers to dismiss her writing on the basis that she did not contribute anything significant to American literature, or to Southwestern culture.[18] Yet Luhan played a prominent, if also problematic, role in attracting influential individuals to the Southwest. Her reputation as a successful Greenwich Village hostess, combined with her position at the fore of political and artistic movements such as the Paterson Silk Strike and the Armory Show, meant that, by the time Luhan relocated her operations to Taos, her status as a collector and promoter of cultural figures was assured.

This popular notion of Luhan as a promoter of talent rather than a serious author in her own right has affected critical reception of her work. Luhan's political role in the Southwest's history is well documented, yet focus on her literary contribution remains sparse at best. Texts such as Lynn Cline's *Literary Pilgrims: The Santa Fe and Taos Writers Colonies*, Lois Palken Rudnick's *Utopian Vistas* and Sherry Smith's *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes* discuss in detail her position as a political activist and as a cultural promoter. However, these critics fail to address Luhan's identity as a Southwestern author. During her time in this region, she produced numerous journal articles, essays, and stories. A good deal of this work, including a novel is, as yet, unpublished. Indeed, this thesis includes the first sustained critical discussion of that novel. As an Anglo author living in the Southwest during the 1920s and 1930s, Luhan was well positioned to experience the formation of the Southwest's unique cultural hybridity firsthand. To dismiss her work out of hand, as has too often been the case, is to leave untapped a reservoir of cultural information which feeds into a reassessment of literature from northern New Mexico. An examination of Luhan's writing will show that, like La Farge, she was engaging with the trope of place-based aesthetics and of the borderlands before these emerged

[18] See the introduction to Rudnick's *Intimate Memories* which discusses this issue in full.

in American literary theory. A particularly important text here is her unpublished manuscript, *Let's Get Away Together*. Comparing aspects of her work to that of contemporary Native writers, as well as her Anglo contemporaries, this chapter seeks to illustrate the full extent of Luhan's contribution to the literary history of New Mexico.

Chapter Three will examine Willa Cather's writing in a Southwestern context, in particular her 'Southwestern trilogy', *The Song of the Lark, The Professor's House* and *Death Comes for the Archbishop.* As the most prominent of the three Anglo writers discussed in this thesis, Cather has already been the subject of extensive criticism. However, this project seeks a revision of Cather's work, suggesting new ways to read her Southwestern texts and illustrating commonalities with other Southwestern writing. Chapter three will evaluate how Cather's position as a tourist influenced her perception of the region and how this perception impacted on her writing. Her novels based in a Southwestern setting share key points of reference with modern Native writers Ortiz and Silko, an aspect of her work which has yet to be explored, and one that locates three of her major novels firmly within the parameters of Southwestern writing.

The last two chapters of this thesis will consider the work of the contemporary Indian writers from New Mexico. My aim is to discuss unexplored aspects of their work, bringing to the fore elements of their oeuvres which will establish links to the Anglo authors previously discussed. Chapter Four will examine Silko, using the work of border theorists like Anzaldúa and Saldívar to re-inflect aspects of her writing, moving beyond the parameters within which her work has usually been read and relocating her writing within a place-based New Mexico context. As such, this chapter offers a new analysis of Silko's oeuvre and suggests that she may be seen, not only as an influential Indian writer, but also as a leading New Mexico writer of the twentieth and twenty first century.

The final chapter of this thesis will address the work of Ortiz, in tandem with the writing of Native and Anglo authors of the region. His first collections of poetry, *Going for the Rain* (1976) and *A Good Journey* (1977,) were widely praised upon publication and continue to be regarded as some of the most influential and politicised Native texts to date. As such, academic discussions of Ortiz's work have rarely, if ever, looked beyond his racial identity as an Indian poet and writer. Nonetheless, this chapter demonstrates significant continuities between Ortiz and his Anglo contemporaries, in particular La Farge, thus compounding the notion that authors from northern New Mexico, despite age, race or background, have more in common with each other than with members of their own cultural groups. An application of contemporary border theories in tandem with considerations of place-based identity, will illustrate that Ortiz's work, like Silko's challenges the Anglocentric paradigm of Southwestern culture. His work, like that of the other New Mexico writers discussed in this thesis, complicates our understanding of American literature, even the more inclusive versions of the canon which have emerged in recent decades.

Chapter One

Oliver La Farge and the American Southwest: *Prefiguring a Borderlands Paradigm*

Oliver La Farge's commitment to the Southwest region and its Native inhabitants is evident in his writing. Possibly one of the most influential politicians in the Indian cause, La Farge also sought to use his writing as a way of highlighting the plight of the American Indian in general, and those of the Southwest in particular. In both his literary and political work, La Farge endeavored to educate contemporary society, forcing his readers to see past the stereotypical savage presented in literature and film during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He also sought to dispel an additional stereotype which became popular in the early twentieth century; that of mystic Indian, guardian of an ancient culture. La Farge considered this representation of Indian culture to be as damaging as the previous process of demonisation, since both lacked any real understanding of Indian culture.

In contrast to Anglo authors of the 1920s, like Mary Austin and Mabel Dodge Luhan, La Farge sought to present realistic portrayals of Native society. Luhan and Austin favoured romanticised portrayals of Indians as representative of a glorious and timeless past. However La Farge's work rejects this notion of Native culture as timeless and static, instead engaging with the existing conditions of Indians in the Southwest.[19] Despite winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1929, he turned from literature to activism as a more productive means of aiding the Indian People. Elected President of the American Association of Indian Affairs in 1933, La Farge worked with influential individuals like John Collier, who served as Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1933 to 1949, as they attempted to overthrown

[19]While it must be acknowledged that both Luhan and Austin shared a more complex relationship with Indians than may be suggested here, a primary concern of their writing and politics was the romanticised representation of Native cultures which they sought to preserve and protect from the modern world. This issue is discussed in greater detail in the subsequent chapter.

damaging legislation such as the Bursum Bill and the Dawes Act.[20] These acts, which were passed before either Collier or La Farge entered politics, represented the most damning aspect of white policy towards Indians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Both men sought, through the practical application of Indian policy, to counteract decades of hostile policy which had dominated the Indian affairs administration.

However, despite the significant role La Farge played in the history of the Southwest, his contribution is today largely unacknowledged by the academic world. His tireless work in political circles on behalf of the indigenous peoples of the Southwest remains largely unappreciated, and his fiction, when it is discussed at all, tends to be dismissed as an outmoded representation of Indian culture. After the publication of his second Indian novel *The Enemy Gods* in 1937, La Farge's writing was increasingly sacrificed in favour of a political career. Although he continued to write short stories, newspaper columns and journal articles until his death in 1963, after 1937, he produced no more Indian novels and after 1942 ceased writing novels completely. Thus, La Farge is best remembered for his political triumphs and his most successful novels, *Laughing Boy* and *The Enemy Gods,* continue to be overlooked, regarded simply as curiosities, which present an obsolete view of Indigenous culture and society. Yet, this fiction is arguably highly significant to the contemporary concerns of American studies and Southwestern studies.

As a writer, ethnographer and politician, La Farge did much to highlight the plight of the indigenous cultures of the Southwest. According to one of his biographers, D'Arcy McNickle, La Farge's most important contribution to the political and literary world was that he "brought Indians into the

[20] The Dawes Act of 1887, also referred to as the Allotment Act, proposed the division of Indian land into private plots effectively destroying a communal way of life. The Bursum Bill of 1922, which marked La Farge's first encounter with politics, was designed to grant legal title to whites who had moved onto Pueblo lands.

consciousness of Americans as something other than casual savages without tradition or style" (236).[21] Through his writing, La Farge offered Anglo-American society of the 1920s an intensely personal experience of a culture so diametrically opposed to their own. In his introduction to *Yellow Sun, Bright Sky: The Indian Country Stories of Oliver La Farge*, David Caffey has noted the author's ability to bring to his writing "the point of view of a trained observer of wide learning and experience. He is able to grant access to an exotic culture, while applying the broad perspective that enables readers to relate to characters as people not entirely unlike themselves"(4). As one of the first Anglos to write seriously and knowledgeably about American Indians, La Farge offered a new perspective on a culture which had previously been portrayed either as barbaric or mystical. His writing marked a "departure from the sentimental neo-primitive tradition of fiction about the American Indian" which had become popular among white authors of the early twentieth century (Pearse, Preface). The practice of primitivism, which developed in response to the growth and expansion of EuroAmerican society in the late nineteenth century, had an immense impact on the history of the Southwest and its development as a distinct region. Writers, artists and poets endeavoured to escape what they perceived to be the destructive and corrupting influence of modern society. Fleeing to places like the Southwest, they witnessed entire societies, unaffected and uncorrupted by the modern world. Believing that this way of life offered an escape from the damaging effects of contemporary life, Anglo writers such as Luhan, Austin and Willa Cather perceived and portrayed the Southwest as an idyllic home for Natives cultures living in splendid isolation. These romanticised representations of Native culture, which became the dominant portrait of Indian society, were rejected by La Farge who favoured more realistic representations of the cultures he encountered. Indeed theorist Paul Kleinpoppen has suggested that La Farge's influence even extends to the very establishment of Native American writing as a distinct

[21] McNickle, a Flathead Indian, worked with both La Farge and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier in the 1930s and 1940s.

literary field. La Farge's work marked the beginning of a trend in American fiction in which Native characters were no longer portrayed as mindless barbarians or timeless mystics, but as real human beings. According to Kleinpoppen, this trend allowed for the development of contemporary Native authors, such as Leslie Marmon Silko and N Scott Momaday (Smedshammer 99). While this assertion may seem an exaggeration, it does acknowledge the impact of La Farge's work on Southwestern writing, both traditional and contemporary, Anglo and Native, an impact that has been overlooked.

La Farge's work is highly significant when examined in light of contemporary theories in American studies. When we examine his writing within the context of place based paradigms it becomes evident that in many ways, La Farge's writing pre-empts the theoretical models presented by later theorists such as Scott Slovik and Tom Lynch. In their analyses of how geographical locations influences cultural production Slovik and Lynch offer new and interesting ways of interpreting the work of early Anglo writers from Northern New Mexico, in particular the writing of La Farge. In his foreword to Lynch's book, Slovik refers to the "sensory immersion in place" that characterises the work of Southwestern authors, an immersion that is particularly evident in La Farge's work. Several of his most successful novels are set in the Southwest and demonstrate the significant influence this landscape exerted over the writer. As Michael Smedshammer asserts: "When La Farge was writing at his best, he was allowing his mind to break free of the East, and "dictate its own course", a course that inevitably brought him to New Mexico" (125). Like female authors such as Mary Austin and Mabel Dodge Luhan, who embraced the desert terrain of the Southwest, La Farge was inspired by this region and by its cultures. His novel *Long Pennant,* published in 1933, was written in an attempt to move away from the Southwest in his writing. That it failed is emblematic of the powerful influence this landscape had on him as a writer.

A reassessment of La Farge's work within the context of emerging research in postcolonial and border studies also offers new ways of understanding the field of Southwestern writing and of identifying Northern New Mexico as a distinct literary field. If we return to texts such as *Laughing Boy*, *The Enemy Gods* and his short story anthologies with a borderlands paradigm in mind, it becomes evident that La Farge was engaging with the subject of border experience and liminality long before such paradigms gained critical currency. Many of the Native characters in La Farge's novels exist on the periphery of cultures, forced into a liminal condition by contact with, and the influence of, white culture. This issue, which is also addressed by Native authors Silko and Momaday, informs much of modern writing from Northern New Mexico. Significant similarities are evident between Silko and Momaday's characters and those that appear in La Farge's works. In *Laughing Boy*, the eponymous hero finds himself in a similar situation to Silko's character Tayo in *Ceremony* and to Momaday's Abel in *House Made of Dawn.* All three Indians find themselves socially and culturally adrift as a result of the clash between indigenous and white races. Similarities between such texts urge a revision and re-evaluation of La Farge's writing under new criteria.

Due to his affinity for the Native tribes of the Southwest and following the success of his first novel *Laughing Boy*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1929, La Farge was categorised as an "Indian writer" by his contemporaries. This designation is problematic when one considers historical issues of power and dominance between Indians and whites.[22] La Farge himself viewed this stereotype with some dismay as he felt that it was an underestimation of his writing and his ability as a writer. For, although the Native American tribes of the Southwest did become a dominant theme in La Farge's work, this subject was

[22] Some of the first recognised Indian autobiographies were actually written by whites posing as Native authors. Texts like *The Education of Little Tree* caused much controversy when it was discovered that the book which had been publicised as a factual memoir of Indian life was actually a fictional work written by a white author. Such issues of authorship and racial dominance have long characterised Indian/white relations.

not his sole literary focus. Resenting the notion that his work was used to market the Indian, La Farge resisted his complicity with the literary promotion of Indianess for a white readership. Following the success of *Laughing Boy*, which was hailed by Mary Austin as "the nearest approach to a genuine primitive love story" La Farge attempted to diversify his writing (qtd. in Cline 64). His subsequent novels *Sparks Fly Upward,* and *Long Pennant*, published in 1931 and 1933 respectively, are set in Mexico and New Orleans and have little connection with Native culture. However, although these novels were praised by his publishers and close contemporaries, they proved to be commercial failures, prompting a return to a Southwestern setting for *The Enemy Gods*.

To suggest that La Farge was incapable of writing creatively about topics unrelated to Indians or to the Southwest region would be an underestimation of his work. His non Indian novels and short stories, although unsuccessful commercially, have literary merit and were well received by critics and a small readership.[23] Yet it was his Indian novels and stories, in a Southwestern setting, which attracted the most attention from publishers and readers alike.[24] A closer examination of these novels in light of emerging trends in place consciousness literature will demonstrate that, like his contemporaries Luhan and Cather, La Farge was significantly influenced by the Northern New Mexico landscape. As such, a renewed analyses of his writing not only destabilises our notion of what defines and constitutes American literature but also places La Farge at the fore of an autonomous body of writing from Northern New Mexico, a field of literature which has long been overlooked and marginalised.

Throughout his career, La Farge feared being categorised as a regional writer, which he regarded as the mark of an inferior artist. From the late nineteenth century, regional literature in the U.S. has been

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[23] La Farge's short story "Haunted Ground" won the O. Henry Prize in 1931.

[24] Indeed, La Farge expressed the belief that the success of his Indian novels could be attributed, not to any literary skill on his part, but more to the fanatical interest the American public displayed towards all things Indian. Comments such as these reveal the self doubt which plagued the writer throughout his life.

associated with the "minor" genre of local colour writing. Regional writing is, by definition, literature that focuses on a particular region and on the cultures and customs specific to that region.[25] As a result, this type of literature often addresses the differences between the region and the dominant culture. In her 1932 essay "Regionalism in American Fiction" Mary Austin attempted to present a more positive view of regional writing than had previously been suggested in American literary studies. Defining regional texts as those that have passed the "test of not being possible to have happened elsewhere", Austin condemns mainstream American fiction which is "shallow enough to be common to all regions, so that no special knowledge of other environments than one's own is necessary to appreciate of it" (99-100). This, according to Austin, has "pulled down the level of American fiction" (99).

In his article ""Regional Writing"- Is What?", published in *The Man with the Calabash Pipe*, La Farge explores the definition of regional writing, acknowledging that "The very label "regional" is always put on writing that is placed in the sticks, or in the smaller cities" (105). Thus, it is the marginality of this genre that La Farge rejected, despite his assertion that the derogatory attitude towards regional literature stemmed from "an old snobbery arising from the fact that early writers...wrote for the people of their metropolis as being world opinion (105). Writing in the early twentieth century both La Farge and Austin raise issues that remain relevant to American literary studies today. More recent articles, such as Paul Jay's "The Myth of 'America' and the Politics of Location: Modernity, Border Studies and the Literature of the Americas", examine American writing within the context of historical events and challenge the Anglocentricism which continues to define the American canon. Citing Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, Jay claims that "the interconnected histories of Britain, Africa, the West Indies, and the U.S. locates the emergence of American literature and

[25] For a more developed discussion of this type of literature, see texts such as *Localizing Strategies: Regional Traditions of Ethnographic Writing* by Richard Fardon and Robert Jackson's *Seeking the Region in American Literature and Culture: Modernity, Dissidence, Innovation.*

culture within a transnational nexus that helpfully dislocates our traditional fixation on the English roots of American identity" (167). By de-stabilising the very roots of the American writing, Jay argues for a revisionist view of a literary tradition which remains Anglocentric, despite a variety of cultural influences, both historic and contemporary. The article posits that American Studies should look to the liminal regions where borders and societies overlap, as these sites of cultural production dislocate and fragment our understanding of a 'traditional' American literature. La Farge's attitude towards this genre of writing reflects early 20th century opinion which regarded regional writing as inferior, largely irrelevant to mainstream society. In the same way, the author rejected his given title of "Indian Writer", fearing it would restrict his writing. This fear led him to rebel against the Southwest as a source of inspiration for his stories and novels. Yet it was this region and its Native inhabitants that had always provided him with the best material.

La Farge first visited the American Southwest in 1921, when he was just nineteen years old. His education at Harvard had provoked an interest in archaeology and anthropology and so he came to the Southwest as part of a field expedition. However, his initial reaction to the landscape was not a positive one. In his autobiography, *Raw Material,* La Farge vividly described his first impressions of the Arizona desert. Regarding it as "a howling ash heap" where "cliffs were too aggressive" and "heat danced on the flats and echoed off the walls", he emphatically declared "The country repelled me, its emptiness, its gaudiness and its sheer size all proclaimed 'not for human consumption'" (148-149). Like other Anglos who travelled in the Southwest during this period, La Farge seems to have experienced the region as foreign territory, a space defined as 'other', separate from American soil. In perceiving the Southwest as distinct from the American state, La Farge prefigures the work of contemporary Native writers from Northern New Mexico, who argue that this space exists apart from

the prevailing notion of an American nation.[26] In later years, La Farge commented on the prevailing perception of the Southwest as foreign:

> "A New Mexican never ceases to be surprised to hear visitors- standing within sight of a Chevron filling station, a clearly labeled United states Post office, and a coke advertising drug store, with a movie theatre right down the street- ask the tariff on a purchase they are contemplating "when we take it back to the states"" (Hillerman 7).

This statement echoes the author's own feelings of foreignness when first encountering the desert of Arizona and New Mexico. The young La Farge also seems to have been intimidated by such an alien environment. Referring to the landscape as "jumbled", he declared "The Place came at one, the place attacked" (152). His reactions to the region's Native inhabitants were equally unenthusiastic. He referred to them as "savages of the hinterland … merely shabby and surprisingly dark" (148). These unfavourable impressions of both the landscape and its indigenous population are surprising, considering La Farge's background and family, and its longstanding connection to the American Indian.[27]

Although originally unimpressed with such hostile terrain, La Farge soon grew to appreciate the unfamiliar landscape of Arizona and New Mexico and was impressed by the rich and vibrant cultures he found there. After travelling in the region for some time, he discovered that the Natives were not only friendly but that they had a wit and intellect that was refreshing and engaging to an outsider like himself. During a trek on horseback from Lukachukai to the Grand Canyon, a distance of over 170

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[26] Although La Farge initially perceived the Southwest as a negative liminal zone, his attitude altered significantly when he spent some time in the region, a change that is reflected in his novel *The Enemy Gods*, which portrays the interstitial spaces of the borderlands as an enabling space for the novel's protagonist.

[27] La Farge's father, Christopher Grant La Farge, was an architect, who had a keen interest in Native culture. Commissioned by Elsie Clews Parsons to illustrate a volume of her work entitled *American Indian Life*, Christopher was familiar the tribes of the Southwest, and indeed had many Indian acquaintances.

miles, La Farge's perception of the desert landscape was also dramatically altered: "I began to see the country with a rush and to know that it was beautiful and that I loved it" (*Raw Material*, 152). This journey, which is reminiscent of Charles Fletcher Lummis' trek across the continent in 1884, took La Farge across the Navajo reservation and exposed him to the culture and the landscape of the Southwest. His trip dispelled many preconceptions the young author held about the region and its Native inhabitants, who he had dismissed as "ragged pensioners of the government" (*Raw Material,* 151). Returning to Harvard, he determined to establish himself as a student of Navajo and Apache culture. In a letter to his brother Christopher, La Farge stated that "One must lay down for oneself certain conditions essential to life, and stick to them. I am beginning to find mine, and I am feathering my arrows and dancing the Ghost Dance…I am thinking about the Enemy Gods, I walk among their weapons" (qtd. in McNickle 37). La Farge's burgeoning interest in the Southwest and its Native peoples saw him return to this region in the ensuing years. These travels exposed him to the landscape which was to dominate his writing and also brought him into direct contact with the Natives who were to become the subjects of his novels and stories.

During his travels in the Southwest, La Farge also developed an interest in the plight of the Indians an interest which would determine his political career. In *Raw Material*, the author remembers how his journey through Navajo country convinced him that "The Indian story had to end in tragedy. It was hopeless to dream that the Indian Bureau with its powerful church backing could be reformed, or that the children would cease to suffer. The culture must die away under hostile pressure and there was no sign of anything to replace it save hopelessness and sloth" (*Raw Material*, 176). Thus, La Farge's first association with Indians took place "in a period when cultural and biological extinction seemed imminent and inevitable" (McNickle 50). At that time the phrase "vanishing redman" characterised public attitude with regard to Native culture. This assumption that Indians were the last remnants of a

dying race was popularised during the 1890s, when the Native population was in decline. The end of the Indian wars, coupled with pseudo-scientific race theories, meant that Native Americans were viewed as a collective group rather than distinct tribes. The emergence and widespread use of the word 'Indian' as a designation for all Native tribes contributed greatly to the vanishing Indian trope, as it proved easier to imagine the disappearance of one distinct race, rather than multiple tribes. In his thesis "The significance of the Frontier in American History", Frederick Jackson Turner presented the deterioration and eventual obliteration of the Indian people as an inevitable result of frontier expansion. At this time, several Indian tribes had been settled on reservations for many years, effectively, as Turner thought, destroying the tribal way of life. As such, events of the late nineteenth century seemed to justify the theory that the Indian culture was destined to be eliminated. Following the passing of the Dawes Act in 1887, Indian Government policy was habitually based on the assimilation of Indians into mainstream American life. These policies culminated in the Indian Citizenship Act passed in 1924, which aimed to integrate Indians fully into American society. Thus by the 1920s, the prevailing perception of Indian culture was one of eventual extinction. Such theories of racial obliteration gave rise to the tourism trade in the Southwest, as contemporary America flocked to the region to witness the last gasp of a dying culture.

From his initial contact with tribes like the Navajo and Apache, La Farge was convinced that the Indian way of life was doomed to be assimilated into white culture and eventually disappear. His first novel, *Laughing Boy*, reflects this pessimistic attitude. The Native protagonist of this story finds himself caught between two worlds when he marries an Indian girl who has been educated at a white boarding school and has lost all connection with her heritage. When his family refuses to recognise the match, Laughing Boy must abandon his tribe and his culture in order to marry Slim Girl. However, although Laughing Boy is the story's protagonist, it is Slim Girl who commands the reader's attention.

Forcibly removed from her home, she is educated in a school run by white people. When her parents are killed while she is attending school, Slim Girl's ties to her people and culture are severed. Ignorant of the tribal way of life, she chooses to remain in the white world, working as a servant for a preacher's wife. Inevitably she is taken advantage of, and abandoned by, a white cow puncher. When she is cast out by the white people for whom she works, Slim Girl has no choice but to turn to prostitution.

Through the character of Slim Girl, La Farge critiques the Indian education policy advocated by the American government, a policy he referred to as the "torture, starvation and slow murder" of a generation of Indian children (*Raw Material,* 178). The government's actual intention was to alienate Native children from the tribal way of life, effectively leading to its destruction. It was believed that a prolonged absence from their tribe would "civilise" these children, thus making it impossible for them to return to their reservations. Students at these schools were forbidden from speaking their tribal languages or from practicing Native religion. This was effectively, as David Adams claims, an "education for extinction" (qtd. in Porter & Roemer 52). Native children were encouraged to believe that their tribal ways were heathen and backward and therefore to embrace the white world as their salvation. Slim Girl attempts to explain to Laughing Boy how, during her time at school, "they tried to make us not be Indians; they succeeded pretty well. I wanted to be American. I forgot the gods then, I followed the Jesus trail. I did well, then, at that school" (221). However, Slim Girl's educational successes prove futile when she becomes pregnant and is cast out of the white world which she had embraced so completely. Where she had expected kindness and understanding, she is met with accusation and condemnation, revealing that "everyone said one thing and did another. The Jesus trail seemed to be a lie" (223). Slim Girl's disillusionment with the white world leads her to exact revenge by marrying a full blood Indian and returning to the old ways.

The corrosive influence of white education is also explored by La Farge in his short story "Higher Education". This story describes a Navajo Girl's return home to the reservation after many years spent in a white school in California. Unable to re-connect with her parents, Running Girl is alienated from her culture and eventually has an affair with a white trader who reminds her of a movie star. The story ends tragically as, when the affair is discovered, Running Girl commits suicide by throwing herself over a cliff. Unlike *Laughing Boy*, this story actually depicts the return of the Native girl to her Indian people and illustrates graphically the damaging effect the white education system had on Native culture. La Farge describes in detail the moment of reunion between Running Girl and her parents:

> Wing Singer stopped a few yards from his daughter and her mother went forward alone. The girl stood still, her head hanging. The old woman moved slowly and we could see that her half-outstretched hands were trembling. Now they were close to each other, and Wind Singer's wife was touching her daughter's shoulders. There was an agony of longing on her face…Wind Singers wife touched the girls face lightly, fleetingly, with her hands and the girl shrank. Then the old woman stepped back, and seemed for the first time to take in the strange clothes, the half bare arms and neck, the short skirt…she took off her blanket- it was moderately clean- and cast it about her daughters shoulders. The girl took the edges in a curious, hypnotized fashion and drew them together. She did not shrink from the heavy wool, rather it seemed as though in complete despair she had ceased to mind. The mask on her face was so perfect that it now cried out, betraying its secret…the three of them turned together and walked slowly, all with bowed heads, out of the gate. (Caffey 49)

This description clearly illustrates the unbridgeable gap that has developed between the old people and their daughter, which La Farge argues is the fault of the American Government. Not only are the members of a family strangers to each other, but there is also a language and culture barrier. Upon witnessing this family reunion, the white narrator of the story contemplates "how often can the substance be shattered and re-create itself", thus acknowledging the irreversible damage done to the Indian girl (Caffey 51). When Running Girl returns to her family she is fragmented, torn between the way of life she has followed for ten years and the life she must lead with her family.

When advised that she can do great things for her people because of her education, Running Girl replies "I can't even talk to dem" (59). Her education has made her a foreigner in her own home.

This issue is also a dominant theme in the work of Native authors from Northern New Mexico, Silko and Simon Ortiz. Both illustrate the corrupting influence of white education through their writing. In Ortiz's short story "Pennstuwehniyaahtsi: Quuti's Story", a Native boy escapes from school and from white people who would eradicate his entire way of life in order to make him like them. Similarly, Silko addresses the effect which a prolonged exposure to white education had on Native children. In *Ceremony*, the character of Laura is taught to emulate the styles of dress and modes of behavior of white people. She wears makeup and styles her hair "the way the home ec teacher taught them, exactly like the white girls" (69). Similarly, La Farge's Running Girl wants to be like the white people who have educated her: "I want nice pretty things like the white girls have…I like clean things, an' change dem- an' you know, like you see in de movies" (59). Both these characters are taught to be ashamed of their Native heritage and to regard their culture as barbaric. Running Girl describes her parents as "savage", saying "De blankets an' sheepskins are dirty, an' de food ain't no good, an' my fader an' moder, dey spit an' scratch demselves" (59). Silko's character Rocky also exemplifies the alienating effects of white education. Rocky wants to escape the reservation and uses his white education to do so.

He reads white magazines, trains for his football scholarship and joins the army in an effort to be accepted by EuroAmerican society. These characters have been conditioned to emulate white civilisation and taught to view their culture through white eyes, perceiving only the negative aspects of the tribal way of life. However, like Laura, Rocky and Slim Girl, Running Girl is also exploited by the white society of which she yearns to be a part. When the white trader, called Show-Off by the Navajo, discovers her interest in white clothes, jewellery and movie stars, Running Girl is lured into an affair that ruins her chances of marriage to a traditional Indian. Through these characters, Ortiz, Silko and La Farge criticise a flawed education system which permanently alienated Indians from their Native heritage and tribal way of life.

However, much as we desire to sympathise with La Farge's Indian characters, Slim Girl and Running Girl, they are not without fault. In his work, La Farge did not seek to create angelic characters without flaws or defects, as other Anglo writers did, but rather constructed characters which are undeniably realistic. In "Higher Education" Running Girl seeks advice from a white archaeologist who is a friend of her father. He advises her to look to the positive aspects of her heritage instead of focusing on the negative: "You forget what your people have – strength, intelligence, pride, skill, beauty, character, and a magnificent religion"(59). He also encourages her to use her education to help her people survive in the modern world. However, Running Girl chooses to ignore this advice, instead clinging to things that remind her of her time in the white world. This leads to her illicit affair with the white trader and ultimately to her death. Similarly, Slim Girl has her own agenda and she ruthlessly uses Laughing Boy to achieve her goals. To her he is "a light with which to see her way back to her people"(51). As she believes her only way to survive is to go "back to the blanket" she must marry a full blooded Indian, and so her method of choosing a husband is both calculated and callous. Laughing Boy is young, hot headed and innocent in the ways of the world. Slim Girl recognises this and uses his

ignorance and her knowledge of the outside world to trap Laughing Boy and bind him to her. Presenting him with products of white culture, such as whiskey and processed food, she ensures that he becomes addicted to the alcoholic drink and begins to regard ordinary Indian food as "coarse". Slim Girl also introduces Laughing Boy to aspects of white society, such as an all consuming need for wealth, declaring that "We shall command money, money will command everything" (107).

As a product of white society which interfered with the Indian way of life, Slim Girl is arguably the most complex character in La Farge's novel. When Laughing Boy enquires about her family, Slim Girl declares "I belong to myself" (35). This solitary existence is uncharacteristic of the Indian way of life where one's sense of identity is located within the tribe or community. This aspect of Native culture is strongly represented in the work of Ortiz and Silko who emphasise the important connection between community and identity. When the character of Laura in *Ceremony* moves to the city and disappears from reservation life, the tribal elders send her sister to find her and bring her back. To the old Indians Laura represents what is happening to their culture as a whole: "The people wanted [Laura] back. Her older sister must bring her back. For the people it was that simple, and when they failed, the humiliation fell on all of them; what happened to the girl did not happen to her alone, it happened to all of them"(69). Similarly, Ortiz's short story "The San Francisco Indians," depicts Natives who have moved away from the reservation and so have lost their connection to the traditional community, and thus, their identity as Indians. Consequently, in their writing, La Farge, Silko and Ortiz, assert that a connection to tribal culture is vital for the construction and expression of identity. As Slim Girl does not actively participate in membership of a tribe, she is culturally adrift for most of the novel: "I am not Navajo, nor am I an American, but the Navajos are my people" (53). In Laughing Boy she sees "all the strength of the Navajo people" and, recognising that her salvation lies in returning to the old ways, she attempts to cast off the cloak of whiteness (70). Her fanatical devotion to the practice of weaving is the

most obvious demonstration of this attempt. Slim Girl believes that her failure to master this Indian ritual represents her failure to be acceptable to Indian society. This proves to be true when, upon returning to Laughing Boy's people, he notes that "they were puzzled, some disappointed, and some pleased to see how normal and Navajo were Laughing Boy and his wife. Her blankets spoke for them with many tongues" (137).

However, even though she is eventually accepted by Laughing Boy's people, Slim Girl never fully reconnects with her heritage. She is a perpetual outsider, observing a culture from which she is estranged: "She tried to think that these things were native and close to her, but found that she could only observe them objectively. She was foreign now. She could sympathise with their spirit, but not enter into it. A door had been closed to her" (140). Slim Girl cannot re-embrace the traditional way of life and yet she has no place in contemporary society. As Gladys Reichard claims, "She is nothing culturally and might in reality be anything" (121). As such, Slim Girl inhabits the periphery of both Indian and white worlds, a position which is manifested both physically and psychologically and, as her husband, Laughing Boy, is also forced to embrace this liminality. It is interesting to note that liminality in La Farge's first novel is ultimately a negative condition and one which exists in stark contrast to modern constructions of a border existence which are evident in contemporary literature from Northern New Mexico.[28] For much of the novel, Laughing Boy and Slim Girl inhabit a geographical borderland, a solitary space, outside the boundaries of both cultures. La Farge gives physical evidence of this by describing in great detail the residence of the married couple. They do not live with Laughing Boy's tribe or among white society, but instead settle in an isolated piece of desert somewhere between the two cultures. The very structure of their house illustrates elements of both

[28] This perspective of liminality reflects 1920s attitude towards a Native existence, one which is much altered in La Farge's later novel *The Enemy Gods* where liminality is a positive condition, one which enables Indian culture to survive.

cultures. It is not a Hogan, the traditional dwelling of the Navajo, but is modeled on Anglo architecture. However, the door is positioned to face east, in the traditional way of Navajo Hogans. In this liminal space these two characters live as hybrids, adopting aspects of both cultures. The topographical no man's land occupied by Slim Girl and Laughing Boy indicates that they have no inherited way of life and so they drift between both Indian and white, culturally homeless.

The physical and psychological liminality which dominates La Farge's first novel is highly significant when one considers contemporary paradigms in border and postcolonial theory. For much of the novel, Slim Girl is aware of her peripheral position. Understanding that her white education has alienated her from the tribal way of life, she acknowledges the necessity of a liminal existence. Consigned to the fringes of both Indian and white society, Slim Girl endeavours to create a separate space for herself and her husband, the third space of a border culture. La Farge's work here prefigures the theoretical models proposed by contemporary theorists who posit that the collision and interaction of diverse races creates a third space in which the hybrid culture evolves. However, unlike Homi Bhabha, who presents a utopian model for the creation, development and habitation of this third space, La Farge addresses the often grim reality of a border existence.[29] In *Laughing Boy*, the border between cultures is a space of alienation and estrangement, comparable to Gloria Anzaldúa's depiction of the U.S-Mexico borderlands. Although Anzaldúa's third space does have a utopian dimension, existing as an enabling liminal zone she also discusses the brutality which often characterisers borderlands life. Like Anzaldúa who portrays the borderland as "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" La Farge addresses the isolation and separation which dominates the life of Slim Girl and her husband (3). Their peripheral position in the desert proves to be

[29]Although Bhabha does not actually discuss the American Southwest but rather focuses on the hybrid liminalities of migratory populations in the U.K. his work has been used by border theorists to discuss these borderlands.

a lonely existence and much of the novel is devoid of interaction with other characters. La Farge's border is not quite the war zone described by Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, yet both Laughing Boy and Slim Girl are aware of, and affected by, their marginal existence. Forced out of Native society by their illegal marriage, and rejected by the white world, these characters embody Anzaldúa's *nephantlera*, threshold beings for whom the alien environment of the border has become home. Anzaldúa's assertion that a society existing on the border between worlds must develop its own culture means that, as border inhabitants, Laughing Boy and Slim Girl create their own way of life. Laughing Boy keeps horses in the tradition of Indians but he also drinks whiskey and eats white food products. Slim Girl weaves blankets like a proper Indian woman, but she also dresses in the clothes of a white woman and goes shopping in town. Breaking the taboos of Native society, Laughing Boy also teaches his wife sacred rituals and chants known only to male members of the Navajo tribe. Adopting and adapting aspects of both Indian and white culture in order to survive, these characters illustrate La Farge's engagement with issues surrounding border existence, hybridity and liminality. However, as the novel's conclusion illustrates, liminality is not a positive condition, again revealing La Farge's negative perception of border experience.

At the novel's close both characters recognise that a liminal existence is not possible. Laughing Boy has convinced Slim Girl that they belong with his people. However, on their return journey, Slim Girl is shot by an Indian suitor she had previously rejected and before they can reach the safety of Laughing Boy's tribe she dies. As the original threshold being of the novel, Slim Girl cannot simply rejoin a society of which she was never a part to begin with. She must remain isolated, and her untimely death allows her to do this. In contrast, Laughing Boy returns to his tribe affected but not transformed by his border experience: "Laughing Boy felt a deep sense of peace, and rejoicing over ugliness defeated. The gods danced before him, he felt the influence of their divinity…he had been bathed in flame, he had

been through a fire" (258). La Farge allows his protagonist to return to the refuge of an unchanged and unblemished Indian world. This unsatisfactory ending reflects the attitude of 1920s America, which perceived the Indians as a doomed race of people, inevitably faced with the extinction of their culture. La Farge's attempted resolution of this story illustrates his belief that it was not possible for Indians to exist outside of their culture:

> *Laughing Boy* expressed the point which I had reached. I saw our own Indians as inexorably doomed, I saw that they must come increasingly into contact with our so called civilisation, and that …contact meant conflict and disaster. I put this idea into the book… and then I let myself out by sending my hero, after the final tragedy, back into my own dreamland, the untouched, undisturbed Navajo country where the white man was not a factor and would not become one within my time. (McNickle 177)

The publication and subsequent success of *Laughing Boy* proved to be both a blessing and a curse for La Farge. The popularity of his first novel gave him the financial freedom to choose his future direction as a writer, yet he had been stereotyped as an Indian writer and both public and publisher expected more novels on the same subject matter. In retrospect, La Farge felt that the success of his first novel said more about the society which read it, than it did about his ability as a writer. Like the tourism trade which flourished in the early twentieth century, novels based on Indians became popular as sources offering the last evidence of a dying culture. Thus the young author found himself a victim of his own success. In *Raw Material*, La Farge recalls the indignation felt on finding himself typecast as an Indian writer: "I grow sick of smiling fools who tell, 'Oh, Mr La Farge, I did so love your Laughing Boy, when are you going to give us another book?' Having written four other novels, a book

of short stories and two non-fiction books, and being like all writers badly in need of more royalties, one can hardly avoid giving a short answer" (206-207). In an attempt to counteract this constriction on his work, La Farge diligently applied himself to ethnological and anthropological work, accepting offers of work in Mexico and Guatemala examining Mayan linguistic and religious practices. La Farge's experiences among the Native tribes of this region significantly altered his attitude to the fate of the American Indian and changed the very course of his career.

As outlined in the introduction, landscape of the American Southwest exerts a distinctive influence on the writers who inhabit its spaces, an influence that is particularly evident in the work of writers from Northern New Mexico. In his ecocritical approach to the field of Southwestern literature Lynch analyses how an individual's sense of identity may be located within the natural landscape in which they live. Referring to this approach as "bioregionalism", Lynch posits that "our sense of identity may be constituted by the characteristics of our residency in a larger community of natural beings…rather than…national, state, ethnic, or more common basis of identity" (*Xerophilia* 18). It is this theory which forms the basis of this thesis. In providing a comparative analysis of Anglo and Native writers from Northern New Mexico, this research illustrates that habitation in the same geographic and cultural landscape has irrevocably influenced their work. This theory offers significant insight into La Farge's work. In his novels and short stories the natural landscape of the Southwest is not simply a passive background, but plays an active role is each text. In *Laughing Boy* the natural landscape helps Slim Girl establish a connection to Native culture. When the couple encounter cliff ruins of an older Native civilisation, Laughing Boy explains that "Some of the Divine ones live there, they say. The two brothers came here when they were looking for Talking God, they say" (130). On this journey to visit Laughing Boy's family, Slim Girl begins to feel a connection to the landscape of which she is a part. She interprets Laughing Boy's affinity for their natural surroundings as "strong medicine" and clings to

him in the hope that he will share it with her. These descriptions of the natural landscape echo the work of other New Mexico writers, particularly Ortiz and Silko, who also present the landscape as a dominant character in their fiction.

In La Farge's work, indigenous characters are completely at ease in the desert, while it is the white characters who are the outsiders. This is a common theme in the work of contemporary Native writing, as later chapters will illustrate. However, this aspect of La Farge's stories was unusual for the era in which he wrote, and marked a distinct change in the portrayal of Indians in American literature. His short story "The Happy Indian Laughter" describes the planned marriage between a white woman and an Apache Indian. In this story it is the white woman who is the intruder on the Native way of life as she attempts to fit in with the tradition of an Indian existence; eating food while sitting on the floor, riding a horse and attending ceremonials. However, like Slim Girl, the outsider in this story can neither connect with nor understand Indian culture. Unable to comprehend or appreciate the humour of the Indian family she is marrying into, the girl eventually understands that she will remain an outsider, and decides to return to white society. Similarly the story "A Pause in the Desert" depicts white characters as intruders on a Southwest landscape. Although the white man, Huggins, attempts to be "master of this wild country", it is clear that he fails utterly (Caffey 29). Described as "Plump…not hard, not ready for the saddle …soft, pale, commonplace," Huggins addresses men twice his age as "boys" and identifies an Apache Indian as a Sioux pronouncing it "sigh-ooks"(35-36, 26). In this story it is clear that the plump, soft tourists are out of place in a Southwestern setting where everything is bright, harsh and unyielding. The story "Policeman Follow Order" also illustrates the close connection between Indians and landscape. When a young white couple elope, an old Indian tracker is sent to retrieve them. This Native character, Spotted Shield, displays an intricate knowledge of the natural landscape and tracks the young couple with ease. From tracks in the sand, he can decipher every aspect of the young

couple's flight, even which horse the woman is riding and when the people kiss. It is clear that the Native is the dominant character in this story as he manipulates the white man's language and his laws. Feigning ignorance of his orders from the white sheriff, which specified that he bring back the stolen horses, Spotted Shield allows the couple to escape and returns with only the animals. This story, in particular, illustrates La Farge's proclivity for writing stories from the Indian point of view, allowing him to "turn… the ethnographic camera around to show how whites might appear if Indians snapped the shutter"(Trump 334).

The time that La Farge spent observing and interacting with Native tribes in Mexico and Guatemala convinced him that cultural adaptation was possible for the Indians of the Southwest. In these provinces he witnessed entire tribes that were exposed to outside cultures yet managed to remain, in essence, Native. One tribe in particular, the Jacalteco Indians, had withstood outside influences, yet retained aspects of their own culture. Ultimately this tribe presented "a picture of a thoroughly primitive people whose background is highly civilised, subjected strongly to the influence of a foreign culture and out of these factors evolving a tight pattern peculiarly their own" (McNickle, 47). La Farge's opinion of Native culture had evolved. Instead of simply regarding Indians as helpless wards of the government, he began to see their strength as a distinct people and this convinced him that cultural adaptation without destruction was possible:

> assimilation should be a matter of their own free choice, and …where they have been able to make an intelligent choice, go at the question of what cultural values of their own to retain and what to abandon in favour of ours in a realistic manner. They should be given not only the academic education but the general understanding of our world which will enable them to make these choices soundly. (McNickle 175)

Following his experiences in Mexico and Guatemala, La Farge became convinced that a policy of adaptation rather than assimilation was necessary for the survival of the Indian race, a theory that was also shared by Collier, then Commissioner of Indian Affairs.[30]

La Farge used his writing to express this view that adaptation and survival was possible for the tribes of America. His novel *The Enemy Gods* addresses real issues which affect Native cultures in a contemporary setting, namely the "reality of the Navajo nation in full decline, reflected in the rapid falling away of its traditional customs and the gradual erosion of the authority of the elders and the ancient Gods"(Gillis *Enemy Gods*, ix). Hailed by La Farge as "my first non-escape writing", *The Enemy Gods* engages with the difficulties affecting the survival of the Navajo, yet ultimately presents a more positive view of Indian culture than does its predecessor (*Raw material,* 208). The contrasts between the two novels are pronounced, as the author sought to escape the "puerile romanticism" of his first work (*Enemy Gods*, ix). *Laughing Boy* had portrayed Native characters as primitive beings secluded in a traditional setting, almost unaffected by the dangers inherent in a culture clash. In contrast to this, *The Enemy Gods* presents the reader with strong, independent Indian characters ready and willing to fight for the survival of their race.

In this novel the Indian characters acknowledge the destructive influence of white society but rather than attempting to escape into a romanticised past, as Laughing Boy does, they are determined to embrace aspects of white society while also remaining true to their heritage. The corrupting influence of white education is again illustrated in this text. The story revolves around a young Indian boy, Myron Begay, who has been sent away to be educated at white school. Like Slim Girl, Myron is

[30] Collier's Indian Reorganisation Act of 1934 was instrumental in the change of direction in Indian policy. Also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act, this was regarded as one of the most significant pieces of Government legislation relating to Indians. The act was a direct reversal of the Dawes Act, returning previously privatised land to communal status and granting the power of self government to individual tribes. La Farge worked closely with Collier to ensure this act benefited the Indian people, liaising with the Hopi in order to form a tribal government.

subjected to the same debilitating effects of white education; loss of language, alienation from Native culture and the enforced conversion to white religion. However unlike *Laughing Boy*, the education forced on Indian children in *The Enemy Gods* has its uses. It can be made to work for Indian society instead of against it. Throughout the novel various characters emphasise the importance of education for all Native Americans if they are ever to survive in the white man's world. Many of the older Indians in this story have experienced shame and degradation at the hands of white men and thus are determined that their children and grandchildren should not suffer the same fate.

When one on Myron's schoolmates expresses a wish to return to his tribe and abandon his education, his grandfather emphatically declares

> No, my grandson. You want this schooling, even if it is hard. There are many tribes of the longhaired people, of Earth People, many strong warriors, but this one tribe, the Bellacana, conquered them all. Why? Because he knows more, I think. By paper and by wires he talks to his friends in the distance, he leaves his words behind him when he goes away. He makes things we cannot make. He is here, he is all around us, we cannot get rid of him. Therefore we must learn his secrets that we, Navajos, may continue… If you learn all the white man's way and forget the Navajo, if that happens to our young men, then we die, we are destroyed, as surely as if by Warfare. The man who will serve his people in the years to come, the man who will strengthen them, is the man who can learn all of one without losing the other. (46)

This aspect of the novel illustrates La Farge's changing attitude to the fate of the American Indian. In *Laughing Boy*, education had been presented as an obstacle to the continuation of Native culture. Removal from her tribe for the purpose of education had resulted in the permanent alienation of Slim Girl from her people. In *The Enemy Gods*, various characters emphasise a need for learning the ways

of the modern world while also remaining true to their Native traditions. As the old Indian attests, "The man who will serve his people in the years to come, the man who will strengthen them, is the man who can learn all of the one without losing the other" (46). One such character, Tall Man, who has been educated in the white world, ultimately returns to live among his people.

He advocates education for all Indians because he believes that "you can trap the white man in his own rules, if you know about them"(84). Tall Man's knowledge of modern society has allowed him to build a successful trucking business and interact with white men on an equal level. In portraying strong independent characters such as Tall Man, La Farge is not only attesting that the survival of the Indian race is possible, he is clearly outlining the path to this success which he believes lies in education and adaptation.

In *The Enemy Gods* the white schooling system is depicted as a horrific challenge which must be overcome and exploited by the Indians if they are to learn how to survive in the modern world. The school experiences endured by Myron and his classmates are depicted in horrifying detail. The attack on their heritage is brutal and absolute. Forced to turn his back on the old Indian ways and to embrace white culture, Myron is encouraged to connect modern society with civilisation and to identify the traditions of his people as backward and barbaric. This anticipates Silko's character Rocky, who is taught to be embarrassed by the ancient customs of his tribe. Belittling the views of his elders, Rocky constantly attempts to cure his family of their 'superstitions' and to persuade them to adopt the ways of white society which "know[s] everything there is to know" (76). However, unlike Rocky, Myron, is never fully converted to the white way of life. Throughout the novel he battles his true nature, which urges him to acknowledge and embrace the Indian way of life. Although Myron does not recognise it, he feels out of place in the white world. His constant attestations that he is going to be a Christian, not a

"blanket Inyan," sound hollow and unconvincing (40). The sound of Indian drums also disturbs him, as he is unable to identify the feelings this sound provokes:

> Through the open windows came the sharp drumbeats that make one's blood vibrate in pulse with them. A few beats, a pause, a few in different tempo…Now the drummer got going steadily, the penetrating, quick sounds reaching clearly from beyond the trading post into the darkened room…Lying with one ear pressed against the pillow, Myron heard the beats and felt them through the springs, through the length of his body, thrilling the whole course of his vitals…the effect on him was disturbing, an ache for something unknown, a hopeless restlessness, a sadness which he would not have given up for any consideration, and a keen excitement." (41-42)

Myron remains at school for ten years, learning the white man's ways and adopting his religion and culture. However when he is returned to the reservation for a summer and is once again immersed in the traditional way of life, his interest in Native culture is awakened. He is re-absorbed into the traditions of his tribe and unwillingly re-establishes a connection with his relatives and his heritage.

The fact that Myron need only spend a holiday among his people in order to restore his connection to the tribe signifies a change in La Farge's attitude towards the survival of Native culture. Unlike Slim Girl and indeed Running Girl, Myron is not completely estranged from his heritage, illustrating La Farge's hope that the Indian way of life will not, after all, be exterminated by the white education system. In reality, Myron is only comfortable when he is surrounded by his own people who make no demands on him: "The boy was accustomed, had braced himself to white adults' intrusive greetings and immediate curiosity. He relaxed before his relatives' undemanding easiness" (103). Myron makes an attempt not to "backslide" during the time spent on the reservation. He rejects objects and practices

which he views as being distinctly Indian, refusing to wrap himself in an Indian blanket and avoiding smoking. However, despite his best intentions, Myron identifies with and finds a comfort in Indian society, a reassurance which he has not experienced at school. He is re-acquainted with Native religion and what he has come to regard as the "enemy gods". Having being taught at school that these gods are false and the religious practices heathen, Myron is surprised by his reaction to them. Where he had expected barbarity, he sees beauty and is impressed by the simple creativity of the ceremonies.

Myron's instinctive longing to participate in his Native religion is tempered by his instruction in the white man's world, which has taught him that all Native practices are heathen, all Native Gods false. La Farge's protagonist in this novel bears a significant resemblance to Silko's character, Tayo, in *Ceremony*. Both are alienated from their heritage and struggle to re-establish a connection. Tayo's link to his culture is represented by his renewed appreciation of the natural world. Myron has a similar revelation in *The Enemy Gods*: "He had forgotten at school, with its taps and showers, what water really was. He drank and sprawled, feeling the sturdy blades of grass under his back and by his cheek"(119). Both find salvation through a greater comprehension of and communion with the natural landscape.

For La Farge Myron is a generic or representative Indian. Through this character, the author illustrates his belief that in order to survive as a distinct nation, the Indian people must learn to adapt to modern civilisation while still retaining aspects of their own culture. After ten years of training in a white school, Myron has apparently cast off his cloak of Indianess and embraced the white man's world. He is determined to be a preacher and to spread the white man's religion to the Indian tribes. This character's religious crisis parallels his cultural turmoil throughout the novel. Although he is determined to be a preacher, Myron encounters barriers to this almost from the moment he leaves the school. His concept of the old religion as heathen and savage is contradicted by what he witnesses

among his people. His uncle recognises this conflict and urges him not to be blinded by prejudice: "You've never heard anything but the Jesus talk. What you believe, you will have to settle for yourself. But you can't disbelieve something you never heard of" (127). When he has sex with Juniper before they are married, Myron is convinced that eternal damnation awaits him. Viewing this act through the eyes of white society he is repulsed by what they have done. This reaction confuses and offends Juniper who represents the traditional in the novel.

This character has never been to school and so has not been subjected to the religious fanaticism of the white world. In contrast to La Farge's first novel, here it is the male character that is bifurcated between the Indian and white worlds, while the female represents an authentic Indian identity. Myron's ultimate acceptance of his heritage is represented by his union with this woman. It is Juniper who recognises the turmoil that stands as a barrier between them: "You were something once…but you leaned on those white men, and then you leaned on your uncle, and then, I suppose, on the white men again. You have always leaned on someone, I think" (297).

This confusion between who he is and what the white world wishes him to be means that Myron unwillingly occupies the border between the two worlds. Like Slim Girl, he exists on the periphery of two cultures. Myron regards being an Indian as unacceptable and yet he can never be fully accepted by the white world. As such, he is suspended between a world which he has rejected and one within which he can never really belong. When he returns to live among his people Myron finds that his perception of the tribal way of life is coloured by his knowledge of the white society in which he has been educated. The dual influence of Indian and contemporary society means that he is aware of both sides of the conflict. However, until he learns to adapt to the unique position in which this places him, he remains physically and culturally adrift, constantly refering to himself as "mixed up" and "in between". As in *Laughing Boy*, the border between cultures in *The Enemy Gods* is a site of conflict and alienation.

This confusion of identity leads Myron to commit murder, an act which itself results in a moment of realisation, as he is aware that the white man's laws will sentence him to death. As a result, he seeks refuge among his people and returns to the reservation. At this point in the novel, Myron recognises his position as "neither Indian nor white, neither Christian nor Navajo, nothing at all, a cypher, zero"(257). It is not until he realises that the future of the Indian people lies in embracing the white world, instead of ignoring it, that Myron can live in peace with the woman he loves.

Recognising that the way forward lies in accepting and using the white way rather than ignoring it, Myron represents the hybrid inhabitant of the border culture. However, unlike the characters in La Farge's first novel, Myron embraces his dual heritage as a means of survival: "Our world is changed…just following the Navajo way wont save us, and we cant walk in the white man's trail. We have to give up a lot of little ideas, that we have held because they were the best we knew. If we want to save ourselves, we have to learn to use the white man's knowledge, his weapons, his machines- and-still be Navajos"(323). In this aspect of his writing, La Farge prefigures the work of border theorists like Anzaldúa and contemporary Native writers such as Silko. In *Ceremony*, Silko writes that "things which don't shift and grow are dead things", asserting that evolution is necessary for the survival of Native heritage (126). Like Silko and Anzaldúa, La Farge asserts that a fluid identify is necessary for survival in the Southwest borderlands. In order to endure, the Indian race must adapt and adjust to a new way of life, one which includes both Indian and white ways.

The Enemy Gods marked a turning point in La Farge's career. Not only does the novel illustrate the changing perception of American society towards Native culture, it also illustrates La Farge's evolution as a writer. Although his writing style remains (perhaps deceptively) simple, the characters and underlying issues which the work addresses are decidedly complex, creating "a powerfully constructed novel, rich in scenic detail and representing in its central thrust an attack upon a major social problem

of the American scene" (Gillis, ix). By the 1950s La Farge was writing short stories based on the adaptation and resilience of Indians to the evils of twentieth century society. In the collection of short stories, *Yellow Sun, Bright Sky*, La Farge presents strong Indian characters "able to defend [their] Indian culture against the pressures of a white world. Each [character] encounters the white world and grows stronger by the experience" (Trump 338). These stories, which were written and published between 1927 and 1963, illustrate the gradual evolution of La Farge's perception of the Native American race. Stories such as "Higher Education" and "North is Black" illustrate the unbridgeable gap between cultures which characterised La Farge's early perception of the clash between Indian and white cultures. However, later stories such as "The Ancient Strength" urge the white world to see the Indians as something more than the ignorant wards of the American government. Instead they are literate, politically and culturally educated and are determined to retain control of their representation and way of life. Other stories demonstrate how the Indians' knowledge of the outside world can aid in the protection of their culture while also emphasising the untrustworthiness of white ethnologists. "The Little Stone Man" addresses what La Farge saw as a growing concern connected with the change in attitude of American society towards the Indian and his culture. This issue related to the presence of white people in the Southwest and the effect their presence had on the Native cultures they encountered.

The growth of the tourism industry in the Southwest during the 1920s complicated an already growing concern, as white Americans gathered to observe and investigate Native cultures. According to D.H. Lawrence, the growth of this industry turned the Southwest into "the great playground of the white American" and the Indian into a "wonderful live toy to play with" (Crosswhite Hyde, 187). As outlined in the introduction the state of New Mexico was particularly popular with Anglo tourists and places like Santa Fe and Taos proved particularly popular to Anglo writers and artists. This made New

Mexico a particular target for Anglo tourists and travellers. La Farge argued that most people like himself who sought to explore Indian culture did so because they yearned to capture the "picturesqueness" and "simplicity" of the Indigenous way of life. However, he also acknowledges the dangers research of this kind posed, inflected as it was by notions of cultural and even racial superiority. Recognising that "the study of another's culture implies certain power relationships", La Farge sought to protect the Indians from what he called "Indian-Seekers" and "escapists", whose interest in Native culture was solely aesthetic (Trump 336). Some escapists believed that Native cultures should be left in splendid isolation, a museum exhibit of the glorious past, and regarded any attempt at modernisation as a corruption of an idyllic way of life. La Farge criticised this romanticism as "a poor improvement over demonisation, since it from a similar lack of real understanding" (Trump 337).

In his writing, La Farge sought to highlight the exploitation of Indians by white tourists who used their wealth to bribe the Natives and gain access to tribal ceremonies. In *The Enemy Gods* he describes this intrusion from the point of view of the natives. Upon recognising an outside presence at an Indian ceremonial dance, Myron is dismayed: "It upset him to see white people here, as if this inner country wasn't as safe as he had thought it to be…none of them would be able to understand what they'd come to see" (170-171). D.H. Lawrence, who spent some time in the Southwest during the 1920s, anticipated La Farge's condemnation of white purists who did more damage than good in Indian circles. As a guest at one of the Hopi Snake dances, Lawrence described the exploitation of Natives for the amusement of white viewers. Although he later amended this first account, Lawrence refused to adhere to a belief system which had "turned ceremonial practices into cheap theater" (Padget 171).

La Farge is also critical of white tourists who used gifts and bribes to cheat Natives out of their possessions, which were then foolishly presented to their white friends as "evidence of one's close

relations with the mystic people" (*Raw Material* 156). This comment could be a criticism of Mabel Dodge Luhan and her friend Andrew Dasburg, who habitually travelled the Southwest searching for and buying Native *Santos*, which they displayed in her Taos home.[31] Lawrence, who was an acquaintance of Luhan, and came to New Mexico in the first instance at her invitation, also regarded her interactions with the Indians as intrusive and condemned her circle as "renegades" exploiting the Indians for their own selfish gain[32]. One of La Farge's short stories in particular seems to have been directed specifically at Luhan and denounces her practice of 'collecting' Indian individuals for her own amusement. "Hard Winter", published in 1933, is described by McNickle as "an excoriation of Eastern women who, out of idleness or a frustrated ego, attach themselves to artless but virile men" (97). This story's Indian narrator is seduced by a white woman offering all the material trappings of European culture. The criticism in the story is not directed at the weak Indian character, Tall Walker, who abandons his family for money and the promise of an easy life, but at the superficial white characters, particularly the Luhan character who enjoys "playing Indian" (28). According to La Farge, Anglos of this kind displayed no regard or respect for the individual Indian but were only interested in the mystic past they represented.

For much of his later career, La Farge devoted himself to the assistance of Native Americans through political channels. As president of the American Association on Indian Affairs he was a diligent campaigner for the political and cultural rights of all Indians. Settling in Santa Fe in 1941, he continued to write short stories and newspaper columns which illustrate a continued preoccupation with the Southwestern landscape, which he described as "a vast, harsh, poverty stricken, varied, and

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[31] Luhan later donated her entire *Santos* collection to a Taos Museum; it is the exploitative act itself which La Farge condemns.

[32] It must be acknowledged that Luhan is ultimately a more complex figure than that presented by La Farge in his writing. Although both La Farge and Lawrence condemned Luhan for what they perceived as her exploitation of Native culture, their portrayals of her do not acknowledge the positive aspects of her presence in New Mexico. This lack of acknowledgment, which dominates Luhan' s legacy, will be addressed in the subsequent chapter.

beautiful land, a breeder of artists and warriors... the home by birth or by passionate adoption, of a wildly assorted population which has shown itself capable of achieving homogeneity without sacrificing its diversity" (Hillerman 21)

La Farge's fiction, when it is mentioned at all, tends to be dismissed today as an overly romantic portrayal of Indians. However it cannot be denied that this writer played an influential part in the modernisation of American society's perception of Native culture. In *Raw Material*, La Farge stated that "Good writing stems from things so deeply felt, so sharply perceived that they are unforgettable"(5). His career was a remarkable fusion of the literary and the political, delivering to his readers "a wealth of reliable ethnological material through a literary form" (Caffey 5). La Farge's writing had purpose. His novels and stories were designed to highlight the responsibility of the white man towards the Indian and to 'protect' Indigenous cultures from those he viewed as escapists, like Luhan, who would exploit them purely for their aesthetic qualities. A revisionary study of La Farge's work illustrates that he was engaging with theories of liminality and border experience long before these hypotheses emerged in academic scholarship. His writing also provides a basis for re-evaluating literature from Northern New Mexico under new criteria. A re-examination of La Farge's work in light of regional paradigms of place-based literature offers new ways of understanding his oeuvre. This aspect of his work links La Farge's writing, not only to that of the other Anglo writers discussed in this thesis, but also to contemporary Indian authors Silko and Ortiz. When viewed in conjunction with other writers from Northern New Mexico, in particular Ortiz, La Farge's work is a part of a continuum and, as such, a revision and re-evaluation of his work is crucial in the recognition of New Mexico writing as an autonomous body of literature.

Chapter Two

'A once and future Eden': Mabel Dodge Luhan's Southwest

Popular perceptions of Mabel Dodge Luhan as a wealthy, domineering Anglo interloper have long influenced the perception of her role in the cultural history of New Mexico. Marginalised in academic scholarship, Luhan's iconic status has little to do with her literary career and stems more from her eccentric personality. Despite the one dimensional portrait offered in the work of Oliver La Farge and others, Luhan has played a vital role in the literary history of northern New Mexico. As this chapter aims to demonstrate, past representations of Luhan by both critics and writers are flawed, incomplete characterisations of this author's role in both the literary and cultural landscape of the American Southwest. When considered in conjunction with Anglo and Native authors from northern New Mexico, Luhan emerges as a powerful and influential literary figure and, as such, her writing demands reappraisal.

In the early years of the twentieth century, an expanding interest in new fields of artistic endeavour, combined with progressive understandings of gender roles, led to the emergence of powerful female figures in American society. Women writers such as Gertrude Stein and Willa Cather competed with their male counterparts to revise, rejuvenate and recreate a new American literary culture. Through workshops, salons and literary magazines, women writers became a powerful force in modernist literary circles.[33] At the centre of this influential movement was Mabel Dodge Luhan. In pre-World War One America, New York was the base of cultural operations and Greenwich Village, where Luhan settled, was the centre of bohemian society. Recognised as the most prominent salon hostess of the period, Luhan played a significant role in cultural and literary circles. Establishing her home as a site of

[33] For a developed discussion of women in the field of modernist literary studies see Maren Tova Linnett's edited collection of essays "The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Women Writers".

artistic and cultural expression, Luhan emerged as a significant figure in the American modernist movement. Indeed, her role as hostess and facilitator is so significant that critical attention has rarely focused on other aspects of Luhan's career. Throughout her life, this writer's personal reputation eclipsed her work. Lacking confidence in her own ability as an author, she directed her energies towards inspiring others. Consequently, Luhan's own writing has seldom been addressed by critics and her position as a prominent New Mexico writer has been largely ignored.[34]

Believing that the Southwest was a haven providing a refuge from the corruption and materialism of modern society, Luhan made her home in Taos, New Mexico and endeavoured to attract prominent artists, writers and poets to the area, in order to establish this region as a new cultural centre. Her ability to draw famous individuals to Taos stems from Luhan's perception of herself as a hostess and muse, an inspiration to individuals whom, she believed, exhibited a greater talent for the creative arts. This has only compounded Luhan's marginalisation by the academic community, with contemporary historians and biographers dismissing her as a "culture carrier rather than an originator" (Rudnick, *Intimate Memories* viii).[35]

Luhan's unpublished manuscript, *Let's Get Away Together*, demonstrates both her relevance to and neglect within Southwestern literary Scholarship. Despite the potential significance of this work to the literary and cultural construct of northern New Mexico, it remains overlooked, even by Luhan's principal champion, her biographer Lois Palken Rudnick. However, while the writing is uneven and the narrative pace slow, this text, more than any other work Luhan produced, expresses the liminal identity

[34] Lois Rudnick is widely recognised as the foremost authority on Luhan in contemporary scholarship, having written several books and articles relating to Luhan's life. However, even Rudnick's work lacks focus on Luhan's own writing, instead focusing on her role as hostess to famous artists and writers.
[35] This has also been said of Willa Cather.

and border experience expressed by other Anglo and contemporary Native writers from northern New Mexico.

This manuscript clearly demonstrates that, like La Farge, Luhan was engaging with theoretical paradigms such as borderlands theory, decades before such hypotheses emerged in critical debate. In addition, the prominent and influential role which the natural landscape plays in this text locates Luhan's writing as an early instance of the place- based literature the contemporary forms of which have attracted the attention of ecocritics like Tom Lynch. Defining ecocriticism as the relationship between literature and the physical world, Lynch's work offers new ways of understanding and interpreting early Anglo writing from northern New Mexico. In applying his theories of place-based identity to Luhan's work, this thesis offers a unique perspective of this author long marginalised in academia (*Xerophilia* 13). A close examination of Luhan's unpublished manuscript, when viewed in conjunction with the work of contemporary writers like Leslie Marmon Silko and Simon Ortiz reveals the significance of Luhan's writing to the literary community of northern New Mexico.

The natural landscape of New Mexico plays a vital role in the work of writers from the region. For many authors from northern New Mexico, from Cather to Silko, a sense of identity is located within a Southwestern setting, demonstrating the important role place-based consciousness plays in the writing of the region. This concept is key to Luhan's novel *Let's Get Away Together.* This work, which carries the alternate title *Oh Johnny!,* is based on the experiences of a man whose identity is ambiguous and whose life is unfulfilled until he encounters the healing power of the Southwest landscape. As the product of a capitalist society, Johnny is unable to connect with the individuals or the lifestyle offered by such a civilisation. Dissatisfaction with his world manifests itself as a fear of all things which represent the capitalist society in which he lives:

> In this tall narrow house there was no life, no fun. He never felt he belonged there, even when he was a child, every time he came in the front door with Ester or Mom his heart dropped down inside him…The hall was so dreary and the drawing-room that opened from it was actually so frightening, heavy with velvet curtains and old golden furniture, that Johnny always made a dash up the stairs to reach Mom's room or the attic room in front of it (3).

The fear and anxiety expressed by Luhan's protagonist is echoed in the other characters who inhabit his world. As Luhan states, Johnny's mother and his aunt "were so wrapped up in something no one could get at them. They were muffled up in their own anxieties, and hastes and fussings" (11). Characters in Luhan's eastern world are isolated from each other and from their emotions, inhabiting an environment comparable to that of Godfrey St. Peter in Willa Cather's The *Professor's House*. A particular representative of repressive capitalist society is the character of uncle Hewitt, who attempts to force Johnny to conform by joining the family business:

> That was the horror of the future. Johnny was destined by the whole universe, by the past hundred years, by every custom in American life and all proper thinking, to go and spend his waking days in sunshine and in storm by the side of Uncle Hewitt in the office. No one questioned the propriety of this, nor its necessary fulfilment. It was part of the pattern of the life they were born in, and it had to be carried on. It never occurred to him to rebel, or to refuse his foreordained role. The edifice of America had been built of these living stones laid one upon another until the great structure towered wide and high and he knew he was to be one more brick in the wall (13).

At the novel's opening Johnny is restless, unable to find a sense of identity in the cold, calculating world of the east. The first half of Luhan's novel replicates the "grey and colorless" life her protagonist

endures (13). Thus, although the early part of the novel may be monotonous, it does function as an effective contrast to the later scenes set in the Southwest landscape. Again like Cather, who in *The Professor's House* constructs Tom Outland's story in opposition to the Professor's modern world, Luhan makes significant use of contrast between the bilocated settings of her novel. Emphasising the destructive tediousness of life in eastern society serves to highlight the regenerative quality of the Southwest landscape where Johnny discovers a sense of self, finally finding a place he identifies as home.

Just as the character of uncle Hewitt represents repressive capitalist ideals in the east, Luhan's depiction of Jerry, a Pueblo Indian, represents the freedom of the Southwest landscape. The character of Jerry in this work is clearly modelled on Luhan's husband Antonio (Tony) Luhan. [36] Having served in the army with Johnny, Jerry is comfortable in both the Indian and Anglo world yet he chooses to return to the Pueblo way of life. This character's defining characteristic is his connection to the natural landscape which, according to Johnny, gives him "his poise, his security and his serenity that nothing disturbed" (160). While camping on a hillside during one training exercise, Johnny and his campmates are unprepared for the hardship of an outdoor life and must be taught by Jerry how to remain safe and dry in the open air. Luhan writes that while "wet in the rain, they huddled in the chow line, eager for the hot coffee", Jerry looks "clean and washed" and perfectly at home (153-154). Luhan's presentation of this character locates her work within the field of ecocritical writing and paradigms of place-based identity. Jerry's identity is structured in relation to the natural world which surrounds him, a connection that allows him to remain comfortable and secure in any situation. Acting as a teacher and guide to an emotionally stunted Johnny, Jerry teaches him to appreciate the simple beauty of the natural world:

[36] At points in the novel, Jerry even speaks in Tony's exact words. For example, on one of their first encounters, Jerry informs Johnny that "God gave the white people things but he gave the Indians just what grows on the mountain", a speech that Tony makes to Mabel in Edge of Taos desert (161)

"Look at fire! Look down on water, feel sun, sleep and rest and wake up and see another day come. That all good. That living(158). Through his friendship with Jerry, Johnny is introduced to the New Mexico landscape, a place he describes as "unearthly, quiet and good" (336).

The sense of identity Johnny feels in relation to his natural surroundings is reflected in his renewed sense of purpose. Unlike the first part of the novel, which is dominated by descriptions of Johnny's listlessness and general indifference to life, his time in New Mexico is characterised by enthusiasm and resolve.

The second part of Luhan's novel is dominated by powerful descriptions of the natural landscape in order to highlight the prominent role this terrain plays in her protagonist's life:

> The whole valley spread out before them already swimming in the morning haze. They could look away across to Taos and it looked like a tiny hamlet ivory and beige in the distance and it wavered uneasily in the trembling haze. Ahead of them the tall pine trees marched to meet them as they started on again. Soon they were unable to see beyond these stout trees that hemmed them in on all sides. It was dim under the branches. The ground was carpeted with dry brown pine needles and there were many wild flowers in the grass beside the road. Red Penstamen, blue lupin, yellow gorse. Woodpeckers flashed by showing the red feathers (336).

In *Let's Get Away Together,* Luhan also constructs the Southwest landscape as a refuge for her protagonist and his friends. After the war Johnny realises that it is Impossible for them to return to their old lives; there is no place for them in the modern world. Asserting that "We're so foul inside…we can't meet the folks we know…we're different from them now", he seeks out a place of retreat (275). When Jerry encourages them to visit his home in the Southwest, Johnny and his compatriots embrace a place where there are "no offices…no politicians, no blood and guts...a place where the mountain is

alive, all clean and good" (276). In New Mexico, Luhan's Anglo characters find "A clean slate. A clean earth, a clear sky above them, far removed from the hustle of cities and the rapacious scramble of country life" (279).

This description of the desert landscape as a refuge connects Luhan not only to other Anglo authors of the 1920s, but also to contemporary Native authors like Momaday and Silko. Like Johnny and his friends, Silko's protagonist Tayo is war veteran who finds a safe haven in the local landscape when pursued by outsiders and, like Luhan's characters, he experiences peace in the desert:

> At that moment in the sunrise, it was all so beautiful, everything, from all directions, evenly, perfectly, balancing day with night, summer months with winter. The valley was enclosing this totality, like the mind holding all thoughts together in a single moment. The strength came from this feeling. It had always been here. He stood there with the sun on his face, and he thought maybe he might make it after all (237).

Silko's description of the natural landscape as a source of healing is prefigured in Luhan's unpublished novel. In the Southwest, where there is "no strain or tension or anything", Johnny and his friends forget about the horrors of war and live a peaceful existence far from the corruption of a capitalist society (354).

Let's Get Away Together also engages with a prevalent theme in the work of contemporary Native writers like Silko and Ortiz; that of the reluctant return of the Native. Like Silko and Ortiz, Luhan analyses the alienating effects of war on young Natives, albeit from an Anglo perspective, and presents a solution in a renewed cleaving to Indian traditions. In *Ceremony* Tayo struggles to inhabit the modern world and finds a cure by embracing his Native heritage. In the same way Jerry retreats from the white world after the war and (re)connects with the Indian way of life by living on the slopes of the sacred

mountain. When Johnny and his friends arrive, Jerry tells them that he is not yet ready to rejoin his tribe but that he is "takin' Indian medicine up there"(349). Jerry tells his Anglo friends that "I take the sun, and drink the good water and I listen to God talkin'. Then I feel good. All that poison run out of me" (349). By re-immersing himself in the natural world Jerry, like Tayo, finds a new link to his heritage and so is 'cured' of the disease of modernity. After escaping from a German prison camp, Jerry returns to the Pueblo, but is unable to settle there. As Luhan states:

> He needed the complete solitude and the mountain life…He got a few provisions together and took his gun and climbed to the top of the range…he had built a shelter…and already he had had time to collect his wits and to recover all his old thoughts living with the beasts and birds. He felt fine now. (343)

Like her contemporary La Farge, Luhan examines the corrupting power of modern civilisation and its effects on the traditional way of life. In the same way, Silko constructs her character, Tayo, as a symbol of the corruption of Indian culture and as a reminder that the both the old ways and the younger generation are being lost to an encroaching Euro-American culture. In Luhan's novel, Jerry describes for Johnny how education has alienated Natives from their culture:

> It's different when the school boys come home after graduating. It's too hard for them to go back to breech cloth and leggin's. They come home with short hair and pants on and wearin' store shoes…the boys don't feel good when first they come home to live. The school life been so different. They forgotten all the thoughts they used to have…seems like nothin' to do. No streetcars, no movies, no nothin'. (167)

Like La Farge's characters Slim Girl and Myron, these Indians are alienated from their tribal ways and feel out of place in a tribal setting. However, unlike La Farge's characters, Jerry attests that by

reacquainting themselves with the old ways, these boys find their way in life. In contrast to Slim Girl, who remains a perpetual outsider, and Myron, who becomes an amalgamation of Indian and White, evolving into something new, Luhan's Native characters reject any interaction with the outside world. The old men of the Pueblo teach the young men the Native customs and beliefs and reinitiate them into the tribe. They learn "how to protect themselves, how to make fire outdoors in all kind weather…How to be strong in arms and hang for hours from tree branches…They learn to feed themselves with berries and good roots…so they learn to need nothin' from the store. No cans" (169). In this way, Luhan asserts her primitivist ideals, suggesting that Native cultures can only thrive when unencumbered by the ways of modern society.

The idyllic conclusion to Luhan's novel is further compounded by the characters' ability to organise a co-operative, permitting the various races which inhabit the region to become self-sufficient and removing the need for contact with the outside world.[37] This aspect of the novel anticipates contemporary theories of third space and liminality discussed in the work of Edward Soja. In his landmark text *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real and Imagined Places* Soja presents third space as something "produced through continuous human struggle over perceived space, conceived space and lived space" (Rodriguez 397). The production of space evident in early Anglo writing from northern New Mexico, particularly the Anglo authors discussed in this thesis, constructs this region as both an actual and figurative liminal zone, a space apart from the dominant ideology of an American nation and one where a distinctive cultural and literary has emerged. The New Mexico landscape presented in Luhan's novel exists apart from mainland America, offering an interstitial existence far removed from the corruption and disintegration of modern society. As such, Johnny and

[37] Indeed, the manuscripts final words – "The End or maybe The Beginning!" illustrate that, as with Luhan herself, Johnny's life really begins when he reaches the Southwest.

his friends inhabit the liminal space between cultures, existing on the periphery of both the white world and the Native world represented by Jerry and the Pueblo Indians. Luhan's idyllic portrayal of this space suggests that her novel may be read according to the theories of Homi Bhabha who ascribes a utopian dimension to his theories of liminality and third space. Like Bhabha and Soja, Luhan engages with issues of hybridisation as her characters are forced to adopt aspects of both the Indian and white worlds in order to survive in the interstitial spaces of the Southwest. Insisting on buying all the conveniences necessary in a modern household, Johnny and his wife are also taught by Jerry how to light a fire without matches and how to cook dinner over an outdoor campfire. The co-operative organised by Johnny and his neighbours at the novel's close is Luhan's strongest articulation of the liminal position of her characters. Self sufficiency allows the inhabitants of Taos to exist in an idyllic space, isolated from the corruption and materialism of modern society. Luhan's novel suggests that she may legitimately be read in the context of northern New Mexico writing.

During her time in New Mexico, Luhan was profoundly influenced by the landscape and cultures which surrounded her. As Sherry Smith states, "She did not dabble in the region, she helped define it. She did not merely visit it, she lived it, making the West her home for over forty years. She did not simply "play" Indian, she married one" (187). Having lived in the region for such a prolonged period of time, Luhan witnessed the hybrid identity and liminality now expressed by contemporary Native writers like Silko and Ortiz. This experience, which is evidenced in her unpublished manuscript, is also addressed in her numerous articles, essays and memoirs. Such works illustrate Luhan's perception of the unique tri-ethnicity which characterises northern New Mexico. Furthermore, a closer examination of her oeuvre illustrates the influential role which the natural landscape exerted over the writers and artists who inhabit its spaces. Articles such as "Paso Por Aqui" depict the New Mexico landscape almost as a living entity, capable of positively or negatively influencing the writers and artists who

inhabit the terrain. Other works such as *Winter in Taos* and *Edge of Taos Desert* prefigure later paradigms of place-based identity in literary studies, as Luhan ascribes particular significance to her natural surroundings and establishes her identity in relation to the desert terrain of northern New Mexico.

The lack of academic attention to Luhan's oeuvre demonstrates that her literary legacy continues to be overshadowed by her forceful personality. According to Ansel Adams, Luhan was "never a victim of convention… [but] played out her life on a stage illuminated by her great wealth and the sychophantic bees that flocked to her hive" (qtd. in Willard 17). It is this aspect of her presence in New Mexico that offended La Farge, who identified Luhan as a primary example of the corrupting force of Anglo escapism on Native culture. According to La Farge, Anglo "escapists", were manipulative individuals whose interest in the indigenous cultures of the Southwest would ultimately prove destructive. In his short story "Hard Winter", published in 1933, La Farge denounces the destructive power of escapism and presents Luhan as an exemplar of a pernicious Anglo presence in the Southwest. In this story, a white woman is fascinated by all things Indian- their clothes, music, and language. When she develops an interest in one particular Indian, she attempts to 'buy' him, offering him all the trappings of the modern world and paying him for sex. The naïve Indian of the story is so allured by her wealth that he effectively abandons his wife and children. As a result of his absence, his only son dies and his family is left destitute. This white woman is clearly modelled on Luhan. In his first description of the woman at a Native dance, La Farge states "Plainly she thought that Indians were very important, and she was enjoying herself playing Indian" (28). The white woman in the story bestows on Tall Walker "Indian finery, more than he desired, and a rifle, and she surrounded him with unimagined luxury" without considering how this might be detrimental to his way of life (34). Luhan was often accused of trying to buy the friendship of the Indians she encountered in Taos, and of using

her wealth to bribe the Natives. However, in La Farge's story, the most striking allusion to Luhan's life is the character of Juan, who represents La Farge's view of Luhan's relationship with her Indian husband Tony. In the story, Juan works as a guide for the white woman and in return she offers him material possessions. Tony also acted as a guide for Luhan and her Anglo visitors. However, despite Juan's obvious wealth, La Farge notes that "there was a hidden shame present", suggesting that the Indian is conscious of his betrayal (29). As a result of his relationship with the white woman, Juan is also alienated from his tribe and his friends and "understood neither Navajo nor Apache" (29). Although Tony was married when they first met, Luhan paid his wife to divorce him. The Pueblo elders, who refused to accept Tony's breach with his family, nonetheless excluded him from tribal councils and from ceremonial events in the Kiva. Although this excommunication was later rescinded, for much of his life Tony remained an outsider to his culture, which La Farge suggests was the fault of his rich Anglo wife.[38]

La Farge's story makes a significant contribution to society's view of Luhan as "an Anglo interloper, a rich white woman from back east who thought that she could be fulfilled if she called an Indian her husband and Taos her home" (Burke, *Greenwich Village* 3). [39] Luhan's need to be accepted by the Indians among whom she lived, combined with her belief that Taos was destined to be the new spiritual centre of America, made her an influential figure in the spread of primitivism throughout the

[38] Reports of Tony Luhan are widely varied. As evidenced by La Farge's short story, some considered him a traitor who abandoned his tribe to marry a rich white woman. Other reports suggest that Tony worked as an informer and sold tribal secrets to Anglo researchers. His marriage to Mabel alienated him from the very Southwest his wife claimed he represented. During their marriage Mabel anglicised her husband's name, shortening Antonio to Tony and changing the Lujan to Luhan. Despite Mabel's best attempts to create a character portrait of Tony in her writing, he remains an enigmatic figure. Although he appears in stories and photographs provided by Luhan's guests, Tony produced no literature of his own. As a result much of our information pertaining to him is derived from widely contradictory sources. Anglo visitors to Mabel's home, such as Georgia O Keefe and Willa Cather seem to have regarded Tony as the living embodiment of Taos itself while many modern sources from Taos Pueblo still regard him as a traitor to his tribe and his way of life.

[39] While this thesis argues that Luhan makes a more extensive contribution to the field of New Mexico literary studies than has previously been recognised, it is necessary to acknowledge this troubling aspect of her character.

Southwest region. Drawn to New Mexico by the ethnic tourism popularised by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (ATSF) and the Fred Harvey Company, Luhan and her contemporaries sought the 're-birth' of Western civilisation. Convinced that modern society was doomed to extinction, Anglo interlopers looked to the Southwest as a utopian paradise, containing "vestiges of a culture that has, with inestimable vitality, withstood the passing of time and its changes and has maintained…its devotion to the eternal truths, static yet in perpetual motion" (Luhan, *Bridge* 299). This primitivist belief that Native societies existed in a pre-modern condition was particularly popular with Anglos from a white, educated, middle class background, those who possessed the money and the means to explore the Southwestern terrain.

Luhan's primitivism stemmed from a disillusionment with modern society which led to a rejection of the materialistic lifestyle in which she was raised. [40] Born into the Victorian ruling class, Luhan's upbringing was characterised by loneliness and repression. One of her most vivid memories from childhood is of being presented with a silver dollar by her grandfather Cook: "He moves slowly down the staircase, a self assured Victorian Priest of finance capitalism. When he arrives at the bottom of the staircase, he reaches 'his bloodless, clawlike hand' into his pocket and withdraws a shining silver coin. "Here… Here is a silver dollar for you! Now take it and never forget it!""(Rudnick, *New Woman* 1). This incident illustrates the psychological effect of the capitalist society into which Luhan was born, in which it was a common practice to substitute monetary security for familial affection. Her own personality, combined with an emotionally stunted upbringing, resulted in a lifelong aversion to what she saw as the corrupt materialism of the Anglo ruling class and encouraged an interest in what she regarded as "the perfection of the primitive" (Luhan, *Edge* xix). In Luhan's view, modern society was

[40] Indeed it seems obvious that Luhan based the main character of her unpublished manuscript on herself and her negative experiences of capitalist society.

inherently destructive and required a complete transformation in order to survive. She also regarded herself as the symbol of an American culture whose growth had been stunted by the suffocating restrictions of both class and society. The spiritual awakening she experienced upon visiting the Southwest convinced Luhan that the modern world's salvation lay in the "superior spiritual state of the simple Indian life" (Drohojowska-Philip 261). Thus, in her literary work, she attempts to present herself as a metaphor for the decline, fall and regeneration of modern civilisation.

Perceiving that all primitive societies held the "key to Universal truth", Luhan and her contemporaries believed that they should be kept in splendid isolation, unaffected by the corruption of the modern world (Torgovnick 7). In particular, Santa Fe and Taos emerged as popular sites of Anglo/Native interaction as expatriates flocked to established artist and writers colonies. Luhan and her contemporaries were accused of "playing Indian", ignoring the poverty and hardship of the Indian way of life and instead construing all things Native as mystical. Luhan, in particular, was criticised for this attitude in her writing. "A Bridge Between Cultures", certainly omits any reference to the poverty and hardship which was clearly an aspect of Taos Pueblo life. Claiming that the Indian life is "Harmonious and balanced", Luhan contrasts this to "the competitive life of civilization [that] keeps men chained to the clock in New York (299- 300). Such primitivist statements also dominate the final volume of her memoirs, *Edge of Taos Desert: An Escape to Reality*. In this work, Luhan claims "I was becoming acquainted with a kind of living I didn't know existed anywhere. I had heard of course, of the Golden Age, and of the Elysian Fields, but they had only been words to me. Now I found out what they meant" (177). "A Bridge Between Cultures" also suggests that a new culture will rise in the Southwest and hails Santa Fe as the "spiritual centre of America" (299). Adopting and adapting the views of Oswald

Spengler, Luhan's primitivism is evident as she emphasises the simplicity of daily Pueblo life.[41] Highlighting the harmonious aspects of communal Pueblo culture in this article, Luhan ignores the practical issues of health, sanitation and the denial of Native tribal rights: "In that land of crystal space, among the higher altitudes, men still live on in a lyrical mode that remains pristine and beautiful… for they are not only the hosts of the life force but, I venture to announce, they are the favourites of the will of nature" (299-300). These selective and primitivist presentations of Native life account for the one dimensional characterisation of Luhan, one which led critics to denounce her work, both literary and political, as primitivist doctrine of the most romantic kind.

Luhan's career as a writer began in earnest when she relocated to the desert landscape of Taos, New Mexico in 1917. Her initial trip to the region was, in her own words, "no casual adventure, but an escape from the disillusions of contemporary survival" (*Edge*, xix). Disheartened by the capitalist corruption of modern society and also by the repressions attendant upon America's entry into the First World War, Luhan was drawn to New Mexico by her third husband's description of the purity and simplicity of the Native cultures he had encountered there. Aware of his wife's interest in cultural and political movements, Maurice Sterne wrote that Luhan's goal in life should be to "save the Indians, their art- culture- reveal it to the world" (Rudnick, *Intimate Memories,* 184). Luhan arrived in New Mexico in December, 1917. Although she later identified the Southwest as a new Eden, initially she was unimpressed with Taos, a somewhat dilapidated adobe settlement of 2,000 people. The remote location of this frontier community necessitated a way of life which was alien to someone from Luhan's background. When she arrived in the region, the capital city had not long achieved statehood

[41] Spengler alleged that history was cyclical and that each 'high' power had a predictable life cycle. This theory, which was in vogue during the modernist period, held that western civilisation was in decline, having passed through the height of its life cycle. Although Spengler looked to India and the East, modernists like Luhan utilised his theories to suggest that the next 'high' civilisation was to be found in the Indians of the Southwest. (*A Bridge Between Cultures*)

and the landscape had not been altered to accommodate modern conveniences. Cars were relatively new to the region and what would have been a short journey in New York became an extended navigation over the harsh, desolate terrain of the desert. Goods had to be ordered months in advance; the town had no electricity and no gas or oil heating. Echoing that of La Farge, Luhan's immediate reaction to the region was not particularly positive: "So *this* was the Southwest! *Well*!" (*Edge* 16). Both individuals found the New Mexico terrain inhospitable and intimidating upon arrival.[42] Indeed Luhan's original impression of New Mexico's landscape was that it was utterly foreign. People spoke Spanish as a first language and the architecture of the region was strange. She felt that they had left America behind and entered a new country.

Both La Farge and Luhan initially experienced the territory of New Mexico as "other", a foreign landscape within the domestic terrain of America.[43] The geographic landscape inhabited by Luhan and La Farge was recognised as American soil, yet as they understood, it existed as a separate nation state outside of the prevailing national ideology of an Anglo dominated America. Despite having a large Hispanic population, the region was no longer recognised as part of Mexico. As such, it occupied a unique geographical and theoretical position between nations and cultures, a position that permitted, and even demanded, the evolution of a new identity which was distinctly New Mexican. What early Anglo writers like Luhan communicate in their first impression of the New Mexico is an early expression of this unique hybridity, prefiguring contemporary paradigms of third space and liminal identity. In their writing, both La Farge and Luhan also demonstrate what border theorist Gloria Anzaldúa would later refer to as the lived reality of the borderlands; a liminal culture comprising an

[42] D.H Lawrence also displayed a strong reaction to the Southwest landscape. In an essay entitled "New Mexico" he claims "It had a splendid silent terror, and a vast far and wide magnificence which made it way beyond mere aesthetic appreciation" (Hillerman 31).

[43] This point of view is echoed by Michael Gold in his article "Mabel Luhan's Slums". Describing his experiences during Navajo sheep dipping on the reservation, Gold remarks that "Only four pale faces were present, including myself. This was America, and we were the foreigners here" (12).

amalgamation of three races- Anglo, Hispanic and Native which co-existed in the landscape surrounding Taos. Luhan, in particular,embraced this third space as a transcultural frontier. Just as Anzaldúa depicted the border region as a brutal yet enabling liminal zone, Luhan also perceived the territory of northern New Mexico as one which offered the potential for redemption and embraced this tri-ethnic space as a place to re-define her identity. As a result, the renewed analysis of Luhan's oeuvre offered in this work is essential to the establishment of an autonomous body of writing from the region of northern New Mexico.

Shunning Santa Fe, which already hosted many influential Anglo expatriates such as Alice Corbin Henderson, Luhan settled in Taos and immediately took up the 'cause' of the Indians. However, despite her assertions that the Indian's simplistic mode of existence represented the uncorrupted purity of the Native way of life, Luhan had no qualms about exploiting Natives she encountered.[44] In *Edge of Taos Desert*, Luhan recalls her first visit to Taos Pueblo, where she attempted to buy the friendship of the Natives: "I took a bag of oranges out with me, for I had heard somewhere that one could ingratiate oneself with small presents like that" (92). Luhan and the painter Andrew Dasburg, one of her frequent visitors to Taos, also bought many old Santos from the Mexicans they encountered and Luhan admits that Dasburg, in particular, "became ruthless and determined, and he bullied the simple Mexicans into selling their saints, sometimes when they didn't want to" (*Edge* 126). In *Edge of Taos Desert*, Luhan also acknowledges how Tony became an accomplice in these exploitative endeavours, acting as guide and intermediary between the Mexicans and the intruding Anglos: "Sometimes Tony went with Andrew and me around to the Mexican houses…[he] would knock at a door and say "*Tiene cosas*

[44] Despite her professed admiration for the simplicity of a Native life, Luhan never lived like the Indians she sought to emulate. She imported all modern conveniences into her home, Los Gallos, and frequently employed Indians and Hispanics as servants. Such reports give credence to La Farge's opinion of her as an Anglo interloper who enjoyed 'playing Indian', dressing in Indian blankets and occasionally sleeping in a teepee while also enjoying all the trappings of the modern culture she claimed to detest (Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas*)

antiquas, y cuanto hay?" – and we would push in behind him, especially Andrew would push eagerly, and occasionally we would find perfect treasures"(139). Despite the fact that it was Mexicans, not Natives, whose trust Dasburg and Luhan were abusing, it is the dominating, exploitative presence displayed during such encounters that anti-primitivists such as La Farge objected to in the Anglo cultural invasion of the Southwest.

The direction of Mabel Dodge Luhan's life was dictated by her continual search for a sense of identity. This quest for a sense of place and belonging is acknowledged as a significant tradition in American women's writing. During the modernist period, the American Southwest emerged as a prime location for women writers who sought to contest the notion of literature as a male defined tradition by laying claim to spaces which had historically belonged to men. As Molly Mullin asserts, "The Southwest appealed to [women writers] in part because it offered a way of reinventing the geography of national identity and of gender in ways that seemed especially promising" (qtd Lynch 383). Many female poets and authors embraced the harsh, unyielding desert as a symbol of the modern woman who refused to be dominated and controlled by male influence. Consequently, regions like northern New Mexico became havens for feminists and lesbians who identified with the uncharted spaces of the desert terrain and also with the Native cultures which, they believed, valued female independence and power and challenged the notion of a fixed monocultural American identity. In doing so, such individuals provide an early representation of ideologies expressed in the work of contemporary border theorists, like Anzaldúa and José David Saldívar, who argue that the Southwest landscape is a "zone of dangerous crossings with new "centralities" that challenge dominant national centers of identity and culture" (Saldívar, *Border Matters* 19). By embracing the American Southwest as a site of creativity, female writers of the 1920s, such as Luhan and Austin, inhabit Anzaldúa's harsh, violent, yet enabling liminal border zone. The connection women writers of the Southwest felt shaped their artistic voices

and influenced their creativity, so much so that when he arrived in New Mexico, Lawrence argued that the place was overpopulated with strong women, like Luhan, who had claimed the space as their own and so left no room for his own creative exploits.

Contemporary theory posits that the habitation of the desert by these women is a form of cultural colonisation which is connected to Anglo forms of feminism; that by writing about the desert landscape, they sought to lay claim to it. Like the male explorers who preceded them, female authors, artists and poets who embraced the desert landscape of northern New Mexico perceived its vast expanse as largely uninhabited, a blank canvas upon which they could inscribe their own theories of renewal and regeneration. The theory that authorship gives power over the object described has been identified by Mary Louise Pratt as a significant tradition in colonial enterprises when explorers would provide written accounts and drawings of the landscape and people encountered. This act of description, which Pratt refers to as the "Monarch- of- all- I –Survey scene", places a stamp of ownership on the object described, as the audience is only permitted to perceive the object from the describer's point of view. Women authors who wrote from and about a Southwestern setting attempted to lay claim to the desert landscape and interpret it, not as a male dominated frontier, but as a harsh, unyielding and ultimately female space. In this way Georgia O' Keeffe, for instance, identified the New Mexico desert as an inherently female landscape and placed her artistic stamp on it, claiming "I never feel at home in the East like I do out here…I feel like myself- and I like it" (Drohojowska- Philip 297). The unspoiled nature of the desert landscape also gave authors such as Willa Cather, Mary Austin and Alice Corbin Henderson a sense of cultural and literary authority. Austin's experiences among the Native tribes of the Southwest led her to identify a form of feminism in Pueblo Indian life. In these tribes, Austin observed an equality among the sexes which was rooted in an indigenous existence in the desert. Consequently, her female characters are liberated from the "restrictive norms of femininity by

the vast and undominated scale of the land" (Rudnick, Norwood & Monk 18). Despite her earlier assertion that "the west is a man's world and…woman's sphere is in New York", Luhan, too, embraced the desert as a largely uncharted female space which allowed her the freedom to express herself (qtd in Smith 187).[45] This self-expression inevitably revolved around Native culture, which Luhan attempted to describe and interpret for her readership.

Cather and Henderson claim that their lives "broke in two" upon experiencing the power of the New Mexico desert. Adapting the philosophy of Walt Whitman, who argued that America could evolve into a multi-cultural paradise, these women viewed the landscape as an agent of redemption for American culture at large. Like Luhan and La Farge, these writers understood that the terrain of New Mexico existed somehow apart from the dominant ideology of an American nation – a third space which they could claim as their own. Disregarding the male dominated tradition of exploration and exploitation, women like Austin, Luhan and Cather embraced northern New Mexico as an empowering force in their domestic and creative lives. In their writing the female is liberated from the restrictions placed on their sex by the empowering vastness of the desert. By interpreting and presenting the desert landscape of northern New Mexico as a liminal space between cultures, early Anglo writers like Luhan anticipate Soja's theories of third space and liminality. This distinctive identity is evident in Luhan's writing, particularly in *Winter in Taos* and in the last volume of her memoirs, *Edge of Taos Desert*. In conjunction with her unpublished manuscript, these works remain Luhan's strongest expression of the hybrid identity which characterised her life in northern New Mexico.

Luhan's memoirs were published at a time when such frank confessional texts by women authors were not usual. Her writing, particularly that of her later career, which remains neglected even by her

[45] Luhan made this comment after her trip to El Paso in 1913. Accompanying John Reed, who was reporting on the Mexican Revolution, Luhan was repelled by the violence and corruption experienced in what she called "the vulgarist town in the United States" (qtd Smith 187).

most attentive biographers and explicators, not only attempts to subvert a male defined tradition but also embraces the landscape of northern New Mexico in an attempt to resolve conflict and confusion on both a personal and national level. Many of the texts produced by women writers of the Southwest were autobiographical in nature, a genre now identified as life writing. Writing of this kind is often significantly influenced by a sense of identity developed from a connection to the surrounding landscape. Contemporary theory suggests that autobiographical texts stem from an inner compulsion to write of the self, therefore involving a degree of difficulty not only in constructing a sense of self but also in communicating it. This process of life writing is thus concerned with an analysis of selfhood and identity. Autobiography has also played a major role in feminist ideology, constructing relationships between individuals and a collective identity. Women authors who inhabited the Southwest struggled against socially constructed identities which assigned them a subservient role in society. As Laura Marcus argues, the very process of life writing enables the author to structure an uncertain identity into definite form: "In this sense, life writings become the organisers of identity- the means of controlling both the written life and the life itself" (24). In the Southwest, women writers and artists sought to leave behind the restrictions placed on them by Victorian society and instead create a new identity, one shaped and influenced by the multicultural landscape which surrounded them. Luhan embodies this in her memoirs, where she attempts to describe for her readers the corruption, destruction and eventual salvation of the modern American way of life through representation of her own experiences.

Encouraged by her psychiatrist to write her memoirs as a form of therapy, the ensuing works, which spanned 1,600 pages, were described by D.H. Lawrence as "the most serious 'confession' that ever came out of America, and perhaps the most heart-destroying revelation of the American life-process that ever has or will be produced" (Boulton & Vasey, 428). In analysing Luhan's work, it is

almost impossible to separate life and art, political activism and literary accomplishment. This is simply because Luhan was a "walking work of art"; her personality informs the work she produced. As a writer she had always acknowledged that her best work was inspired by personal experiences, claiming "I could never write about anything except myself and what I saw" (*Lorenzo* 121). Such assertions place Luhan at the fore of New Mexico literary studies, a field that is in many ways defined by an individual's experience of landscape and cultures. Luhan's creative talent, such as it was, lay in writing works based on her personal experiences, in life writing. As such, the forty years she spent in New Mexico were crucial to her literary achievement. Adhering to her own experience gave Luhan the grounding she needed to produce coherent pieces of work. In fiction, she lost this structure.[46] The source of Luhan's talent was recognised by Lawrence, who urged her to remain focused on works of non- fiction: "As soon as you try writing from the imagination, not recording your own actual impressions, you become amateurish" (*Lorenzo* 280). Published in four volumes, Luhan's memoirs locate her at the forefront of life writing as a construction of identity, as she struggles to present the evolution of modern civilisation to her readership through an interpretation of her own character and lifestyle.

Autobiographical texts also examine the dialectical relationship between the self and the world, between inside and out. As such, the landscapes and cultures of the Southwest had an immense influence on authors who engaged in autobiography. In her memoirs Luhan displays an attempt to construct her identity by possessing the landscape of which she was a part. During her time in Florence she attempted to recreate her identity by erasing her American past in favour of the customs and traditions of her new country. A vehement declaration "I will make you mine" upon arrival in Florence

[46] This is particularly evident in her unpublished manuscript, which is loose and tedious until Luhan moves her characters to the Southwest landscape.

demonstrates her belief that through possession of elements of the native culture - a house, clothes, food- could she alter her identity. This quality is also echoed in Luhan's later writing of New Mexico, where she attempts to possess the landscape she inhabits in order to present it to her readers.

The final volume of her memoirs, *Edge of Taos Desert* is, perhaps the strongest example of her life writing. In this text she describes her journey to Taos and her subsequent experiences in the desert region. This introspective account of her life in northern New Mexico illustrates how relocation to this landscape was instrumental in the construction of a new consciousness. Like the work of other New Mexico writers, including La Farge, Silko and Ortiz, Luhan's writing illustrates the significant influence this region exerted on her identity. *Edge of Taos Desert* demonstrates the concept of life as a constant process of evolution, the ongoing construction of identity placed at the centre of cultural transformation. The descriptions of New Mexico which emerge from this text illustrate Luhan's complete acceptance of a world so entirely alien to her own: "I felt a sudden recognition of the reality of natural life that was so strong and so unfamiliar that it made me feel unreal. I caught a fleeting glimpse of my own spoiled and distorted nature, seen against the purity and freshness of these undomesticated surroundings" (33). In contrast to her early life, which exemplifies the destructive power of modern civilisation, Luhan's later life in New Mexico resulted from radical reconstructions of selfhood and identity: "I knew I could arrive at this unconscious, full equilibrium, but that I could only do so by adapting myself. I longed to simply be so, as they [the Indians] were, but I knew I must make it for myself as I went along" (94). This aspect of life writing locates Luhan at the fore of a movement where women's creative responses to the Southwest landscape played a significant role in defining the geographic and cultural parameters of the region.

Although she wrote throughout her life, it is the material Luhan composed in northern New Mexico that is the strongest in content and form. This fact illustrates Luhan's acknowledgment that her best

work was inspired by the surrounding landscape and natural world. Like La Farge, she wrote best when writing about New Mexico, its landscape and its cultures. In Taos, Luhan encountered the most influential of her many male role models, her fourth and final husband, Tony Lujan. In *Edge of Taos Desert*, Luhan recalls how, during her early life in Taos, she was "broken down and made over" by Tony (221). She describes him as "a rock; more than that, a mountain, that will support all the weight I can put on him" (42). Luhan saw her relationship with Tony as 'A Bridge between Cultures', a paradigm for the fusion and ultimate salvation of the modern world through an understanding of, and adherence to, a Native way of life. Tony had an immense influence on Luhan, on both her political work and also on her writing. As previously noted, Luhan's work was informed by the landscape and cultures which surrounded her. Her involvement with Tony influenced how she perceived her Southwestern surroundings, which in turn informed her writing. Tony served as Luhan's "entrée into the Taos landscape", teaching her how to negotiate and interact with the natural setting of New Mexico. *Winter in Taos* reflects this and is rightly recognised as Luhan's "finest literary work, the one that comes closest to sustaining the richly integrated sense of self and environment, form and content, that she hoped the writers she brought to celebrate Taos would achieve. Reading it, one glimpses the regenerate vision that was sometimes hers" (Rudnick, *New Woman* 271). In this work, a utopian domestic, and highly autobiographical novel, the strong connection between identity and landscape is evident, as the natural environment of Taos forms the backdrop against which the daily rhythms of life are measured. Written during the dark days of winter, which the Indians refer to as 'The Time of Standing Still', the story details the simple pleasures found in the daily routine of Taos. Luhan structures the narrative around the seasons, creating a sense of affinity between the human and the natural worlds. She emphasises the power nature can exert over human emotions, echoing her earlier works: "From the very first day I found out that the sunshine in New Mexico could do almost anything

with one: make one well if one felt ill, or change a dark mood and lighten it. It entered into one's deepest places and melted the thick slow densities. It made one feel *good*, That is, alive."(*Edge* 17). Such assertions are echoed by Cather, who likewise emphasises the regenerative power of the New Mexico landscape. Both women sought recognition for the Southwest as a place of cultural significance and in doing so they highlight the significance of landscape in Southwestern writing.

Luhan had arrived in Taos determined to protect Native culture and "reveal it to the world". In the autumn months of 1922 she enlisted the help of Lawrence, who, Luhan believed, was "the only one who can really *see* this Taos country and the Indians, and who can describe it so that it is as much alive between the covers of a book as it is in reality" (Burke *Greenwich Village,* 155).[47] It is in her relationship with Lawrence that Luhan most overtly fulfils her role as muse and inspiration to artists more talented than she. Believing that Lawrence was the only person capable of interpreting Taos for the outside world, she hoped to draw him to the Southwest which, with her help, would inspire him to great works of art. Lawrence's international reputation rendered him capable of reaching a wide and varied audience, and Luhan felt that his talent as a writer would 'speak' Taos for her. Lawrence's visit to America was part of a self-imposed exile after the traumatic experience of the war years. An open contempt for militarism, combined with his wife Frieda's German nationality, meant that the Lawrences were viewed with suspicion in a war-torn England. As he had succeeded in building a reputation in America, Lawrence embarked on a pilgrimage to the Southwest with the intent of eventually migrating to the continent.[48] Luhan, who hoped to harness Lawrence's literary genius for the benefit of Taos and its Native cultures, encouraged him to visit New Mexico and see "the dawn of the world" (*Lorenzo,* 31).

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[47] Although, Luhan first wrote to Lawrence in 1921, he did not arrive in the Southwest until the fall of 1922.
[48] In visiting America, Lawrence also hoped to find a site for his utopian community, which he called 'Rananim', a place where he believed both sexes could live in simple harmony.

The relationship which developed between Luhan and Lawrence proved to be both problematic and materially productive for both parties. Each individual found the other to be equally intriguing and infuriating. For Lawrence, Luhan represented the worst of the female sex; a rich, powerful woman with an opinion and the confidence to express it. Lawrence in turn proved to be the greatest threat to Luhan's sense of identity. However, although his misogyny conflicted with Luhan's dominating personality, she was the inspiration for most, if not all, of his works based on the Southwest and Mexico. In the short story *The Woman who Rode Away*, the heroine is a woman who, dissatisfied with her modern life, feels that it is "her destiny to wander into the secret haunts of these timeless, mysterious, marvellous Indians of the Mountains" (42). Rejecting modern society, she goes in search of a reclusive Indian tribe and ultimately offers herself as a sacrifice to their gods. The ending of this story is usually interpreted as a critique of Luhan's belief in the spiritual power of Native culture, as the heroine happily lays down her life for something she does not fully comprehend or appreciate.[49] In what is certainly a more optimistic caricature of Luhan, the protagonist of *St Mawr*, also unhappy in the decadent lifestyle of the English upper class, moves to the Southwest, where she finally finds peace in a communion with the natural world. In this story, Lawrence allows his protagonist to experience some contentment in, and connection to her surroundings: "She felt a great peace inside herself…such as she had never felt in Europe, or in the East. 'For me', she said, as she looked away at the mountains in shadow and the pale-warm desert beneath with wings of shadow upon it: 'For me, this place is sacred. It is blessed'" (139-140). Lawrence's unfinished manuscript *The Wilful Woman* is also based on Luhan's journey to New Mexixo. In possibly the closest representation of Luhan, Lawrence's character is driven by a forceful will and a belief in the power of her own destiny. Such works show that, although Lawrence rebelled against Luhan's desire to master his creative genius, he nonetheless used

[49] Although the story makes no specific reference to Luhan, it does seem to have been inspired by Lawrence's disapproval of her belief in the perfection of the primitive.

her as an archetype in his work. Indeed, Luhan's influence on the ending of his novel *The Plumed Serpent* was harshly criticised by Witter Bynner, who informed Lawrence that "It almost seemed as though you had dropped the pen… and let Mabel take it up and proceed to impose on your pages her idiotic bunk about Tony's spiritual qualities and to infuse into your magnificent vision her queasy female notions generally" (qtd. in Burke *Greenwich Village,* 166).

Luhan, for her part, believed that together she and Lawrence would present Taos as the cultural and spiritual centre of the world: "I wanted Lawrence to understand things for me. To take *my* experience, *my* material, *my* Taos, and to formulate it all into a magnificent creation. That was what I wanted him for" (*Lorenzo,* 77). However, she failed to consider Lawrence in her plans. He was not a man to be manipulated, moulded or exploited. As such, their relationship was fraught from the beginning. This conflict extended to the Indian cultures of the Southwest who, Luhan believed, were destined to be the salvation of the modern world. Lawrence did not share this opinion. His view of the Indian, dervied from his boyhood reading of the fiction of James Fenimore Cooper, continually conflicted with his belief that interaction with contemporary society would prove disastrous for Native cultures. Declaring that he could trust Indians only if "one is sure that they are not jeering at one. I find all dark people have a fixed desire to jeer at us", he urged Luhan to give up the Indian cause (*Lorenzo,* 31). Lawrence's first account of the Hopi Snake Dance illustrates their difference of opinion. In this account of what was, by that time, the most celebrated Native ritual, Lawrence focused, not on the performing Indians, but on the large Anglo presence at the event which sought only to witness the bizarre spectacle of Natives holding snakes in their mouths. Although this article was later revised at Luhan's insistence, it reveals Lawrence's authentic reaction to an Anglo presence in the Southwest.[50] Rejecting Luhan's

[50] Luhan described Lawrence's first account as "a mere realistic recital that might have been done by a tired, disgruntled business man" (*Lorenzo*, 243).

primitivist claim that the Southwest offered a new spiritual path for modern civilisation, Lawrence saw exploitation and manipulation in Native and Anglo encounters. Declaring that "All this poking and prying into the Indians is a form of indecency" Lawrence dismissed Luhan's attempts to act as saviour and patron to the Indians of Taos: "You can't "save" them and politics, no matter *what* politics, will only destroy them" (*Lorenzo,* 143, 119). His dissatisfaction with New Mexico also stemmed from a misogynistic belief that it was overpopulated by strong women characters, like Luhan and Austin, who colonised the unexplored space for their own creative enterprises. Objecting to the overt primitivism which Luhan and her contemporaries exhibited towards the Natives, Lawrence refused to represent her cultural vision to the modern world. As Burke asserts, "By attacking Dodge's primitivism, Lawrence hit her weakest point. His frustration that a woman, particularly a woman as difficult as Dodge, exerted so much power in the place he wanted to call his own led him to fight her image of New Mexico" (*Greenwich Village,* 171).

Upon his arrival in Taos, Lawrence attempted to dominate Luhan, dictating how she should dress and how she should occupy her days. Initially, she humoured him, and her compliance to Lawrence's will resulted in Luhan wearing more feminine dresses, scrubbing floors and even baking her own bread. This subservience, however, would only prove temporary. When Lawrence abandoned the novel he was writing about Luhan and her life in Taos, it became clear that he was not the person she had hoped for. She had singled him out to represent Taos to the world and never forgave him for having his own opinion of the place: "I called him there [to Taos] but he did not do what I called him to do...give voice to this speechless land" (*Lorenzo,* 255). Lawrence wrote the first version of *The Plumed Serpent* in the months after his first stay in Taos. To Luhan's dismay, he set the novel in Mexico, instead of the Southwest: "He simply transposed Taos and took it down there to old Mexico. What I had wanted him to do for Taos, he did do, but he gave it away to the mother country of Montezuma" (*Lorenzo,* 113).

Although the two remained in contact until Lawrence died, their initial closeness was never regained and Luhan relocated her hopes for the saviour of the Southwest in Robinson Jeffers, to whom *Lorenzo in Taos* is dedicated.[51]

Despite the fact that she produced a substantial body of writing, Luhan has yet to achieve the recognition accorded to other writers of her generation. Academic interest remains focused on her remarkable personality, and the reactions to that personality of writers and artists like D.H. Lawrence and Georgia O' Keeffe. However, this chapter has argued that a close analysis of Luhan's writing reveals that it is informed and influenced by the landscape and the cultures in which she immersed herself. When considered on its own terms, her writing constitutes a significant exemplar of the power the New Mexico landscape exerts over the writers who inhabit its spaces. Although *Let's Get Away Together* remains unpublished, it is a primary example of Luhan's recognition of the liminality and border experience which defines the contemporary Southwest. Moreover, when considered in relation to *Ceremony*, Luhan's text provides a basis for re-evaluating Silko's novel in a regional context. Despite numerous attempts by other writers and by critics to dismiss her, Luhan's contribution to New Mexico's literary culture should be judged substantial. Although profoundly and problematically influenced by primitivist thought, Luhan should nonetheless be recognised as one of the most influential, if as often lampooned, Anglo figures in New Mexico history.

[51] Luhan met Jeffers at an artist's colony in California in 1930 when he was at the height of his fame. She immediately identified him as Lawrence's successor and convinced him to visit Taos. However Jeffers proved to be as unworthy as Lawrence in that he was determined to formulate his own views on the Southwest and its Native cultures. Ultimately Jeffers considered the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest to be tainted by association with Anglo culture and Luhan failed in her quest to find a male saviour for Taos.

Chapter Three

Opera Singers, Professors and Archbishops: A New Perspective on Willa Cather's Southwestern Trilogy

Like Mabel Dodge Luhan, with whom she stayed in Taos, Willa Cather sought refuge from the destructive materialism of modern America in the Southwest. Cather was a visitor rather than an exile in New Mexico: nonetheless, this landscape exerted a significant influence on the content and on the form of her fiction, an influence that is all the more striking when we examine her work in relation to that of other authors from this region, both Anglo and Native American. Indeed, Cather's Southwestern novels contribute to the very construction of a New Mexico literary tradition.

Like her Anglo contemporaries, Cather was significantly affected by the rapid expansion of the technological age in post-War America. Indeed, critics such as David Harrell have suggested that it was what she saw as the destructive effects of the war and the accelerated industrialisation that went with it in the "modern" world of the East that sent Cather in search of an ancient world in the West. Developments in technology had, in Cather's view, led to an overdependence on machinery: "We have music by machines, we travel by machines- the American people are so submerged in them that I sometimes think they can only be made to laugh and cry by them" (qtd. in E. K. Brown 226). The author's often quoted comment that her life "broke in two" in the 1920s reveals her aversion to an industrial age which had produced an increasingly materialistic American culture. Cather's detachment from this society is reflected in her novels, which function as a base from which she launches a critical attack on the destructive materialism of American society. As a result, her reputation as an author suffered during the 1930s and 40s when her work was regarded as 'backward' and therefore irrelevant to the crises of the American present. However, as Barry Chabot observes in *Writers for the Nation*:

American Literary Modernism, Cather is best understood as a transitional figure whose finest work was published when "American literary modernism was most intense" (48).

Cather remains something of an anomaly in the American literary canon and her work continues to defy categorisation. During her lifetime, she was not engaged in what Susie Thomas identifies as the "crusade to go 'one hundred percent American'" (1). As such, her work has traditionally been regarded as tangential or irrelevant to the main current of American fiction (S. Thomas 1). However, critical interpretation of Cather's writing has altered in recent years, with critics such as John J. Murphy confidently asserting that she has "survived her season of neglect" (1). In *Prospects for the Study of American Literature*, Susan Rosowski also identifies revised interpretations of Cather's work, asserting that "In earlier decades, Cather studies consisted largely of writing *about* Cather, work today is increasingly writing *through* Cather to address larger concerns" (228). Murphy and Rosowski's works, which were published in the 1980s and 1990s, illustrate the renewal of interest in Cather's writing which took place at the end of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, this chapter identifies and seeks to fill what remains a significant lacuna in the analysis of Cather's work.

When Cather's writing is discussed in contemporary scholarship, it is almost always regarded in isolation. Earlier criticism had for the most part located her writing within the framework of early twentieth century American literature, and examined her novels in relation to the themes popularised at this time, most notably a discordance between "noble artistic ideals" and "the crassest

commercialism"(qtd. in Murphy 2).[52] Focus on her Southwestern trilogy, *The Song of the Lark (*1915*),* *The Professor's House (*1925) and *Death Comes for the Archbishop (*1927*)* remains largely underdeveloped. However, when viewed in relation to literature from northern New Mexico, particularly in relation to the authors discussed in this thesis, it becomes evident that Cather's Southwestern texts engage with themes common in the work of authors from the New Mexico region. As such, despite the fact that Cather is seldom referred to as a Southwestern writer, re-reading her fiction of the region suggests a revised or reinflected interpretation of her work as a whole.

In writing of the New Mexico landscape, Cather, like other authors, draws on the genre of life writing. Martin Padget asserts that by interacting with Native cultures and with each other, Anglo writers and artists in the Southwest negotiated issues of selfhood and identity, issues which are examined in their writing. Like Mabel Dodge Luhan, who used the landscape and culture of northern New Mexico to great effect in her autobiographical texts, Cather also engages in a construction of identity in relation to the surrounding landscape. Cather's strength as an author lay in writing about subjects of which she had firsthand experience. As David Daiches asserts, "Her memory had to be stirred, her emotions involved, some autobiographical impulse had to be touched, however indirectly, before she could produce her best and strongest work" (132). This aspect of Cather's work links her writing to contemporary Native writers Leslie Marmon Silko and Simon Ortiz, whose sense of identity is located in the New Mexico landscape. Like these writers, Cather embraced the multicultural quality

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[52] One significant exception to this is Danielle Russell's *Between the Angle and the Curve : Mapping Gender, Race, Space, and Identity in Willa Cather and Toni Morrison*.

of New Mexico as a way of resolving and affirming her own notions of selfhood. As such, the landscape of her novels effectively destabilizes the notion of a simple image of *the* American landscape. In her Southwestern fiction she creates autobiographical characters, both male and female, whose identity is constructed in relation to the Southwestern landscape and who perceive it in widely diverse ways. This aspect of Cather's work links her writing, not only to that of other Anglo authors from northern New Mexico such as Luhan, but also, interestingly, to contemporary Native writer Leslie Marmon Silko.

Unlike her Anglo compatriots, Willa Cather never settled permanently in northern New Mexico.[53] Nevertheless, this region exerted a considerable influence on her personal life and on her writing. According to one biographer, E.K. Brown, Cather had never intended to write a novel about the Southwest as she believed this region was "too big and too varied" (qtd. in Schedler 101). Despite this, three of her most successful novels are set in and are about this region. Indeed, Cather claimed that one of her most commercially successful novels, *Death Comes for the Archbishop,* was the easiest of all her books to write.[54] The author attested that "The writing of it took only a few months because the book had all been lived many times before it was written" (Rosowski 174). The relatively brief period of time needed to produce this text, combined with the author's "total confidence in where she was going" with the story, illustrates the potent and productive role the Southwest played in Cather's writing (Skaggs 112).

Cather first encountered the Southwest at a significant period in her career. Following the publication of her first novel, *Alexander's Bridge,* in 1912, she embarked on a visit to Arizona to her brother, Douglas who worked for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. Her experience of the

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[53] In fact, Cather's experiences of the Southwest were gained from four brief holidays in the region. The first in 1912 was followed by successive visits in 1915, 1916 and finally in 1925, when the author stayed with Mabel Dodge Luhan in Taos.
[54] In fact, Cather completed *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *My Mortal Enemy* during a twelve month period.

Southwestern landscape and culture during this visit had such an effect on the author that this geographic region was to play a significant role in a number of her most famous works.[55] Indeed, Cather's visit to the Southwest at this time may have had a greater influence on her career than previously suggested by critics. It is well known that the writer was unhappy with her first novel, which she had modeled on the works of Henry James. In the author's preface to the 1922 edition, Cather expressed dissatisfaction with this work, declaring that "It does not deal with the kind of subject matter in which I now find myself most at home". She also asserted that "There is a time in a writer's development when his 'lifeline' and the line of his personal endeavor meet. This may come early or late but after it occurs his work is never quite the same". In describing her trip to the region after the publication of her first novel, Cather noted how "after the book was published I went down for six months to Arizona and New Mexico. The longer I stayed in a country I really did care about, and among people who were part of the country, the more unnecessary and superficial a book like *Alexander's Bridge* seemed to me" (qtd. in Stouck 437). These comments demonstrate that the author set *Alexander's Bridge* apart from her other novels; novels she had written after various visits to the Southwest. Indeed, after her return from her visit to her brother, Cather wrote *O Pioneers!*, which, although it is set in the Nebraska of the author's youth, perhaps speaks to the artistic freedom she had found on the trip, a possibility further enforced by the production of *The Song of the Lark* in 1915.

Like other female authors of the early twentieth century, Cather's writing was restricted by the limitations placed on her sex by a male-dominated society. While she did enjoy considerable success during her own lifetime, Cather struggled against and challenged the constraining patriarchy of American culture. Her novel *One of Ours* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1923, thus cementing her reputation

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[55] Cather's interest in the Southwest predates her first visit to the region. Childhood stories told by her uncle sparked the young writer's interest in ancient cultures which inhabited a harsh and deserted landscape. Her short story, *The Enchanted Bluff*, published in 1909, is believed to have been inspired by these stories.

as one of the most influential women authors in America.[56] However, despite the success of this work, Cather longed for access to the male-dominated sphere of literature.[57] During this time female authors traditionally wrote romantic fiction, a practice which Cather despised, claiming "I have not much faith in women in fiction…they have a sort of sex consciousness that is abominable" (qtd. in Thomas 10). Rejecting this inferior genre, Cather yearned to write about serious topics which had national and even global relevance. This desire is reflected in her early career and in her later literary works. Although she is often read in conjunction with figures such as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Cather was criticised by her male contemporaries for encroaching on their domain. The most significant of these subjects was the First World War, which Cather attempted to depict in *One of Ours*. Although this novel earned her a Pulitzer Prize, Cather was never satisfied with the finished product, possibly because of the criticism it provoked from her male contemporaries. One of her most vehement critics, Hemingway, objected to Cather's portrayal of warfare which he regarded as overly sentimental. Declaring that her depiction of war had come straight from the film *The Birth of a Nation*, Hemingway and many of his counterparts believed that, as women had little direct experience of war, they were not qualified to write on the subject.

Like other female authors and artists who visited the region, Cather found great artistic freedom in the Southwest. During her prolonged vacations in the Southwest she discovered an artistic community of women who had laid claim to the uncharted spaces of the desert. Like Austin and Luhan, Cather identified with the harsh terrain of New Mexico, which exemplified for her a space devoid of male

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[56] This novel was based on the experiences of Cather's Nebraska cousin who fought and died in the war. After visiting her cousin's grave and reading the letters he had sent home to his family, Cather decided to use his accounts of battle as a basis for her book.

[57] This longing to be part of male society is evident from Cather's youth when she cut her hair, wore boys clothes and insisted on being called William. Such actions have led to much debate surrounding Cather's identity and sexual orientation. Indeed many critics suggest that her longing to be accepted among the male literary community stems from a homosexual desire to be affiliated with this gender. This assertion seems an overly in depth analysis of Cather's motives, which may have simply stemmed from a revolt against gender restrictions.

influence. As Audrey Goodman asserts, "For Austin and Cather, as for many women regionalists, assuming responsibility for exploring, cultivating and preserving the region meant breaking away from the conventions of marriage and family"(xx). As Cather had never adhered to the gendered expectations of American society, she embraced New Mexico wholeheartedly, finding the landscape both liberating and inspiring. The sense of personal and professional freedom offered by the New Mexico desert is evident in Cather's novels which depict this landscape.

In *Sexual Politics,* Kate Millet discusses the effects of an ideological deployment of gender in literary texts. Cather imagines the landscape as female and portrays it as such in her Southwestern novels which contain extensive references to womb like caves and fissures in the earth. In *The Song of the Lark,* the canyon offers Thea Kronborg a womb-like security where she can reflect on her past mistakes before being re-birthed into the world with a renewed vigour for her profession. A similar depiction of landscape is found in *Death Comes for the Archbishop.* When Father Latour and his Indian guide are lost in a sandstorm, they take refuge in an old Indian cave, which Cather describes as "a peculiar formation in the rocks; two rounded ledges, one directly over the other, with a mouthlike opening between. They suggested two great stone lips, slightly parted and thrust outward" (126). The significance of such descriptions have not escaped critics who identify Cather's landscape as a "textured map of the female body, wild and gentle, rocky and fringed and smooth, seemingly accessibly, yet sheltering life deep within its hollow center" (Fryer, Norwood and Monk 33). The feminine aspect of this formation is further emphasised by the bishop's reluctance to enter the cave and his subsequent display of revulsion with regard to this female space: "Great as was his need of shelter, the bishop, on his way down the ladder, was struck by a reluctance, an extreme distaste for the place" (127). Having survived his ordeal in the cave, the bishop remembers the incident with horror, vowing

never to be tempted into such a situation again. Such incidents illustrate Cather's perception of the New Mexico landscape as a feminine space offering refuge to women but ultimately rejecting male control.

Like other individuals such as Georgia O Keeffe, Cather found great artistic freedom in the New Mexico desert. Her fascination with traditional styles of painting had a significant impact on the formal structure of *The Professor's House* as she experimented with literature in relation to the visual arts, both modernist and older visual modes. At the time Cather was writing the book, she was interested in particular in Dutch interior painting which depicted indoor domestic scenes which included a view to the outside through an open window. Cather tried to emulate this effect by contrasting the overcrowded, bourgeois world of the Professor with the simple, unaffected narrative of Tom Outland. As the author herself attested,

> In my book, I tried to make the professor St. Peter's house rather overcrowded and stuffy with new things; American proprieties, clothes, furs, petty ambitions, quivering jealousies- until one got rather stifled. Then I wanted to open the square window and let in the fresh air that blew off the blue mesa, and the fine disregard of trivialities which was in Tom Outland's face and in his behaviour. (qtd. in Bloom *Willa Cather* 60)

In Cather's novel the window is provided by Tom's story. Through it the Professor can see beyond the modern world to the ancient past represented by Outland's account of the discovery and exploration of Cliff City.

The very structure of *The Professor's House* suggests that Cather used composition as a form of experimentation. Her critical essay "The Novel Démeublé," written in 1922, was a call to de-clutter literature which, according to Cather, had been "over furnished". This manifesto asserted that simplification was the defining quality of authentic artists. Like Austin and Luhan, it was in northern New Mexico that Cather discovered the personal and artistic freedom to experiment with content and

form. The insertion of what had originated as a short story into the main body of a larger work initially confounded critics of *The Professor's House,* who regarded Outland's story as "a technical mistake that has damned the book" (Bloom, *Critical Views* 22). However, a closer analysis of this novel encourages the reader to look to its formal structure for historical understanding. Although influenced here by a traditional style of painting, Cather's later novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop* illustrates the impact which a modernist mode exerted over her writing.

Influenced by Cubist artworks, Cather experimented with the formal properties of the novel in the attempt to achieve a comparable effect.[58] According to Thomas, in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Cather attempts to "approach the condition of painting, in which everything is present at the same time" (155). During her student days, Cather had also been greatly influenced by a collection of frescos featuring nine distinct panels which, when viewed as a collective work, provided the viewer with a complete visual narrative. Combining her experience of Cubism with this older style of painting, Cather attempted to construct a novel containing nine separate and distinct stories that, when placed together and considered as a whole, would allow "the reader's experience of the novel [to] come as close as possible to that of a viewer casting an eye across a canvas" (155). This technique, identified as "word-painting", has confused critics' perception of Cather and affects analyses of her novel (Skaggs 123). In *Critical Essays on Willa Cather*, John H Randall criticised Cather's "anxiety for order [which he claimed] stultified her creative urge and crippled her vision of life" (250). Cather's preoccupation with providing a regional portrait rather than telling a cohesive story has resulted in a novel that is devoid of a distinct timeline. This, according to Thomas, was intended to influence the readers experience of the novel, so that it could come as close as possible to that of a viewer casting their eye

[58] In cubist art, objects are represented in abstract form allowing the viewer to witness multiple aspects of the same form, thus providing greater context. This art style also greatly influenced the painter Andrew Dasburg, as illustrated by his depictions of Taos Pueblo.

across a canvas (155). Throughout the novel, historical events are interspersed with the bishop's experiences in the narrative present until the reader becomes uncertain of the time period Cather is describing. This aspect of the novel, condemned by Randall, has led critics to comment that "the lack of any real order in her [Cather's] vision is emphasized by the loose episodic construction of the novel" (Murphy 250). The experimental construction of Cather's book led critics to assert that it was not a novel at all. Cather herself identified the text as a narrative, a form which was also rejected by critics who proclaimed that "narrative implies plot and a casual relationship between events, features which are consciously absent" (S. Thomas 145). Modern critics have reinterpreted the text with reference to content rather than form, a re-examination which highlights the novel's powerful sense of place and culture. However, an analysis of the novel's form also establishes a significant link between Cather's writing in the 1920s and Silko's epic text *Almanac of the Dead*. Thus, despite the fact that *Death Comes for the Archbishop* was largely condemned upon publication, the experimental nature of the text establishes its significance, not only to Cather's oeuvre but also to New Mexico literary studies.

A comparative analysis of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *Almanac of the Dead* establishes significant similarities between the work of Cather and Silko, similarities which support the recognition of an autonomous body of writing from northern New Mexico. Separated by time and race, the structure of Cather's novel nevertheless bears striking similarities to Silko's later text. Cather's creation of several distinct storylines in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is comparable to Silko's construction of a complex web of characters and plots in *Almanac*. Cather's particular intention with her novel was to provide readers with a complete picture of the culture and landscape of northern New Mexico, an intention which is obvious in the novel's expansive timeline. Although the story is based on the figure of Father Latour, various tangents explore historical events of the New Mexico region. This is similar to Silko's construction of *Almanac* which, although centred on a group of modern characters, explores

past events in the Southwest and Mexico through an account of the Almanac's history. Also, in the same way that Cather removes the timeline from *Death Comes for the Archbishop,* Silko also disrupts the temporal sequence in *Almanac* in order to depict many levels of history at once. This technique creates a cyclical notion of time in both texts, thus encouraging the reader to focus on the characters and cultural setting rather than the novels' linear progression. Such obvious similarities between *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *Almanac of the Dead* suggests new ways of understanding Cather's position in Southwestern writing and also offers compelling evidence that the literature produced within the region of northern New Mexico possesses distinct characteristics which distinguish it from the American canon.

Unlike other Anglo authors who settled permanently in the region, Cather's perception of the Southwest is informed by her position as a tourist. Her visits to this region, from 1912 to 1925, coincided with the growth and expansion of the tourist industry in the area. The popularity of New Mexico as a tourist destination, which had begun with the expansion of the railroad, increased with the introduction of the motor car. The Fred Harvey Company, working in tandem with the railroad, sought to open up the "matchless virgin territory" of the Southwest through the expansion of the railroad and the creation of the "Indian Detour" (qtd. in Padget, *Indian Country171*). Publicised as the "Newest way to see oldest America", leaflets promoting the Indian Detours offered travellers a journey through "a region rich in history and mystery". Advertisements promising access to "the Enchanted Empire" appeared in influential magazines and newspapers throughout America, attracting wealthy tourists to the region. The discovery of Indian ruins challenged the notion that American culture was in its infancy, and tourists were encouraged to visit the region and observe civilisations which predated Columbus and the Spanish invasion of America.

Tourist companies promised their clients access to "Native Americans who would welcome tourists to their communities yet remain unchanged by participating in the new economy of tourism" (Padget, *Indian Country* 172).

Railway tours and Indian Detours blurred the line between Indigenous cultures of the past and present day Native Americans who inhabited the Southwest. Tourist companies did not draw clear distinctions between ancient cultures and modern societies. Regardless of their historical position, the cliff dweller cultures of the Southwest were presented as the "ennobled… forerunners of American civilisation, the continent's first artists and master builders" (Woidat 30). Indians, both ancient and modern, were regarded as representatives of an exotic culture, akin to the oriental civilisations of the East. Cliff Dweller cultures were the primary focus for the publicity campaign run by the Fred Harvey company and the ATSF, for, as Caroline Woidat asserts, "Whereas the Indians of the old west had entered American history as 'savages', the old cliff dwellers earned respect for their historic 'apartment buildings' and various industries. The achievements of the cliff dwellers were thus linked to modern American culture rather than Native American culture" (30). During the Indian Detours, tourists were taken on day trips to Indian ruins, like the Mesa Verde where they could witness the remnants of these ancient civilisations. Day trips to local Pueblos and Native dances were also organised in order for the Anglo tourist to witness this Indian 'other'. Like fellow Anglo tourists, Cather's purpose in visiting the Southwest was to experience an authentic past by engaging with a contemporary Indian person. As Leah Dilworth asserts in *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past,*

> On Indian detours, tourists visited a ruin or two and then an 'inhabited' Pueblo, as if they were exactly the same, the only difference being that Indians lived in one and had abandoned the other. Representing Indians as living ruins made them seem unquestionably authentic and

> marvellous; rather than having lived *through* history, they emerged directly from a misty, idealized past. (103)

Unlike D.H. Lawrence, who recognised and criticised the exploitative aspect of an Anglo presence in regions like New Mexico, Cather seems to have accepted the image of this landscape offered by the Fred Harvey Company and the ATSF.

In her article "The Indian-Detour in Willa Cather's Southwestern Novels", Woidat uses the paradigm of the Indian Detour to deconstruct Cather's role as an Anglo writer of the Southwest, examining how the author's tourist status influenced her awareness of landscape and culture and how this affected her novels. Since childhood, Cather had been fascinated by the ancient cliff dwellers of the Southwest. Her imagination was captured by ancient cultures that lived in such close harmony with nature. During her holidays in the region, she was taken on tours of many Indian ruins, including the Mesa Verde in Colorado, which, (although relocated to New Mexico) is the setting for Tom Outland's narrative in *The Professor's House.*[59] Cather's exploration of the Southwest through the medium of organised tours influenced her perception of the region and its Indian cultures.

The absence of contemporary Indians in *The Professor's House* and *The Song of the Lark* signifies that Cather's perception of northern New Mexico differs somewhat from that of other Anglo authors. As Woidat's article suggests, Cather's experience of New Mexico reflects twentieth century tourist perceptions of this regional landscape and culture. This is illustrated in her Southwestern trilogy, where an Indian presence is largely confined to the glorious past. The Native landscape of *The Song of the Lark* and *The Professor's House* is relatively uninhabited; apart from the mummified figure of mother

[59] On their tour of these ruins, Cather and her companion Edith Lewis found themselves lost when their guide became disorientated among the canyon trails. Leaving his charges alone, the guide went in search of help. In reflecting on this five hour wait, Lewis noted how Cather seemed perfectly at ease in her natural surroundings. Calmly perching on a rock where they would be aware of approaching snakes, both women watched the twilight descend. The lack of panic exhibited by Cather reveals the significant impact the Southwestern landscape exerted on this writer, an impact she communicates in her Southwestern novels.

Eve, the Indians of Tom's mesa and Thea's Panther Canyon have been dead for centuries. The absence of a physical Indian presence in the landscape allows Tom and Thea to freely inhabit the space previously occupied by these cultures and to learn and benefit from an understanding of their civilisation. This aspect of Cather's novels is in keeping with the tourist notion of the Southwest as an uncharted territory, waiting to be discovered and explored by Anglo adventurers.

The highly idealised depiction of Native society presented by the Fred Harvey Company and the ATSF also highlighted for Cather the destructive materialism of modern America. Her holidays in the Southwest convinced her of the superficiality of contemporary society when viewed in the context of ancient cultures living in perfect isolation. For Cather, as for many Anglos, the Indian tribes of Arizona and New Mexico represented an ideal society which was the complete antithesis of the modern world. Cather viewed these 'primitive' societies as perfect in their simplicity and regarded her trips to the region as a "healthy counterpoint to the aggressive individualism, spatial emptiness and corrupt materialism of modern American life" (O' Brien 414). Although her primitivism is not as overt as Luhan's or Mary Austin's, Cather does seem to have subscribed to similar theories of cultural regeneration, where a "return to a past way of thought may be relevant criticism of the present" (Bloom, *Modern Critical Views* 12). This belief in the perfection of a primitive past is a dominant theme in Cather's Southwestern trilogy, and one which links her writing to the work of other Anglo authors from northern New Mexico.

In *The Professor's House*, Cather uses juxtaposition and contrast to emphasise her belief in the superiority of the past over the present. The opening section of the novel, which serves as a critique of modern society, introduces us to various characters inhabiting "an increasingly alienating wasteland" (Fryer, Norwood & Monk 36). The first section of the novel is symbolic of the moment when Cather declared that her world broke in two.

The characters in this section exist in a suspended state of despondency, trapped within the materialism of modern society, a fact which only the Professor can acknowledge and accept. As Merrill Maguire Skaggs attests, the opening section of the novel is similar to "the unreality of that other dream novel, *Alice in Wonderland:* through it all St. Peter, like Alice at the tea party seems a bewildered onlooker to a world gone mad" (140). The character of St. Peter is confused by and disillusioned with the destructive materialism of modern society and wishes he could escape to the liberating emptiness of Outland's mesa. Tom's diary account of his Southwestern experiences provides a stark contrast to the corruption, greed and general malaise which pervades the Professor's world. The characters of the novel's opening section are defined by the roles which society has assigned to them and thus illustrate the restrictive power of modern American civilisation. The Professor feels increasingly isolated amongst a host of characters who are preoccupied with money and with personal gratification.

St. Peter's own living arrangements illustrate, at a very basic level, the disparity between his way of life and that of his family. Having enjoyed some academic success with his histories detailing the Spanish explorations of North America, St. Peter is convinced by his wife and daughters that their style of living is inappropriate for a prominent author. Persuaded to build a grander house which provides more living space and contains all the latest technical inventions, the Professor quickly realises he was happier in his old, draughty residence. St. Peter's lack of enthusiasm for his new dwelling stems from a reluctance to leave behind the simpler past, (represented by his relationship with Tom, whom he encountered and befriended while living in the old house) and embrace a more material way of life (embodied by the grand home and superior style of living encouraged by his wife and daughters). The Professor's family is preoccupied with wealth and social standing, purchasing extravagant clothes and furniture and planning expensive trips to Europe. In particular, his daughter Rosamund and her husband Louie represent the corrupting influence of wealth. Having inherited Outland's money, they are

preoccupied with building and furnishing a Norwegian-style mansion which is excessively extravagant and is out of place with the surrounding landscape. Rosamund has become so obsessed with her own fortune that she is estranged from the sister who was her constant childhood companion. For her part, Kitty is so jealous of Rosamund's wealth that at times the Professor actually believes he sees her turning green. In contrast to this preoccupation with wealth, the Professor prefers a simpler way of life. He asks nothing more than to spend his days in his attic room, writing and reflecting on various issues. This aspect of Cather's novel can be compared with Silko's description of modern society in *Gardens in the Dunes*. Just as the characters in the Professor's world represent corruption and greed, so the modern characters in Silko's novel are characterised by materialism and self-indulgence. In *Gardens*, the characters of Edward and his sister Susan represent the destructive materialism of modern society. Throughout the novel Edward actively participates in the destruction of the natural world for monetary gain as he collects rare orchids for sale in Europe. Similarly his sister spends vast amounts of money arranging lavish parties designed to display her wealth to society. As in Cather's novel the avarice and opulence of Edward and Susan's world is contrasted with the Native character, Indigo's, way of life. Just as the Natives in Cather's novel represent a simpler existence, Silko's Indian character is characterised by her minimalist needs. Collecting seeds which she plans to grow in her desert garden, Indigo functions most effectively as a contrast to the novel's modern characters. Requiring nothing more than the promise of enough food to feed her family, Silko's Native character represents a stark contrast to the destructive materialism of contemporary society. Cather suggests a similar contrast between the Native and the modern in *The Professor's House*.

Tom Outland's story provides a fresh breeze that blows through the Professor's stifling world (Skaggs 79).[60] Following her trip to the Mesa Verde ruins in 1915, Cather penned the story of Outland's Southwestern adventure. However, she remained reluctant to publish this story as a standalone text, recognising that its value might lie in a more complex juxtaposition, or opposition, with a story of modern American life. As Michael Smedshammer asserts,

> By juxtaposing the story of the Blue Mesa with St. Peter's story, Cather makes each section more powerful in its proximity to the others. Tom's experience on the Blue Mesa becomes the 'reference point' by which St. Peter's experience is measured; readers better understand the depths of St. Peter's losses and triumphs in light of what happens on the Blue Mesa. (218)

Outland's story is presented as a stark contrast to the overt cupidity of the novel's opening section. The Indians of Tom's diary account are a superior race of people representing an idealised way of life which provides a measure for judging everything in the novel; the Professor, his family and their position in modern society. Thus, Cather uses not only the structure of the novel, but also the representation of her characters to demonstrate the superiority of Native culture.

In Tom Outland's narrative the ancient cultures of the Southwest seem idyllic in their simplicity. Indeed, Cather describes the Native inhabitants of Cliff City as a race of "superior people" (197). When Outland first discovers the site he is convinced that "only a strong and aspiring people would have built

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[60] The idea for this section of the novel began as a short story, "The Enchanted Bluff", which describes six boys, brought together by their fascination with an ancient Indian site in New Mexico. This story, which was published in 1909 in Harpers magazine, provides "a microcosm of everything Cather's work would eventually become" (Skaggs 89). The theme of artistic ability versus materialism, which is developed in *The Professor's House,* is introduced in this work. One of the story's characters, rejecting the possibility and artistic freedom represented by the Mesa, grows up to become a stock broker, possibly the closest representation of a materialistic modern society.

it" (182). In their excavations of the cliff dwellings, Tom, Roddy and Father Duchene are awestruck at the depth of culture and understanding exhibited by such a primitive culture. As Tom asserts,

> I see them here, isolated, cut off from other tribes, working out their destiny, making their mesa more and more worthy to be a home for man, purifying life by religious ceremonies and observances, caring respectfully for their dead, protecting the children, doubtless entertaining some feeling of affection and sentiment for this stronghold where they were at once so safe and so comfortable, where they had practically overcome the worst hardships that primitive man had to fear. They were, perhaps, too far advanced for their time and environment (198).

Cather's belief that primitive cultures provided a model for the regeneration of modern society is further illustrated by the connection between the two main characters of the novel. It is only by immersing himself in the narrative of Outland, and thus in the pre-Columbian past, that the Professor finds the means to cope with the present. In *Playing Indian,* Philip J Deloria posits that "we construct identity by finding ourselves in relation to an array of people and objects who are not ourselves" (21). This aspect of primitivism is evident in Cather's novels, where various characters reinforce their identity by comparison with or in contrast to the 'other' figure of the Native. Thus the Professor is able to reinforce his white identity by interaction with an aboriginal past.

This sentiment is also evidenced in Cather's earlier Southwestern novel *The Song of the Lark.*[61] During her visits to Panther Canyon, Thea finds a connection to civilisations which have preceded her own. She immerses herself in the environment and mode of living of the Indians until "a certain understanding of those old people came up to her out of the rock shelf on which she lay" (272). During

[61] This novel also contains a Southwestern interlude. Indeed when viewed as a complete trilogy, *The Song of the Lark, The Professor's House* and *Death Comes for the Archbishop* illustrate the progression and evolution of Cather's writing as she advances from writing a brief Southwestern interval to a significant Southwestern experience to a novel completely based in this landscape .

this experience, Thea examines her place in the modern world and begins to re-evaluate her life: "All her life she had been hurrying and sputtering, as if she had been born behind time and had been trying to catch up. Now, she reflected…it was as if she were waiting for something to catch up with her. She had got to a place where she was out of the stream of meaningless activity and undirected effort" (269). As a result of her submersion in the simple lifestyle of the Indians, Thea feels "united and strong" and her ideas for the future are "sharper and clearer" (275).

In *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Cather once again uses the relationship between the New Mexico landscape and its Native inhabitants to reassert her belief in the superiority of primitive cultures. On his travels with an Indian friend, the novel's protagonist notes that it "was like travelling with the landscape made human" (232). In her final Southwestern novel, Cather is careful to emphasise that the Native inhabitants of the region live in harmony with their natural surroundings. Claiming that "It was the Indians manner to vanish into the landscape, not to stand out against it…to pass through a country without disturbing anything; to pass and leave no trace", Cather notes how "They seemed to have none of the Europeans' desire to 'master' nature, to arrange and re-create" (233). She also describes how the Indians "ravaged neither the rivers nor the forest, and if they irrigated, they took as little water as would serve their needs. The land and all that it bore they treated with consideration; not attempting to improve it, they never desecrated it" (234).

Cather contrasts this treatment of the natural landscape with the novel's modern characters. Represented by the clergy, these individuals continually attempt to dominate the landscape around them, as, in Cather's opinion, "it was the white man's way to assert himself in any landscape, to change it, make it over a little" (232). The missionary priests in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* endeavour to place their stamp on the country by converting the Natives and attempting to change the agriculture and architecture of the region. Dissatisfied with the common food of the Natives, various priestly

characters arrange elaborate gardens and plant fruit and vegetables which cannot survive in the arid climate. A primary example of this is Cather's tale of Friar Baltazar Montoya, priest of Acoma Pueblo during the early eighteenth century. This character is described as "tyrannical", "ambitious" and "exacting". Depriving the local Indians of their best food stores, Friar Montoya also demands a heavy tribute in labour. Wishing to plant a garden on the barren ground of the mesa, he requires countless baskets of earth to be hauled up from the valley below and also orders each Indian woman to provide him with many ollas of water. According to Cather, it is the "difficulty of obtaining an interesting and varied diet on a naked rock [that] seemed to whet his appetite and tempt his resourcefulness" (105-106). In such a barren, water-starved land, the behaviour of this priest is needlessly exploitative and illustrates not only a need to place his stamp of ownership on his natural surroundings but also a complete disregard for his Native congregation.

The most prominent Native character of *Death Comes for the Archbishop,* Eusabio, is based on Cather's interactions with Tony Luhan, the Pueblo Indian husband of Mabel Dodge Luhan. During a visit to New Mexico in 1925, Cather and Edith Lewis stayed with the Luhans at their home in Taos. For the duration of this trip, Tony acted as a guide, taking both women on long drives through the countryside. According to Christopher Schedler, Cather spent a great deal of time with Tony during this visit, and from him learned "many things about the country and the people that she could not have learned otherwise" (101). The writer's interactions with Tony, combined with her experiences while visiting the Luhan's at Taos, had a significant impact on her last Southwestern novel. For the first time, Cather presents the reader with contemporary Indian characters, a notable difference from her other two Southwestern novels. *Death Comes for the Archbishop* also engages with the Southwest's tri-ethnic identity, as Mexican, Indian and Anglo characters interact on a daily basis. As Schedler asserts, the changes in Cather's depiction of Southwestern culture can be attributed to Tony's influence since

he provided her with "an intellectual model of the dialogic social transactions which characterize the cultural borderlands" (102).

In Cather's Southwestern trilogy, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* appears to be the most successful depiction of life in the New Mexico borderlands.[62] As Schedler attests, the novel represents "the borderlands of the Southwest as an intersection of different cultures understood not as fixed totalities but as social processes subject to change, conflict and resistance" (103). *Death Comes for the Archbishop* presents the reader with a portrait of the shifting, unstable nature of a borderlands society where various races co-exist and interact on a daily basis. As such, this work is evidence that, long before borderlands theory emerged as a recognised paradigm in contemporary scholarship, Cather, like Luhan and Oliver La Farge, was addressing this issue in her writing.

The final novel of her Southwestern trilogy also engages with the harsh reality of borderlands life. In this aspect of her writing, Cather prefigures the work of border theorist Gloria Anzaldúa and contemporary Native writers like Silko and Ortiz. In the prologue of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, New Mexico is described as a land of "savagery and ignorance" requiring a priest who is "of strong constitution, full of zeal, and above all, intelligent" (8). The violence that characterises life in the modern borderlands of Anzaldúa and Silko is also evident in Cather's texts, where violence, greed and corruption are presented as routine. For example, on their lonely journey to Mora, Fathers Latour and Vaillant narrowly escape murder at the hands of an Anglo degenerate who robs and murders travellers to whom he has offered shelter. Similarly, when a wealthy Mexican dies, his brothers attempt to defraud his widow and her daughter of their rightful inheritance.

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[62] Mary Austin was reportedly displeased with the finished version of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. According to Lynne Cline, Austin was 'distressed' that Cather had chosen to write about New Mexico from the perspective of a French missionary, a perspective which she felt obscured the strong Hispano history of the region. In reality, Cather's decision to write about the Southwest borderlands from the point of view of an outsider enables her to provide an objective account of the tri-ethnic culture which had characterised this region throughout history.

In another incident, Father Latour is asked to give the last rites to a young Mexican man accused of murder. Obviously innocent, this man is given a death sentence by a corrupt judge who is influenced by biased witness accounts of the event. Incidents such as these permeate the novel, illustrating the violence and systematic injustice which characterises life in contested borderland regions and suggesting significant similarities between Cather's text published in 1927 and the work of modern borderlands writers, Silko and Anzaldúa.

Like Luhan and La Farge, who also address the liminal aspect of borderlands life, in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Cather presents the Southwest as a remote region, set apart from Europe and from the rest of America. In the novel's prologue, Bishop Ferdinand describes the Southwest as a distant territory, far from civilisation and from the modern world. The region's isolated and inaccessible location is emphasised by the fact that it takes the Bishop a year to reach his new diocese in Santa Fe. When he does finally reach his intended destination, Father Latour's perception of New Mexico is that it is utterly foreign; the landscape, the food and the people all represent a new experience for him. Indeed, Cather's account of the Bishops initial journey in the region bears a striking similarity to La Farge's first reaction to the Southwest desert which he dismissed as "a howling ash heap" (*Raw Material* 149). Indeed, Cather, La Farge and Luhan all perceived New Mexico as a foreign region, distinct from their perception of an American homeland. This impression is today expressed in the work of Native writers Silko and Simon Ortiz, who challenge the dominant ideology of America as a monocultural nation.

The issue of liminality expressed in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is also presented in Cather's earlier Southwestern novels. Indeed, *The Professor's House* presents the strongest articulation of liminality evident in Cather's Southwestern trilogy. Just as Outland's diary account stands apart from the rest of the novel, the character of Tom Outland himself exists outside the realm of the modern

world. As Skaggs puts it, "Tom Outland is the romantic hero who finds and conquers a world, and dies young while innocent of adult sins and riding on glory" (82). Despite the fact that Tom did, at one time, inhabit the modern world of the Professor, he occupies the peripheral boundary between the ancient world of the cliff dwellers and the modern world of the Professor. Similarly, in *The Song of the Lark*, Thea Kronborg occupies a liminal position during her time in Panther Canyon. In this remote refuge, Thea belongs fully to neither the modern American world which she has temporarily abandoned nor to the ancient Indian culture which surrounds her. In this novel, Cather pre-empts aspects of Anzaldúa's contemporary presentation of the modern borderlands as an enabling liminal zone. In *The Song of the Lark*, Thea's time in Panther Canyon is fundamental to her emergence as an artist. During her brief stay in this canyon, the young singer experiences moments of clarity regarding the future direction of her career, moments that enable her to move forward confidently in her chosen field. Thea's experience is similar to Tayo's refuge on the slopes of Mount Taylor on *Ceremony*. It is only by retreating from both the modern and the Native world and sheltering on the mountain that Tayo is able to embrace his identity as a threshold person. The liminality which is embraced by these two characters proves to be vital to their emergence as strong, confident individuals. Such aspects of Cather's Southwestern trilogy suggest its contemporary relevance to paradigms in American Studies which too often exclude writers of Cather's generation, and to borderlands scholarship which has tended to exclude the work of Anglo authors.

Landscape is a dominant theme in the work of New Mexico authors. The prominence Cather gives to this theme links her writing to the work of other Southwestern authors, both past and present. According to Sharon O Brien, the Southwest was particularly important for Cather's work "because its topography externalised the psychological state central to her creative process" (409). Cather's emotional response to the landscape of the Southwest provoked a major shift in her writing and aided

in the production of some of her finest works. In *Literary Pilgrims: The Santa Fe and Taos Writers' Colonies, 1917-1950* Lynne Cline notes that, after her first trip to the Southwest in 1912, Cather began to write with a strong sense of place. In each of her Southwestern novels, the natural landscape is foregrounded, playing a vital role in each text rather than being relegated to simple background. This is a characteristic also evident in the work of other authors from northern New Mexico. In Luhan's unpublished manuscript, *Let's Get Away Together*, the Southwestern landscape exists almost as a conscious entity, brought to life by Jerry's descriptions of its rugged perfection and its importance to its Native inhabitants. Similarly, the landscape of Silko and Ortiz's writing is a vital aspect of each work. In Silko's novels *Ceremony* and *Almanac of the Dead*, each character's relationship with the natural landscape defines his or her position in society and also indicates the inner worth of the individual. For example, Tayo's sickness in *Ceremony* is characterised by an alienation from the natural world. In order to reconnect with his heritage, and therefore find a cure, Tayo must find a way to exist in harmony with the natural world. His healing begins when he accepts the strength he draws from the natural landscape around him:

> Tayo stood… looking down on the path over the way they had come. The plateaus and canyons spread out below him like clouds falling into each other past the horizon. The world below was distant and small; it was dwarfed by a sky so blue and vast the clouds were lost in it. Far into the south there were smoky blue ridges of the mountain haze at Zuni. He smoothed his hand over the top of his head and felt the sun. The mountain wind was cool; it smelled like springs hidden deep in mossy black stone…this was the highest point on the earth: he could feel it. It had nothing to do with measurements or height. It was a special place. He was smiling. He felt strong. (139)

Landscape also plays a vital role in *Almanac of the Dead* where corruption and destructive materialism are symbolised by a detachment from the natural world. For example, Leah Blue, arguably the novel's most corrupt character, displays an astonishing lack of concern for the natural environment when she plans to confiscate the Southwestern water supply in order to build a luxury city in the desert with extensive canals and waterways. Similarly in Ortiz's short story, "San Francisco Indians", loss of Native culture is symbolised by a disconnection from the natural world. The significant role that the natural landscape plays in Cather's Southwestern trilogy links her writing to that of Silko and Ortiz and illustrates themes common in their work.

In Cather's writing, as in the work of Silko and Ortiz, the land becomes a character in its own right. As Russell asserts, "What might be dismissed as 'mere' background in fiction, the physical setting of the story, is subtly foregrounded in the writings of Cather" (28). This aspect of her work firmly locates Cather within the field of eco-critical or place-based writing. When discussing writers of the American Southwest, Tom Lynch confidently asserts that the natural landscape of the region "is not a challenge to their identity, it *is* their identity" (94). Such a statement could certainly be applied to Native authors like Silko and Ortiz. However, it is interesting to examine its relevance to Anglo authors from New Mexico, particularly authors like Cather who did not reside permanently in the region. A close analysis of Cather's Southwestern trilogy within the context of place-based paradigms illustrates that, despite the brevity of her residence in the region, this author was irrevocably influenced by the natural landscape of New Mexico. This is evidenced by the fact that the natural terrain of "Tom Outland's Story" makes a lasting impact on the reader of *The Professor's House*. Tom's diary account of his first hike into the canyon and his discovery of Cliff City offers vivid depictions of the Southwestern landscape. Cather describes how "The bluish rock and the sun-tanned grass, under the unusual purple-grey of the sky, gave the whole valley a very soft colour, lavender and pale gold so that the occasional

cedars growing beside the boulders looked black" (178). Tom also notes that "it seemed to me that I had never breathed in anything that tasted so pure as the air in that valley" (178) This section of the novel is based on Cather's own experiences of the Mesa Verde in Colorado and illustrates the powerful effect of the desert landscape on her writing. In her 1916 essay "Mesa Verde Wonderland is Easy to Reach" Cather asserted that these Indian ruins are more than just "an inconveniently situated Museum" but that this geographic wonder is "the human expression of that land of sharp contrasts, brutal contrasts, glorious colour and blinding light"(qtd. in Rosowski 159). In this essay, Cather also emphasises the considerable influence that the "rocky splendours" and aromatic pinon smoke" exert on her regional perception and creative talent. The powerful descriptions of landscape which permeate Tom Outland's diary account exist in stark contrast to the Professor's story, which is set outside the Southwestern terrain. The significant variation in detail and description which exist between the two sections of *The Professor's House* illustrate that, despite academia's reluctance to consider her writing within a Southwestern context, Cather is certainly engaging with paradigms of place-based identity in her writing.

In *The Professor's House*, the natural landscape takes precedence over the actions of the characters, exhibited by the fact that Tom Outland's story is the most memorable section of the novel. However, it is Cather's later novel, *Death comes for the Archbishop*, which most profoundly reveals the influence of setting and landscape. In this novel, the New Mexico landscape is central to the novel's progression and the main character's development. Extended descriptions of landscape abound; indeed in the opening section of the novel, the Southwest region is described as a land of "peculiar horrors" where "The very floor of the world is cracked open into countless canyons and arroyos, fissures in the earth which are sometimes ten feet deep, sometimes a thousand" (7).

This powerful and intriguing introduction is followed by a detailed account of the Archbishop's initial perception of his Southwestern surroundings:

> As far as he could see, on every side, the landscape was heaped up into monotonous red sand-hills, not much larger than haycocks, and very much the shape of haycocks…He must have travelled through thirty miles of these conical red hills…red as brick-dust, and naked of vegetation except for small juniper trees…The hills thrust out of the ground so thickly that they seemed to be pushing each other, elbowing each other aside, tipping each other over. (17-18).

Such descriptions dominate the novel and have alternately intrigued and confused critics who attempt to place Cather's Southwestern writing in the context of her other work. In *Between the Angle and the Curve*: *Mapping Gender, Race, Space, and Identity in Willa Cather and Toni Morrison*, Danielle Russell attempts to address the predominance of landscape, asserting that, in Cather's work, "Landscape takes on a personality of its own" (13). Conversely, in *Critical Essays on Willa Cather*, John J Murphy opens his article with the somewhat flawed assertion that "The hero rather than the setting or situation as the main thing in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*" (258). Murphy's essay, which consists of an analysis of the character of Archbishop Latour is selective in its investigation of the text and omits any reference to landscape. As such, one consults his article with the impression that a significant aspect of the text has been ignored. Granted, this is unusual, as few critics who have discussed *Death Comes for the Archbishop* have failed to recognise the influential role which the New Mexico landscape plays in the novel's events. However, the extent to which this terrain influences the characters and events of the novel has remained unexplored. Russell's analysis makes the closest assessment, asserting that the characters of Cather's work "do not simply live in places: they *live* places emotionally, spiritually and intellectually" (4). A re-examination of Cather's work with a place-based paradigm in mind illustrates that her characters are directly inspired and influenced by the

Southwestern landscape which surrounds them, a fact which places Cather at the fore of an emerging literary field from northern New Mexico.

As in the work of other northern New Mexico writers, the landscape of Cather's novels is not passive but exerts a considerable influence over the characters that inhabit its spaces. Just as the Taos landscape alters and inspires Luhan's Johnny, so the natural terrain of Panther Canyon makes a profound impact on Thea Kronborg in *The Song of the Lark*. Cather regarded her own holidays in the region as necessary to her continued wellbeing, a fact which is echoed in her novel as a prolonged visit to the Southwest is beneficial to Thea in her career as an artist. Indeed, it is her brief sojourn in this natural setting that allows Thea to come to terms with her musical abilities. In the canyon's "Rock rooms…full of sun" Thea acknowledges that "Music had never before come to her in that sensuous form. It had always been something to be struggled with…now her power to think seemed converted into a power of sustained sensation" (269-270). The sense of freedom Thea experiences in Panther Canyon is echoed in the work of other authors, both Anglo and Native, discussed in this work. Both Luhan's Johnny and Silko's Tayo find that a connection to the natural landscape of New Mexico is vital to their identity and their survival as individuals.

Similarly, the natural setting of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* is influential in the development of the story's main character. As Cline asserts, the novel investigates "how the untamed country of New Mexico changes a man of the church, even as he struggles to impose his faith upon that country's people" (52). At the beginning of the novel, Archbishop Latour is sent to New Mexico in order to impose religious rule on a region dominated by Native rebellion, dissolute priests and political corruption. However, although the bishop does exert considerable influence on his new diocese, Cather is careful to emphasise that the priest is also irrevocably altered by his time in the New Mexico landscape.

This alteration is most significantly influenced by the Cathedral commissioned by the Archbishop. According to Rosowski, the "Midi Romanesque cathedral reflects the Old World in the New, and its gold rock reflects the desert country from which it was made" (167). In his desire to construct a building representing his faith, Father Latour designs a structure that, despite imposing French architecture on a Spanish scene, is completely compatible with the surrounding landscape.[63] The construction of a French cathedral would seem to support Austin's claim that Cather's imposition of a foreign culture on a Spanish landscape obscures the strong Hispano presence in the region. However, it seems Cather's objective here was to illustrate the profound influence the Southwest exerted over the character of the bishop. By living in New Mexico he did not cease being a Frenchman, hence the design of the cathedral. However, the influence of this region is evident in his choice of material and location for the cathedral – the foreign architecture does not blight the New Mexico landscape, but rather blends into the natural terrain which surrounds it.

In keeping with Cather's perception of the Southwest as a counterpoint to the aggressive materialism of contemporary society, the dominant image of landscape in her novels is one of refuge. She presents the region as a sacred space defined by its crevices and canyons in which primitive societies have sheltered and thrived. In *The Song of the Lark,* Thea finds salvation in one of these cliff dwellings which functions as a "sacred space, a retreat from the profane space of the surrounding world" (Fryer, Norwood and Monk 29). Similarly in *Death Comes for the Archbishop,* Father Latour is saved from dying of thirst by his miraculous discovery of a desert river and its community of Mexicans. The landscape of Tom Outland's story in *The Professor's House* also functions as an idyllic space for Tom, Roddy and Henry where they form a "happy family" far from the malign influences of

[63] Spanish mission churches were also habitually made from Native materials in order to better blend into the Southwest landscape. A particular example of this is the church at Ranchos de Taos, which proved particularly inspiring to Georgia O'Keeffe.

modern civilisation (176). As in the work of other New Mexico authors, the landscape in Cather's novels has the ability to heal and rejuvenate its inhabitants.

In *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Cather once again highlights the regenerative powers of the Southwest. As the novel draws to a close and the bishops death approaches, he remarks that "In New Mexico he always awoke a new man…His first consciousness was a sense of the light dry wind blowing in through the windows, with the fragrance of hot sun and sage-brush and sweet clover; a wind that made one's body feel light and one's heart cry "To-day, today" like a child's" (273). This is comparable to Luhan's assertion in *Edge of Taos Desert: An Escape to Reality*, that the natural landscape of New Mexico "made one feel *good*, That is, alive" (17). Similarly, in *The Song of the Lark*, Thea's communion with the natural landscape during her time in Panther Canyon provides regeneration, thus enabling her to approach her career with newfound confidence. Suffering doubts about her talent as a singer and musician, Thea retreats to the shelter of Panther Canyon where she inhabits a purely elemental world free from the crushing demands of her job and her art. The revitalising power of this landscape is such that, "without ever singing a note, Thea Kronborg finds herself as an artist" (O'Brien 405). Interpreted in this light, Thea's residence in Panther Canyon takes on a ritual significance which echoes that of Silko's protagonist in *Ceremony.* In the same way that Tayo's renewed appreciation of the natural world purifies and regenerates him, Thea undergoes after a period of incubation in the cave-like structures of the cliff dwellings, followed by a purification ceremony in the waters of the canyon's river. In this instance, the character of Thea represents Cather herself who acknowledged that her sojourns in the Southwest stimulated her creative talent while also reviving her physical person.

Cather's contribution to the literature of the Southwest is certainly more extensive than has previously been acknowledged. According to Edith Lewis, the writer "loved the Southwest for its own

sake" and was "intensely alive" to it (qtd. in Goodman 149). The author's experiences in this region played a vital role in directing the course of her personal and professional life. As Cline asserts, "The vast solitude of the Southwest, its bald magnificence, brilliant light and physical impact, too, had the effect of toning up her spirit, and made available a path in which a new artistic method could evolve from familiar Nebraska subject matter" (57). In particular, Cather's experiences in New Mexico exerted an influence, not only on those of her novels which are set there, but on her evolving oeuvre as a whole. In addition, an examination of her work in light of contemporary trends in border and place-based studies illustrates that her writing contributes in significant measure to the emergence of New Mexico as a distinct literary field.

Chapter Four

Beyond Borders: Leslie Marmon Silko's Re-appropriation of Southwestern Spaces

The continuity between Anglo and Native American writing in northern New Mexico is evident in the work of Leslie Marmon Silko. Her position in the field of literary studies for the most part rests on her status and designation as a Native American writer, albeit one who examines hybrid identities; in comparison, her position as a New Mexico writer has seldom been explored. Although Silko's work has been compared with that of her fellow New Mexican, Simon Ortiz, her connections with earlier, Anglo, authors such as La Farge and Luhan have been neglected. This chapter aims to fill that lacuna.

Since the publication of *Ceremony* in 1977, Silko's oeuvre has been analysed at both a national and global level.[64] Her style of writing, combined with her cultural background and university education, has rendered this author's work accessible to both Native and non Native alike. As one of the principal authors of the Native American Renaissance, Silko played a major part in popularising Indian literature and establishing Native writing as a distinct tradition within the context of American Studies. However, aspects of her writing continue to be debated and criticised by contemporary academics. Silko's role in the Native American Renaissance led to popular perception of her as a quintessentially Indian author, a representative of, and spokesperson for, Native Americans. In *American Indian Literary Nationalism*, Jace Weaver, Craig Womack and Robert Warrior suggest that the field of Native American literature, to some extent, remains underdeveloped with many readers still entranced by texts which are perceived as providing a gateway to understanding Native culture and which appear to offer "initiation into a hidden world of tribal wisdom" (2). Despite the fact that her work engages with many issues which transcend Native concerns, Silko's writing has often been viewed in this context.

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[64] *Ceremony* remains the most popular of Silko's texts and has sometimes been studied at the expense of her other works.

Conversely, she has been accused by fellow Native authors of 'anglicising' her work in order to make it more accessible to a non-Native audience. Throughout her career, Silko has battled against publishing companies with preconceived notions about what an Indian text should be. According to Jeff Karem, much of the scholarship surrounding Silko has been shaped by "a narrow range of expectations" which has limited perceptions of her work (160). Silko has constantly contended with editors who reject the 'unconventional' elements of her work in favour of what they regard as authentically Indian.

The critical reception of Silko's work highlights an important issue with regard to Native American writing in the twenty-first century, that of self-determination. Historically Indian writing, and indeed Indian identity, has been subjected to Anglo definition and criticism, a state of affairs which Native writers like Sean Kicummah Teuton reject. In *Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel* Teuton posits that a new theoretical framework is needed for Native American literature. According to Teuton, "most scholars, despite an admirable, expanding interest in studying American Indian literature and culture, still approach Native literary texts primarily as a project to form an interpretative relationship to the literature of an extremely different culture" ("A Question of Relationship", 152). As Teuton argues, this immediately places Native Americans in the minority category, a subservient culture to be studied by a dominant power. Instead he argues for a tribal realist perspective, encouraging self-determination in contemporary Native American Studies. Defining tribal realism as "new knowledge for a new Indian future", Teuton focuses on shared experience among Indians to encourage an imaginative shift in self-conception (xvii). Declaring that "Natives are not helpless victims of colonial devastation, but instead the shrewd protectors of indigenous thought" Teuton rejects the stereotypically subservient role assigned to Indian culture. (11). This viewpoint is echoed by Craig Womack in *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism,* where he asserts that "The Idea of Native consciousness interests me. The critics of Native literary nationalism have faulted

Native specialists with a fundamental naiveté, claiming we argue that Native perspectives are pure, authoritative, uncontaminated by European influences. This misses the point. Native viewpoints are necessary because the 'mental means of production' in regards to analyzing Indian cultures have been owned, almost exclusively, by non-Indians" (5). What both Teuton and Womack reject is the definition, categorisation and often mis-representation of Native culture. Without fully embracing the extremist viewpoint that only Indians should study Indian culture, these theorists encourage a new direction in Native American studies, one which offers interesting insights into Silko's work.

In *The Romance of Authenticity*, Karem examines how an Anglo perspective has affected widespread interpretation of Silko, attesting that she is "rarely treated as an artist and more often treated as an informant, granting authoritative information about Laguna life" (160). This representation of Silko has led to an overly restricted definition and analysis of her work, for, as Karem claims, "Critics have become so entranced by *what* Silko writes about Native American life that they have often ignored *how* she writes or have treated any non- Native American issues as extraneous to the text" (160). As this assertion illustrates, Silko's work has largely been interpreted within an ethnographical context, with critics focusing on how her work relates to, and impacts on, Native American Studies.[65] This thesis aims to re-assess Silko's work in a regional context, since to consider this writer as solely an Indian author is to ignore the cultural complexity of her oeuvre. Also, Silko is considered a key figure within the tradition of Native American literature, a marginal field which is beginning to transcend the dominant ideology of 'American Literature'.[66]

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[65] According to theorists Sophie McCall and Emma LaRoque, Native literature has always been viewed as either 'ethnographic literature', where the writer seeks to educate American society about their culture, or as 'protest literature', the purpose of which is to remonstrate against the history of Indian/White interactions (McCall 208).

[66] In contemporary academia Native American writing remains a peripheral field of study, even in subversively non-national theories such as Border Studies. As such Native authors like Silko continue to exist as "socially minoritized writers" (Saldívar 50) However, emerging theories in postcolonial research, such as borderlands theory, necessitates a revised analysis of marginal fields like Native American Literature.

As a result, categorisation of Silko as simply a Native American author consigns her work to the periphery of a literary studies field which remains focused on the nation state.

Recent research, particularly in the area of Border Studies, encourages a redefinition and expansive interpretation of Silko's work. As this dissertation has shown, northern New Mexico stands as a cultural borderland, a space in which various ethnic groups interact in what Mary Louise Pratt terms 'Contact Zones'. These contact zones, or borderlands, are sites of convergence and fusion, forming a 'third space' in which new cultures may evolve. Edward Soja defines his recognition of third space as "a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the rebalanced trialectices of spatiality-historicality-sociality" (57). Thus, the political and cultural history of New Mexico accounts for its recognition as a multicultural region, a space simultaneously a part and apart from the prevailing epistemology of the American nation.

The conception and expression of northern New Mexico as a site of cultural hybridity is best evidenced in the work of writers and artists who inhabit its liminal spaces. Just as the Anglo authors of the 1920s experienced the ethnic fusion which characterises New Mexico culture, Silko, as a contemporary Indian writer from the region, also expresses this aspect of Southwestern culture in her writing. Silko's geographic and cultural position in New Mexico has exposed her work to a variety of ethnic influences and as such it may be interpreted and analysed within the context of third space paradigms and borderlands literature.

As a Native American living in the Southwest, Silko occupies the third space proposed by postcolonial theorists, more specifically the third country discussed by Gloria Anzaldúa in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Silko's mixed blood status identifies her as a member of the hybrid race

which occupies the transcultural frontier of the Southwest borderlands.[67] In order to inhabit these borderlands, Anzaldúa asserts that it is necessary to develop a fluidity of identity: "To survive the Borderlands/you must live *Sin Fronteras* / be a crossroads" (194). Silko's own family, which claims Indian, Hispanic and Anglo ancestry, represents this convergence of ethnicities and as such did not belong to any one culture but, according to Silko, "lived somewhere on the fringe of all three" (qtd. in Norwood & Monk 188).

In her autobiographical work *Storyteller*, Silko relates how her family experienced this cultural hybridity as everyday life. Silko's great grandfather and his brother were Anglos who had settled in Laguna Pueblo and married Native women. Both men were integrated into the community and each in their turn served as mayor of the Pueblo. Many of Silko's relatives, including her great grandmother and aunt Susie, had been sent away to be educated at Bureau of Indian affairs schools, yet managed to retain aspects of their Native heritage. Both women were renowned storytellers within the Pueblo, yet Silko recalls how her Grandmother A'mooh would also read to her from the Bible. The Marmon house itself was located near a major highway, which bought the family into contact, not only with Indians from other Pueblos, but also a steady stream of truckers and tourists. Born and raised at this cultural intersection, Silko was exposed to a diversity of ethnic influence from a very young age. In *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, Silko discusses the cultural hybridity which characterised her early life, asserting that "Life at Laguna for me was a daily balancing act of Laguna beliefs and Laguna ways and the ways of outsiders" (17). Although the Marmon family does seem to have been fully accepted by the Pueblo, and indeed played a vital role in the continuation of its culture, Silko recognises that, as mixed bloods, her family existed somewhere on the periphery of cultures: "It was not so easy for me to

[67] In *Borderlands/ La Frontera* Anzaldúa uses the terms 'Nepantlera' and 'Mestiza' to refer to this hybrid race. However, despite the fact that Anzaldúa applies the term to Chicanas, it could also be adapted to refer to other hybrid identities of the Southwest borderlands.

learn where we Marmons belonged, but gradually I understood that we of mixed ancestry belonged on the outer edge of the circle between the world of the Pueblo and the outside world" (*Yellow Woman* 102). Thus Silko's cultural background and upbringing contributed to her position as a liminal being, a hybrid occupant of the Southwest borderlands.

Silko's awareness of her cultural position in these borderlands is illustrated in *Storyteller* which represents a unique form of autobiography, combining traditional Indian poems and myths with prose pieces describing Silko's childhood. This text is problematic when we consider the foundations of life writing as a distinct genre. As Laura Marcus has noted, life writing, or autobiography, is inevitably connected to a construction and analysis of identity, a theory that increases in complexity when applied to Native American autobiography in general, and Silko in particular (3). The first written texts attributed to Native American authors originated during the era of colonisation as part of the religious movement known as the Great Awakening. Missionaries responsible for converting Indigenous tribes taught them to read and write as a means of civilisation and subjugation. Following the relocation of Indian tribes west of the Mississippi, the American Government enacted a policy of what David Adams refers to as an "education for extinction" (qtd. in Porter and Roemer 52). Indian children were taken from their families and placed in boarding schools where they were forbidden to speak Native language or engage with any aspect of their Native heritage, such as tribal rituals, myths or stories. Forced to read and write English and learn from the Bible, they were alienated from the tribal way of life for years at a time. In Indian society, stories were not only a means of entertainment; they were also a channel of information to the next generation, in essence, tribal autobiographies. Faced with an encroaching technological society, storytelling allowed Indigenous populations to retain their tribal identity. However the initial absence of Indian children and their eventual alienation from tribal ways was problematic for the continuation of Native stories and, therefore, Native culture.

As a result it became necessary to write down tribal myths and histories in order to ensure their survival. Thus, the origination and subsequent use of written language among Native Americans was the result of assimilation policies and acts of oppression imposed by colonising nations.

This recognition has raised questions surrounding the definition and authenticity of Native American literature, and by extension, Native American autobiography. The question "What is Native American Literature?" still causes much controversy within the academic community. Theorists such as Arnold Krupat and Elvira Pulitano have challenged the classification of written works as Native American since Indian cultures are oral in origin. However this in turn leads to a problematic consideration of Native American identity for, as Thomas King states, "Perhaps our simple definition that Native American Literature is literature produced by Natives will suffice for the while providing we resist the temptation of trying to define a Native" (qtd. in Weaver, *Native American Authors* 47). Rejecting the extremist viewpoint that "literature ceases to be Indian when it employs Western forms" Silko engages with the genre of autobiographical writing on its most basic level-that of its written form (Weaver, *Native American Authors* 47).

In *Storyteller* Silko recalls how, in response to the disruption of the oral tradition, her aunt Susie began a new tribal autobiography, adhering to the written form in order to ensure the preservation of "an entire culture, an entire identity of a people" (6). *Storyteller* is Silko's continuation of her aunt's work. This book is a revision and manipulation of the traditional genre of life writing in an effort to accurately represent Silko's hybridity and her borderlands identity. According to Cynthia Carsten, Silko rejects the literary conventions of Euro-American writing "because they are inherently unsuited to the inscription of Pueblo worldview and lived experience. In addition, these conventions have historically served to maintain and propagate ideologies of domination over American Indian cultures"

(107). This is particularly evident in Silko's autobiographical works, which manipulate western forms of literature to reflect her tribal view of history, culture and identity.

In "Storyteller: Leslie Marmon Silko's Reappropriation of Native American History and Identity", Carsten questions if an authentic Pueblo autobiography is possible, asking "Can a genre historically given to establishing the self distinctly over and against the communal lend itself to the Pueblo worldview?" (109). Conventional autobiographical texts engage with the binaries of self and other, centre and margin, in order to construct a sense of identity. Silko's text disrupts these binaries, destabilising our very notion of what an autobiographical text should be by redefining the authorial self as the Pueblo community. As Carsten asserts, "Unlike conventional Euro-American autobiographies that place the 'I' at the center, her autobiography locates the self within the web of the interconnected Pueblo universe" (109). *Storyteller* is a personal autobiography but it is also a tribal autobiography representing a community of people; for Silko the two are inseparable. In the text, personal memories of Silko's childhood are set alongside tribal stories of Yellow Woman, Buffalo Man and the Twin Brothers. A tale entitled "Uncle Tony's Goat" is actually a story from Acoma Pueblo, related by Silko's friend Simon Ortiz. Poems detailing the history of the Laguna people are also embedded within the text. The variety of these songs, poems and stories and the order in which they appear disrupts the linear structure which characterises conventional autobiography.

This is a technique which Silko also uses to great effect in her memoir *The Turquoise Ledge*, published in 2010. In this text Silko presents memories and stories interspersed with thoughts in the narrative present until the reader is lost in a confusing web of the author's family history, friendships, both past and present, and modern day experiences. This text is the strongest example of Silko's manipulation of the genre of life writing, as the reader is forced to navigate a complex universe of identity and self-expression.

In her autobiographical work, Silko revises the very form of autobiography in order to represent the cultural diversity of New Mexico spaces. The author herself attested that the key to understanding *Storyteller* lies in the order and placement of these songs, poems and stories: "it may seem chaotic…but in the end I believe it will be a cohesive statement about the interrelationship between the oral arts and the literary arts" (qtd. in Karem 178). The fluidity of form exhibited in this text represents the fluidity of identity exemplified by its author's position within the New Mexico borderlands. In *Storyteller,* Silko constructs her identity in relation to the people and places which surround her. Interspersed throughout the book are photographs which depict not only Silko, her relatives and family friends, but also scenes of the Southwest landscape. Photographs such as the former are typical in autobiographical texts in order to illustrate important aspects of the author's life. However the latter type is unusual and reflects a strong connection between landscape and Native American identity. Silko has stated that "This place I am from is everything I am as a writer and human being" (Barnett & Thorson viii). The inclusion of this landscape photography deconstructs the centre/margin binary which defines conventional autobiography, allowing the reader to enter into Silko's world, repositioning her viewpoint as the centre/ self and assigning the outside world a marginal/other status. In combining Native oral techniques with standard literary text, Silko subverts conventional autobiography, which is the product of western civilisation, and instead constructs a new autobiography, the very structure of which represents the cultural hybridity of the New Mexico borderlands.

In her writing, Silko engages with the 'reluctant return of the Native' theme also expressed in the writing of N. Scott Momaday and Ortiz. In *Ceremony*, the novel's protagonist, Tayo, represents the thousands of Indians who joined the American army during World War II in the hope that this would improve their social position and help them gain citizenship. However, when the war was over, these Indians were rejected by American society and returned to their reservations, where many of them

experienced difficulties re-adjusting to the Indian way of life. In *Ceremony*, Silko criticises the Government's treatment of Native veterans through her portrayal of Tayo and his cousin. Rocky longs to be accepted by white society and believes that joining the army will provide an entrance to this way of life. However, unlike Rocky and the other Indian veterans of the novel, Tayo is aware of the temporary nature of their acceptance by white society, acknowledging that when a white woman blesses him and Rocky, "it was the uniform, not them, she blessed" (41). After the war Tayo remembers how quickly the illusion of respect disappeared: "First time you walked down the street in Gallup or Albuquerque you knew… The war was over, the uniform gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And the white lady at the bus depot, she's real careful now not to touch your hand when she counts out your change" (42). Silko also uses the characters of Harley, Leroy, Pinkie and Emo to demonstrate the negative effects such treatment had on the returning Native veterans. Unable to adjust to reservation life after the war, these characters spend their days drinking, fighting and sharing memories of what it was like to be accepted by white society.

The impact of war on the Indian psyche is also examined by Momaday in his novel *House Made of Dawn*, where the main character, Abel, returns to his reservation completely devastated by his wartime experiences. Like Tayo, Abel must re-learn how to be an Indian and how to inhabit the Indian world. Ortiz also examines this issue in his short story "Kaiser and the War", but presents a more pessimistic view of this theme than Silko and Momaday. In contrast to Tayo and Abel, his character, Kaiser, is unable to adjust to life on the reservation and dies alone, part of neither Indian nor white society. As such, an analysis of Silko's writing in conjunction with Momaday and Ortiz's work illustrates themes common in the work of all three Southwestern authors.[68]

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[68] This theme is discussed in greater detail in chapter Five.

Silko attests that at the core of her writing is "the attempt to identify what it is to be a half breed or mixed blood person" (qtd. in Weaver, *Native American Authors* 76). She embodies what Anzaldúa refers to as a border person or 'Nepantlera', a being who moves in multiple worlds. In *Ceremony,* Silko articulates what it is to be a Nepantlera through the novel's protagonist. Tayo is a 'half breed' Indian, the product of an illicit union between his Indian mother and an anonymous white man. This mixed blood status means that Tayo belongs completely in neither the Indian world in which he has been raised or the white world which he encounters when he joins the army; instead he inhabits the borders of both. During his healing ceremony, Tayo describes his experiences in a modern hospital: "They sent me to this place after the war. It was white. Everything in that place was white. Except for me. I was invisible" (123). Tayo's feelings of invisibility are a symptom of his illness but they are also an articulation of the dislocation he feels when forced to inhabit white spaces; both the actual 'white' colour of the hospital and the societal 'white' of EuroAmerican civilisation.

Tayo's inability to negotiate the peripheral world which he inhabits is further complicated by the refusal of others to recognise and acknowledge his hybridity. According to Silko, the cures offered by modern medicine prove ineffective because the doctors cannot comprehend that Tayo does not completely belong in the white world and thus cannot be healed by its medicine. Indeed the treatment he receives at the white hospital not only proves futile but actually hinders his recovery. The white doctors cannot understand tribal mentality which is based on a communal identity and this complicates Tayo's recovery process. When questioned about his time in the hospital, Tayo attempts to explain that the doctors had attempted to make him forget about his tribal loyalties and to focus only on his own healing: "He wanted to yell at the medicine man, to yell the things the white doctors had yelled at him- that he had to think only of himself, and not about the others, that he would never get well as long as he used words like 'we' and 'us'" (125). When one doctor attempts to understand and cure Tayo's illness

through therapy, Silko suggests that this approach does more harm than good and Tayo is released from the hospital in a dangerously unstable state. His experiences in the train station at the beginning of the novel illustrate his mental instability and physical infirmity:

> Tayo felt weak, and the longer he walked the more his legs felt as though they might become invisible again; then the top part of his body would topple, and when his head was level with the ground he would be lost in smoke again, in the fog again…It was too late to ask for help, and he waited to die the way the smoke dies, drifting away in currents of air, twisting in thin swirls, fading until it exists no more. His last thought was how generous they had become, sending him to the L.A. depot alone, finally allowing him to die. (16-17)

However, when Tayo returns to the reservation, the traditional cures attempted by the tribal medicine man also prove ineffective. Silko ascribes this failure to the fact that the medicine man is unable to account for and incorporate the young Indian's modern world experiences into his cure. When Tayo attempts to explain the nature of modern warfare to the old medicine man, Ku'oosh is confused:

> In the old way of warfare, you couldn't kill another human being in battle without knowing it, without seeing the result, because even a wounded deer that got up and ran again left great clots of lung blood or spilled guts on the ground…But the old man would not have believed white Warfare- killing across great distances without knowing who or how many had died. It was all too alien to comprehend (36)

Ku'oosh's method of healing is based on traditional Indian ceremonies that have been performed throughout the generations. Acknowledging his failure, the old man informs Tayo's family that "There are some things we can't cure like we used to …not since the white people came" (38). The old Indian's inability to adapt to the cultural interaction and conflict around him renders his tribal medicine ineffective. Thus, the failure of both parties lies in the fact that, as full blood members of distinct

cultural groups, neither can completely understand Tayo's marginal status, and therefore the nature of his illness.

Tayo's salvation lies in the character of Betonie, a mixed blood medicine man who has adapted traditional healing ceremonies to account for the changes occurring in the world around him. Like Tayo, Betonie is a threshold person, occupying the liminal space between Indian and white culture. This Indian's liminality is represented, at a very basic level, by his living conditions. Betonie does not live on the reservation but neither does he inhabit the urban world of white society. Instead he lives on the fringes of both worlds, occupying a place that, according to Silko, "looked down on all of it" (116). When Tayo questions the medicine man's decision to live on the outskirts of Gallup, the Indian replies that "It is the town down there which is out of place. Not this old medicine man" (118). Betonie's personal possessions also demonstrate this liminality. When Tayo enters the Hogan, he notices that:

> pouches and bags dangled from wooden pegs and square headed nails. Hard shrunken skin pouches and black leather purses trimmed with hammered silver buttons were things he could understand. They were a medicine man's paraphernalia, laid beside the painted gourd rattles and deer-hoof clackers of the ceremony. But with this old man it did not end there; under the medicine bags and bundles of rawhide on the walls, he saw layers of old calendars, the sequences of years confused… He recognized names of stores in Phoenix and Albuquerque (120-121)

Betonie's ability to incorporate elements of both the Indian and the white worlds into his everyday life and into his ceremonies illustrates the positive nature of his liminality. Like Anzaldúa's assertion that the border spaces between cultures have the potential to be enabling liminal zones, Silko presents Betonie's interstitial existence in a positive light.

In his article "Migration, Emergent Ethnicity, and the 'Third Space': The Shifting Politics of Nationalism in Greater Mexico", David G Gutierrez posits that the liminal spaces of border cultures become sites of segregation where distinctive regional cultures not only developed but thrived. Citing the historian Peter Sahlins, Gutierrez asserts that the interstitial existence of border inhabitants allows them to develop and progress far from "the world of authority and the power of the central state" (489). Such theories accurately describe Betonie's existence. Shunned by the traditional Indian community for his radical healing theories, this medicine man exists outside the realm of both Indian and white society, and this position has allowed him a measure of freedom to develop and adapt his ceremonies. As such, Betonie not only survives, but prospers in the liminality forced on him. It is this ability to inhabit the interstitial spaces of the borderlands that he must pass on to Tayo. Betonie recognises that the traditional ways of healing must be adapted if they are to survive because "things which don't shift and grow are dead things" (126). He rejects the witchery which encourages Indians to "believe all evil resides with white people", therefore preventing Indian culture from growing and evolving, which would ensure its survival (132). Instead he encourages Tayo to be aware of both the Indian way and the white way. Tayo's struggle in the novel is not to relearn how to be an Indian; it is to learn how to be both Indian and white in the modern world: how to exist in the 'third space' he occupies. As David Rice asserts, Betonie has "collected his experience and knowledge to help Indians recognise themselves within the contemporary world and integrate it as part of their experience without letting it overtake them" (126). Thus Betonie's healing ceremony for Tayo is not simply a reconnection to his Indian heritage, it is a lesson in how to exist as part Indian and part white; how to be a threshold person.

The main protagonist of *Gardens in the Dunes*, published in 1999, is also a threshold person, a being who moves through multiple worlds. Set during the time of the Ghost Dance Movement, the story follows a young Indian girl, Indigo, who is separated from her family when white settlers forcibly

extricate the Natives from their homes and relocate them on government reservations.[69] Indigo is taken to a school run by whites so that she can be civilised and trained as a lady's maid. However, having run away from this school, she is taken in by a wealthy plant collector and his wife who decide to take her with them on their travels across America and Europe. In this novel Indigo moves through the actual worlds of America, Italy, Corsica and England while also negotiating the metaphorical spaces of Indian and white identity.

Like Betonie, and indeed La Farge's character Myron, this young Indian's liminal existence proves to be the key to her survival and that of her family. Indigo and Sister Salt are the last members of the Sand Lizard tribe which is doomed to extinction. However, through her experiences in the modern world, Indigo gathers information which will enable her family to survive. This gathering of information is symbolised by the collection of seeds, which Indigo plans to plant in the gardens of the desert. In the modern world, these plants are admired for their aesthetic value. However Indigo views them from a subsistence perspective and collects them to grow as food in the gardens in the dunes. As inhabitants of the desert, Indigo and Sister Salt already possess the knowledge of arid cultivation, passed on to them by their mother and grandmother. However, the plants gathered from Indigo's travels through other cultures will allow them not only to survive, but thrive. Indigo's resilience and the continuation of her tribe depend on her ability to combine aspects of both worlds to find a new identity. Just as Tayo and Myron learn how to accept their liminality, Indigo's travels teach her how to live in the peripheral space both she and her family occupy.

In addition to inhabiting the border between societies, Indigo and her family also inhabit the geographic border between the traditional world of the Indian and the contemporary white world, a

[69] The Ghost Dance Movement, which was led by the Paiute prophet Wovoka, spread across the American continent during the late nineteenth century. Based on the principles of tribal co-operation and peaceful resistance, this movement foretold the end of white domination in the Americas.

space Anzaldúa refers to as a "no-man's borderland" (12). Indeed the desert home of the Indians in *Gardens* bears a significant similarity to that of La Farge's liminal characters in *Laughing Boy*. Like the characters of Laughing Boy and Slim Girl, Indigo and her family embrace the desert as a space apart from both Indian and white societies. However, in contrast to La Farge, who explores a negative construction of what liminality means, Silko presents the reader with a more optimistic portrayal of interstitial existence. In *Laughing Boy*, the characters are forced to live a liminal existence because of the illegality of their marriage and the refusal of Laughing Boy's family to accept Slim Girl. La Farge presents the characters' border life as a temporary position, one Laughing Boy can abandon to re-join Indian society. In contrast, Silko's characters choose to live a border existence in the deserts. Indeed, just as Anzaldúa depicts her border as a site of creativity and cultural productivity, Silko presents this desert space as necessary for the survival of Indigo and her family. Having gained vital knowledge through their interactions with the modern world, Indigo and her family retreat to the protection of the desert, which provides them with everything they need for a harmonious and productive existence. As such, when viewed in light of paradigms in postcolonial theory, in particular Anzaldúa's work, Silko's portrayal of these characters locates her work within the parameters of borderlands writing.

In her fiction Silko refuses to be restricted to the traditional characteristics of minority writing, instead embracing her hybrid identity to offer an insider's perspective on the territorial, ideological and cultural borders of modern New Mexico. Her novels are based in the lived reality of the borderlands, thus challenging popular perception of America as a monocultural nation. Structurally, thematically and stylistically, *Almanac of the Dead* (1999) is a novel of the borderlands which presents a plurality of Southwests, like Anzaldúa's "layered description of the indeterminate, unfixed, nature of the borderlands" (Jarman 147). The map which opens the novel acts as a framing device for the story, immediately contesting the notion of a fixed landscape and subverting "conventional patterns organised

by colonialist regimes designed to regulate space and manage people" (Archuleta 114). Like the photographs in *Storyteller*, this drawing inverts the binaries established by western epistemology which constructs the U.S. as the centre/self and assigns other nations a marginal/other status.

In Silko's map the United States is not identified as a distinct region; instead Mexico is given precedence. The map's most prominent city, Tucson, is defined, not by its location within the U.S., but by its connection to Mexican territory. Moreover, the borderline between the U.S. and Mexico is not depicted as a solid barrier but rather as a porous membrane which permits the mass movement of guns and drugs in both directions. This drawing illustrates Silko's perception of the Southwest as a space defined by the fluidity of its geographical, political and cultural borders. Silko uses this map to subvert what Arnold Krupat defines as the "eurocenteredness of the hegemonic East-West paradigm traditionally used to configure American thought and culture" and in doing so repositions the 'third space' of the Southwest borderlands as 'centre' reflecting border perspective and situating the novel which follows in the contested locations of the Southwest borderlands (qtd. in Muthyala 141).

Silko's map also contains dialogue boxes proclaiming revolutionary messages refuting borders and foretelling the "disappearance of all things European". Throughout history the map has evolved as a symbol of the civilised world. Pratt's theories of colonisation contend that the drawing of maps signified authority and ownership over Indigenous populations. According to Pratt, the drawing of maps allowed colonisers to place their stamp of authority on conquered territories by redrawing and therefore redefining geographical boundaries. Thus for Indigenous populations the map represents a demonstration of colonising force. In *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*, José David Saldívar challenges the underpinnings of colonialism which characterise regional mapping, asking

> How can a map tell us how the U.S.-Mexico borderlands were once an ecological whole, with Mexico blending into the present-day southwestern American landscape? Can maps represent how, with independence in 1821, Mexico took over the Spanish borderlands only to have to fight off the United States in its quest to fulfil its manifest destiny? Can maps show how the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 added what [Américo] Parades calls 'the final element to Rio Grande society, a border', thus inaugurating a new phase of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands? (18)

In Saldívar's opinion, conventional maps are ill-equipped to present an accurate view of history. By presenting her readers with a map of the borderlands, seen from the perspective of the borderlands, Silko succeeds in addressing this issue. Her map not only provides an alternate view of colonial history but also challenges contemporary assumptions of dominance and control. As Ann Brigham asserts, "opening a novel that charts the death and destruction caused by European colonialism with one of the mechanisms of that destruction (Euro-American maps have relentlessly circumscribed and erased Indigenous populations and their lands) becomes a subversive rhetorical move" (303-304). The linear progression which characterises contemporary maps is absent in Silko's drawing. Rather than depicting one geographic location at one specific time, as modern maps do, *Almanac's* map depicts five hundred years of history, illustrating that for the inhabitants of the borderlands, colonialism is not a thing of the past but a lived reality where "defiance and resistance …continue unabated" (*Almanac* Map)

Silko intended the opening map to be a pictorial representative of the narrative illustrating how "the Americas are 'one', not separated by artificial 'borders'' (Arnold 119), a point reinforced by the structure of the novel itself. Stories within stories and characters that are linked in obscure ways give the book a web-like structure, characteristic of Native oral tradition, illustrating circular rather than linear progression. The character of Calabazas, when speaking of historical events, uses the present

tense: “We don’t believe in boundaries. Borders. Nothing like that. We are here thousands of years before the first whites. We are here before maps or quit claims” (216). Moreover, when the character of Sterling begins to tell his life story he starts not at the beginning, but halfway through relating how he arrived at the ranch where he now works. Throughout the novel, fragments of Sterling’s life are gradually revealed in order to build a complete account of this character. This complex structure is repeated throughout the 763 page novel. Individual stories are interrupted by tangents which in turn develop into stories themselves, so that the linear concept of time is disrupted.

Like Cather, who removed the timeline from *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, Silko seeks to focus attention on the events of the novel rather than the linear moments in which they occur. Alongside modern narratives of corruption, violence and revolution Silko has set the story of the almanac itself, its survival throughout history and its prophecies for the future of the human race. This disruption of the temporal sequence allows Silko to depict various levels of history at once, presenting a complete picture of the Americas. As Ellen Arnold attests, “Always concerned to bring to light hidden and silenced histories of brutality and oppression in the Americas, Silko enfolds linear accounts of historical events within more Indigenous conceptualisations of time as cyclically recurring narrative patterns that hold out possibilities for human survival and healing” (x). In doing so, Silko presents a connection between land, history and time which links diverse characters and cultures and subverts the dominant ideology of borders as barriers to the movement of people and culture.

Various characters also function as weapons of resistance to the borders imposed by outsiders’ perceptions of space and region. In one interview, Silko relates how

> In the days before monarch’s maps with boundary lines, the tribal people of the Americas thought of the whole earth as their home, not just one continent. Humans used to feel that way

> until the rise of the nation-state fiction, which sought to destroy ancient liaisons between people on opposite sides of the newly created borderline. (123)

Both Zeta and her business partner Calabazas refuse to acknowledge borders which were put in place by the white man and which represent the tyranny of his race. In her article, "Securing our Nations Roads and Borders or Re-Circling the Wagons? Leslie Marmon Silko's De-stabilisation of 'Borders'", Elizabeth Archuleta asserts that

> Roads preserve an image of imperialism, because they remind indigenous peoples that roads helped facilitate colonialism's expansion into new territories, their ancestral homelands. Furthermore, roads continue to demonstrate how colonialists exercise power over indigenous peoples through laws that attempt to disguise that power. (114)

Zeta and Calabazas challenge this imperialism by creating and popularising new roads through their cross border smuggling business. This refusal to adhere to the legitimate routes created by colonising forces illustrates the resistance these characters exhibit towards the attempted domination of Western civilisation. Zeta does not consider her cross border smuggling to be illegal because those borders were formed on stolen land and so, according to her, are invalid:

> The people had been free to go travelling north and south for a thousand years, travelling as they pleased, then suddenly white priests had announced smuggling as a mortal sin because smuggling was stealing from the government. Zeta wondered if the priests who told the people smuggling was stealing had also told them how they were to feed themselves now that all the fertile land along the rivers had been stolen by white men … Stealing from the 'Government'? … How could one steal if the government itself was the worst thief…There was not, and there never had been, a legal government by Europeans anywhere in the Americas. Not by any

> definition, not even by the Europeans' own definitions and laws. Because no legal government could be established on stolen land. Because stolen land never had clear title. (133)

Zeta's rejection of political borders is a rejection of a governmental system which attempts to construct boundaries, define cultures and control societies located far from their centre of power and influence. In this she is supported by Calabazas who argues that since his people's occupation of the land predates the white man's, then their laws and geographical borders are illegitimate:

> We don't believe in boundaries. Borders. Nothing like that. We are here thousands of years before the first whites. We are here before maps or quit claims. We know where we belong on this earth. We have always moved freely. North-South, East-West. We pay no attention to what isn't real. Imaginary lines. Imaginary minutes and hours. Written law. We recognise none of that. And we carry a great many things back and forth. We don't see any border. (216)

Both Zeta and Calabazas use the remoteness of the desert landscape to smuggle guns and drugs across these illegitimate borders, in order to help a resistance movement which presents a possibility for redemption and renewal.

Through these characters, Silko foregrounds Indigenous narratives and in doing so challenges the dominant western ideology which has "assigned Mexican Americans and American Indians a perpetually foreign status, [thus characterising] their entry into the United States as subjects of conquest and victims of manifest destiny" (Archuleta 118). This issue resonates deeply with Silko, who has personal experiences of being detained by the border patrol despite the legitimacy of her residence in the region. Such incidents have influenced Silko's perception of her own race and identity as she struggles to come to terms with being labelled a foreigner in her own homeland. In her 1996 collection of essays *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, Silko describes being detained at a border patrol checkpoint while cars containing white occupants were waved through. In two essays

entitled “Fences Against Freedom” and “The Border Patrol State” Silko criticises a system of governance which as yet exhibits a colonial tendency to transcribe whiteness as innocent, thereby suggesting that colour is synonymous with criminality.[70]

In these articles, Silko also criticises the daily abuses of power which the border patrol exercise over people of colour. Declaring that the border control can “detain anyone they wish for no reason at all” she emphatically asserts that “Once you have been stopped at a Border Patrol checkpoint, you are under the control of the Border Patrol agent; the refusal to obey any order by the Border Patrol agent means you have broken the law and may be arrested for failure to obey a federal officer” (*Yellow Woman* 108). The feelings of helplessness evoked by such policies have made Silko wary of travelling through the Southwest as inscribed notions of criminality have led to a constant fear of persecution. She notes how “I no longer feel the same about driving from Tucson to Albuquerque via the Southern route. For miles before I approach the INS check stations, I can feel the anxiety pressing hard against my chest” (112). Her article “Fences Against Freedom” describes an incident when Silko and a friend were detained despite producing legitimate Arizona drivers licences. The rage and frustration such an incident incites is evident as Silko recounts how, exercising her right to free speech, she proclaimed to the astonished police officers, “You are not wanted here…Only a few years ago we used to be able to move freely within our own country…This is our home. Take all this back where you came from. You are not wanted here” (109).

The apparent mobility of border patrol checkpoints in the Southwest is also criticised in “The Border Patrol State”. Describing another incident where she and a friend were stopped, Silko relates how the checkpoint was set up on a lonely stretch of highway in the middle of the night. For Silko,

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[70] In light of recent senate bills passed in Arizona, such as SB 1070, Silko’s recriminations take on new significance. SB 1070, which was introduced as an anti-immigration measure, blatantly targets people of colour in the Southwest, regardless of the legitimacy of their residence in the region.

these incidents illustrate "the United States' power to redraw the nation's borders thus contributing to the border's fluid nature" (Archuleta 120). As such, like *Almanac*, these essays are an exercise in decolonisation, as Silko creates characters and recounts events that challenge, and ultimately ignore, the legitimacy of Government boundaries in a region that exists far from the centre of power of the Nation state. Her Indigenous characters in *Almanac* reflect Silko's sense of injustice and rebellion as they reject contemporary borders which are representative of an imperialistic regime, thus destabilising the Anglocentric paradigm of American culture and society.

The prominence of the natural landscape in Silko's novels, essays and articles locates her work within the field of Southwestern writing. The significant role that this region plays in *Storyteller* is a theme also evidenced in the author's later text, *Rain*, published in 1996. If *Storyteller* experiments with multi-genre narrative, combining stories, poems and photographs, *Rain* perfects this technique. This work was a collaborative effort between Silko and her father, the photographer Lee Marmon, and provides the reader with striking photographs of the Southwest terrain interspersed with textual descriptions of the land and its importance to Southwestern cultures. In this work Silko encourages a renewed perception of landscape, while also highlighting its importance to Native culture:

> The term *landscape*, as it has entered the English language, is misleading. 'A portion of territory the eye can comprehend in a single view' does not correctly describe the relationship between the human being and his or her surroundings. This assumes the viewer is somehow *outside* or *separate from* the territory he or she surveys. Viewers are as much a part of the landscape as the boulders they stand on.

This text emphasises the integral role the natural world plays in the everyday lives of Native cultures, an emphasis also evident in her most recent autobiographical work, *The Turquoise Ledge*. The latter is Silko's strongest expression of autobiographical writing, and the fact that that Southwest landscape

plays an important role in the text is significant. Silko herself attests in the preface that the intention of this book was to "construct a self portrait". What follows is a detailed account of the Southwest landscape, as Silko describes her treks through the desert where she discovers pieces of turquoise and other rocks.

Like Ortiz, Silko constructs her sense of identity in relation to the Southwest landscape which surrounds her. Throughout the work she uses descriptions of nature and wildlife to orientate her expressions of selfhood. For example, at the beginning of one chapter Silko relates how

> I never felt alone or afraid up there in the hills. The hummah-ha stories described the conversations coyotes, crows and buzzards used to have with human beings, I was fascinated with the notion that long ago humans and animals used to freely converse. As I got older, I realized the clouds and winds and rivers also have their ways of communication; I became interested in what those entities had to say. My imagination became engaged in discovering what can be known without words. (45)

In this text, Silko navigates spheres of identity as she wanders through the Southwestern desert. Memories of family members, long dead, and of friends do have a place in the book, but are overshadowed by Silko's reminiscences of her early childhood, later adult experiences in the desert and her interactions with its inhabitants. In discussing *Storyteller,* Carsten has noted how Silko "remythologizes the landscape, which has been desacralized by those who have reduced it to commodity" (123). This could also be said of *The Turquoise Ledge* as, throughout the book, Silko ascribes spiritual significance to the desert terrain and its creature inhabitants, in particular the snakes which surround (and occasionally inhabit) her Tucson home. On one of her desert walks, Silko describes how finding a grinding stone left behind by an ancient Indian tribe prompts a memory of how "sometimes in the wind I've heard the voices of women singing their grinding songs" and also of how

"After dark I avoid looking out the living room windows on the west side of my old ranch house because I've seen as many as a dozen figures walk past in a group" (12). Later in the novel, while describing the arrival of rain after a prolonged drought, Silko declares that "in the Americas, the sacred surrounds us, no matter how damaged or changed a place may be" (145).

The powerful and prominent descriptions of landscape which dominate *The Turquoise Ledge* have confused critics who identify the book as "less an autobiography than an exploration of her [Silko's] relationship with the natural and spiritual world" (L. Thomas). Critics such as Louisa Thomas, a reviewer for the *New York Times*, have studied the book, searching for elements of a traditional EuroAmerican autobiography and, finding them missing, have characterised it as "a disconcerting read" (*Desert Song*). However, this text is Silko's strongest expression of place-based identity as she freely engages in what Tom Lynch refers to as "Xerophilia". [71] What critics like Thomas have failed to realise is, that as a Native writer from the American Southwest, Silko's sense of identity is located within the natural topography of the region and so an autobiographical text necessitates a foregrounding of this landscape[72]. A new analysis of *The Turquoise Ledge* in an ecocritical context suggests that Silko, more than any other author discussed in this work, exhibits a strong sense of geographical consciousness in her writing. In *Xerophilia: Ecocritical Explorations in Southwestern Literature* Lynch asserts that "one sees the desert as a bleak existential landscape not because in reality it is one, but because of one's ignorance of its biotic abundance and complexity, because one believes, as the stories of one's culture have taught one to believe, that landscapes must be abundantly green to be meaningful and pleasant" (93). This comment has particular relevance to Silko's work, in particular *The Turquoise Ledge*. Through a colourful and in-depth description of the desert landscape which

[71] The term "Xerophilia" refers to people who love desert plants and animals. In *Xerophilia: Ecocritical Explorations in Southwestern Writing* Lynch applies this term to individuals who display a significant connection to their desert surroundings, possessing a distinctive sense of place which is evident in their writing.
[72] In *Red Land red Power*, Teuton refers to this connection between land and selfhood as "geoidentity" (46).

surrounds her home, Silko forces her readers to re-assess their understanding of this type of terrain. In this way she encourages us to see the Southwestern desert as she perceives it: full of life, light and colour, rich in both plant and animal life.

Silko's position at the fore of place-based studies links her work to the other authors of this thesis, both Native and Anglo. Just as Cather and Luhan's fictional characters establish strong connections with the Southwestern terrain, Silko ascribes a certain power to this landscape in her writing. In her novels, each character's relationship with the natural landscape defines his or her position in society. In *Almanac*, the characters portrayed least sympathetically are those alienated from the natural world. Leah Blue, the novel's most corrupt female character, plans to wipe out the desert by constructing a 'Venice style' city for the wealthy elite with "Mediterranean villas and canals where only cactus and scraggly greasewood grew from gray volcanic gravel" (378). In *Xerophilia* Lynch claims that "the efforts of so many Americans to convert the Southwestern deserts into versions of, if not England, at least of New England, with green lawns, golf courses, trees, water consuming agriculture and grass consuming livestock, illustrates a disharmony between culture and environment that creates an inherently unsustainable situation" (31-32). It is this disharmony that Silko condemns in *Almanac* through characters like Leah Blue. She detests the desert terrain, which she describes as "full of poisonous snakes, sharp rocks and cactus" and is confident that she is "not alone in this feeling of repulsion" (750).

As the novel illustrates, Leah is correct in this assumption. Characters such as Menardo, Serlo and Trigg manipulate the environment for their own selfish needs. Menardo plunders the natural world to construct an elaborate mansion for his wife as a symbol of their wealth. The character of Serlo is so disgusted with the natural world that he plans to use, abuse, and then discard it, escaping in an 'alternative earth' space capsule with a selection of the planet's most wealthy and corrupt individuals.

Loaded with the last of the planets oxygen, water and soil supplies, these modules would orbit the earth in colonies and "the select few would continue as they always had, gliding in luxury and ease across polished decks of steel and glass islands where they looked down on earth as they had once looked down at Rome or Mexico City from luxury penthouses, still sipping cocktails" (542). Silko reserves particular contempt for such characters. All are aware of the destruction and devastation being visited on the natural world. However, rather than deciding to prevent this damage, they use their wealth to strip the earth of its natural resources and abandon it to its fate. Their level of corruption is measured by their disgust of, and alienation from, the natural world.

In *Ceremony* Silko's expression of place-based identity is again evident the significant relationship between the novel's characters and the natural landscape. The hopelessness and destitution of the Gallup Indians is represented by their estrangement from their tribal culture and from the natural environment of the reservation. These Indians, having left the reservation in search of work and an improved quality of life, are exploited and abused by the white world. As a result they are forced to live on the fringes of a white society which will not accept them, falling prey to the evils of alcoholism and prostitution. Reminded of his mother, Tayo is profoundly affected by the sight of these Indians who "walked like survivors, with dull vacant eyes, their fists clutching the coins he'd thrown to them" (115). In *Ceremony*, the character of Laura represents Silko's strongest assertion that the loss of connection with the natural world represents loss of culture and identity. Lured into a life of depravity, Laura rejects all connections with her tribal heritage and with the natural landscape in which she was raised. Abandoning the reservation, she embraces the anonymity of the white world represented by the city. This is an issue also examined by Simon Ortiz in his short story "The San Francisco Indians". Like Silko's Gallup Indians, the Natives of Ortiz's story have lost their connection to the natural landscape and so have become alienated from their culture. Unable to remember traditional chants or

rituals, these Indians beg a reservation Indian for guidance because, as one character declares "I want it to be real" (*Men on the Moon* 121).

Silko's perception of landscape not only locates her writing within the field of place-based literature but also illustrates her position as a hybrid author of the Southwest borderlands. The rural landscapes of her novels frequently function as places of refuge and protection from the evils of a corrupt modern society. In *Ceremony* the final stage of Tayo's healing takes place on the slopes of Mount Taylor or Tse'pina which also provides a refuge from white pursuers. Like Luhan's and Cather's characters who find shelter and inspiration in the rural Southwest, Tayo's acceptance of his position as a threshold person is represented by his connection to the landscape of the borderlands which he finally identifies as home:

> At that moment in the sunrise, it was all so beautiful, everything, from all directions, evenly, perfectly, balancing day with night, summer months with winter. The valley was enclosing this totality, like the mind holding all thoughts together in a single moment. The strength came from this feeling. It had always been here. He stood there with the sun on his face, and he thought maybe he might make it after all. (237)

The desert terrain of *Almanac of the Dead* also offers a refuge for its Native inhabitants. When Sterling, who grew up on an Indian reservation, remembers the year of the Wall Street Crash, he recalls that the Indians remembered it only as "a year of bounty for the people…winters those years had been mild and wet for the Southwest. Harvests had been plentiful, and the game had been fat for the winter" (41). In this case the Indians' connection to the natural world protected them from the disaster experienced by contemporary society. Just as the isolation of the rural landscape protected the Indians during the Depression, so it also shelters Sterling and Seese from the violence of their lives. Seese is attempting to escape from a vicious cycle of drugs and violence, while Sterling is simply looking for a place of

refuge after being banished by his tribe. Both these characters find a measure of protection and friendship in the rural landscape of a desert ranch. Similarly in *Gardens in the Dunes*, the isolation of the desert conceals Indigo and her family from the intrusion of white settlers and prevents their relocation to government reservations. This space also offers a final refuge for the Indians as, at the novel's close, we see Indigo and Sister Salt retreat from the modern world and return to their gardens in the desert.

In contrast to the rural landscape which offers shelter and protection, Silko's urban environments are sites of decadence and depravity representing the destructive materialism of EuroAmerican society. In *Ceremony*, the Indians of Gallup are assigned a subservient role, routinely exploited and dismissed by white society until ceremonial time when they are displayed like objects to the tourists. The city in *Almanac* represents the influence of a white supremacist society and is the site of unrestrained depravity and greed where judges and police chiefs preside over and facilitate corruption and violence. Similarly in *Gardens*, the huge cities which Indigo encounters on her travels represent the wealth and glamour of the modern age. Magnificent parties, elaborate clothes and excessively rich food represent the decadence of European society. Shanty towns which sprang up as a result of the railroad and dam construction are also sites of prostitution, gambling and binge drinking. These towns are the source of the unrestrained corruption and violence which Silko associates with contemporary society.

However, these urban centres also contain the potential for renewal and redemption. In Silko's novels, landscapes which contemporary society would regard as wastelands are revealed to be sites of transformation and regeneration. These spaces are the liminal landscapes of the border region, home to Anzaldúa's threshold beings, *los atravesados*. [73] The outskirts of the town where "Gallup keeps

[73] In *Borderlands/ La Frontera,* Anzaldúa identifies *los atravesados* as "the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal'" (3).

Indians until ceremonial time" is the dumping ground of white society (117). Yet this is the place in which Betonie, as one of these threshold beings, lives in order to "keep track of the people" and it is here that Tayo begins his healing ceremony (117). Similarly in *Almanac of the Dead*, revolution and, as Silko argues, regeneration begins with the army of the homeless who have recognised "the danger from within" (393). The characters of Roy and Clinton represent the dispossessed who, according to Silko, will become the redeemers of social order. Although they come from different backgrounds, these characters have established a common identity through their struggles with a society which has rejected them and consigned them to its marginal spaces. However, it is this very marginality which proves to be their salvation: "saved from total corruption by the marginalization that has been thrust upon them, various individuals and groups are rising up and converging, nourished by the very injustice that was designed to starve them" (St Clair 152-3). Characters in *Almanac* are linked through dreams and stories, establishing a range of cross cultural connections representing a borderlands identity which is based on commonality of social position, identity and history. What these characters have in common is their marginal status; they are the homeless, jobless, downtrodden, weak, and dispossessed. Even the Mexicans who march north are defined by their marginality to the dominant U.S. culture. According to Michelle Jarman, *Almanac* analyses the "hybrid nature of social and individual identities as a means of investigating the liminal spaces of *La Frontera*" (147). These characters are the mestizaje inhabitants of Anzaldúa's border world who, through the formation of a common identity, are marching to take back the territory which, as inhabitants of the borderlands, rightly belongs to them.

The subject matter of *Almanac* is deliberately graphic, characterising the harsh reality of borderlands life. As Anderson attests,

> *Almanac of the Dead* goes places that *Ceremony* and *Storyteller* simply do not go, and it goes there as a hungry, even monstrous text, a 'maelstrom' that seems to have an undisciplined

> agency of its own. In other words, it is able and transgressively willing to cycle, to turn and return, even to risk the creation of monsters- or the transmutation of itself, and perhaps its author, into monsters. (188)

Silko presents a world destroyed by corruption, depravity and violence. Although geographically centred on Tucson, the novel weaves a complex web of characters and locations which spans nearly five hundred years of oppression and violence, culminating in an era defined as *The Reign of Death Eye Dog.* According to Silko, this time period is characterised by excessive brutality and depravity resulting from centuries of violence and disharmony. *Almanac of the Dead* portrays a society so corrupt that it is destroying itself from within. Characters inhabiting this world are inevitably a reflection of the corrupt society in which they live. Control seems to be in the hands of drug addicts and baby killers, while gun runners and sexual perverts hold key positions of power. Government officials who should be figures of law and order represent perversion and violence. The novel's most extreme characters include Judge Arne, who facilitates bribery and corruption in his court while also enjoying sexual relations with his bassett hounds, and the Police Chief, who runs a lucrative pornography business where he allows the torture and mutilation of suspects to be filmed. As St Clair attests, "In a commodified and atomised society where malevolence and depravity are prerequisites to power and status, the highest and noblest social institutions are inevitable as corrupt as the men who control them" (145).

The character of Beaufrey has made his fortune smuggling, pushing drugs and also from the sale of torture pornography on the international market. In the novel, Silko describes how "the most bloody spectacles of torture did not upset [Beaufrey] because he could not be seriously touched by the contortions and screams of imperfectly drawn cartoon victims" (533). Realising from a young age that "he had always loved himself, only himself" Beaufrey recognises the power this gives him over the people in his life (533). He uses drugs to enslave his boyfriend David as well as David's lovers Eric

and Seese. The fact that his boyfriend has other lovers is irrelevant to Beaufrey until Seese becomes pregnant with David's child. Recognising that David could possibly grow to care for the baby, Beaufrey kidnaps and murders it, presenting David with photos of its mutilated corpse. When both Eric and David commit suicide, he makes a fortune presenting pictures of their corpses as art. In contrast to the novel's other mercenary characters, Beaufrey regards his work as a game which he enjoys immensely. When he has finished 'playing' with David and Eric, he calmly moves on to his next victim. The total indifference with which this character regards torture, mutilation and murder represents the venality which permeates every aspect of Silko's novel.

When *Almanac* was first published, reviewers were shocked at the violence and perversion which seemed to permeate every aspect of the society Silko represents. Once again the focus fell on *what* Silko wrote rather that *how* she wrote. Critics seemed unable to move beyond the novel's content to locate the deeper meaning of the text. One reviewer dismissed it as an "unholy mess" and harshly criticised Silko's creation of a novel "filled with a thoroughly distasteful collection of society's misfits" (Karem 199). These adverse reviews are the product of a society which still clings to the primitivist notion of the noble Native and which expects Silko, as spokesperson of this race, to give us insight into this way of life. This attitude is reflected in the positive reactions of reviewers who regarded the text as travel literature and virtually ignored its disturbing content and complex form: "Silko's desert wasteland aches with pain and deprivation, and her sufferers hate all others who suffer. What keeps you reading is the hum of magic within the arid passages" (qtd. in Karem 199).

Such reviews emphasise the 'Native' characteristics of Silko's writing, at the expense of place-based elements. A re-consideration of Silko's work in a regional context presents new insights into her oeuvre. As a New Mexico novelist, Silko exhibits that same sense of place which is evident in the work of Oliver La Farge, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Willa Cather and, as the following chapter will illustrate,

Simon Ortiz. Seen in this light, it is also evident that *Almanac* confirms Anzaldúa's borderlands as a war zone where "tension grips…like a virus. Ambivalence and unrest reside there and death is no stranger" (4). Although Silko locates Tucson as the centre of her novel, similarities with border cities such as Ciudad Juarez or Tijuana are easily apparent. The violence which infects these cities is characteristic of the violence which, according to Anzaldúa and Silko, dominates life on the U.S.-Mexico border and profoundly impacts the borderlands which surround it.

As this chapter demonstrates, classification of Silko solely as a Native American writer is an oversimplification of an oeuvre which is centred on but not confined to Native American concerns. Aspects of Silko's writing have as much, if not more, in common with the work Anglo authors from northern New Mexico than with that of Indian writers from different geographical locations. Arguably, then, this should encourage the interpretation of Silko's writing within a regional context. Texts such as *Ceremony*, *Storyteller*, *Almanac of the Dead* and *Gardens in the Dunes* depict the diversity of cultures which inhabit Southwestern spaces, and, in doing so, urge a redefinition of the geographic, political and cultural borders of this region. By representing the liminal spaces of the Southwest borderlands as a cultural centre, Silko's novels subvert a monocultural national narrative, and draw new attention to the ways in which the Southwest creatively complicates the national imaginary.

Chapter Five

Re-telling and Re-interpreting from Colonised Spaces: Simon Ortiz's Revision of Southwestern Literary Identity

Like Silko, Simon Ortiz has for the most part been read within the tradition of Native American writing. However, again like Silko, his work may fruitfully be re-examined in a regional context, and in dialogue with that of other writers from the region, from the modernist generation to the present. This chapter seeks to reposition Ortiz, and to suggest significant commonalities, in particular, between his writing and that of Oliver La Farge. Locating Ortiz's writing within the framework of place-based literature prompts a re-evaluation of New Mexico literary studies, one which forces us to consider the implications of this regional literature for what may be defined as 'American' literature as a whole.

Ortiz's position in the Southwest borderlands, combined with the political nature of his work, has led him to be classified as an activist poet. His work *From Sand Creek,* which the poet described as an examination of "how to deal with history", won the Pushcart Prize for Poetry in 1981 (Preface). This work depicts one of the most infamous events in Indian history and illustrates themes prevalent in Ortiz's work, most notably the 'discovery' of the American continent and the far-reaching and ongoing implications for its Indigenous inhabitants. In the collection *A Circle of Nations: Voices and Visions of American Indians*, Ortiz stated that he began a career in writing in order to "use my stories and poems to help Indian people come into visible and meaningful existence within a nation that denied their lives and culture" (25). As an Indian poet, Ortiz has been associated with the Native American Renaissance of the 1960s and 70s. Together with N Scott Momaday, Vine Deloria Jr and Leslie Marmon Silko, he has played a significant role in the creation, recognition, and establishment of Native American writing as an autonomous literary tradition.

However, since the publication of his earliest work, academic criticism has focused almost entirely on Ortiz's poetry, while other aspects of his writing have largely been ignored. This lacuna is significant when one considers that many of Ortiz's celebrated poetry collections actually combine poems with other genres such as the autobiographical essay, academic article and short story. As a fiction writer and essayist from northern New Mexico, Ortiz also engages in his work with controversial issues such as "the nature and consequences of cross cultural encounters" (Widget 24). Thus, the prevalent view of Ortiz as solely a Native poet is a flawed categorisation of his work. In many instances, Ortiz's fiction has been overlooked in favour of the work of more 'stereotypical' Native writers such as Silko and Momaday. However, Ortiz is influential when considered in a regional context. One of the first Native writers to speak openly about border experience, exploitation and racism, his work has significant implications for contemporary theoretical paradigms emerging in border and postcolonial theory. As a Native author from northern New Mexico, Ortiz's writing provides a Southwestern perspective, one which challenges the hegemonic patterns that continue to identify Southwestern writing as peripheral to the American canon. In presenting his readers with a Native view of Southwestern culture and society from within the multicultural region of northern New Mexico Ortiz contests the yet prevalent notion of America as a monocultural nation and American literature as white.

Ortiz's writing also highlights the issue of self-determination in contemporary Native writing. His poems, essays and short stories challenge the yet widespread assumption that Native society is subservient to white. Refuting society's notion of Indian culture as a minority, Ortiz uses his writing to contest the marginality of Indian literature. By reposition Native perspective as centre in his work, Ortiz forces his readers to re-evaluate issues of dominance and subservience and, in doing so, reassess their perception of Indian culture in contemporary society. As a full blooded member of Acoma

Pueblo, possibly the oldest continuously inhabited site in the U.S., Ortiz declares that his worldview and his writing are primarily influenced by this culture's identity and historical experience: "To a great extent my writing has a natural political-cultural bent simply because I was nurtured intellectually and emotionally within an atmosphere of Indian resistance" (Riley 36). Influenced by the writers of the Beat generation, particularly Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder, Ortiz focuses on the idea of "writing from and about experience and writing as experience" (*Woven Stone* 19). The work of writers such as Jack Kerouac convinced Ortiz that it was acceptable to write from his Native perspective, and also to use his own writing as an experience in itself, a way of identifying and articulating the sense of injustice he felt as an Indian in American society. The notion of subversion and rejection of mainstream ideals embraced by these Beat writers appealed to a young Ortiz who realised that "as an Acoma person, I also had something important, unique, and special to say". (*Woven Stone* 19). As Kimberly Blaeser attests "Most, if not all of Ortiz's publications across the genres also clearly have supra-literary intentions, working as they do toward challenging the philosophical underpinning of colonialism, raising awareness of contemporary justice issues, and hearkening after the healing associated with ancient ritualized practices" (Berry Brill de Ramirez 215). Ortiz's work, which has spanned decades, consistently argues for the continuance of Native culture in general and the oral tradition in particular.

Ortiz's youth was dominated by songs and stories recounted in the Acoma language, which was "a vital link to the continuance of the hanoh, the people, as a whole" (*Woven Stone* 5). However, English was the language spoken at the Bureau of Indian Affairs School at McCarthys and it rapidly replaced the traditional language of the Acoma people. Ortiz's writing illustrates, at a very basic level, this tension between the traditional and the contemporary. In his introduction to *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*, Ortiz acknowledges that although "there are many Indian people, who did not read, write and speak in English- some preferring not to deal with the baggage…I

chose to be an Indian writer using the English language since that was the predominant one Indian people faced" (xvii). Ortiz's writing combines modern prose with traditional chants, illustrating the dual influence of tribal heritage and modern education. His work *Out There Somewhere* exemplifies this influence. This text is a study in cultural mediation and combines modern political poems and prose pieces with traditional Native chants written in the Acoma language. Ortiz's article "Song, Poetry and Language: Expression and Perception, A Statement on Poetics and Language" also engages with the tension inherent in modern Native writing, containing an analysis of the Acoma language and the weight of culture behind it. In this essay, Ortiz recalls asking his father to translate a phrase from Acoma into English and to break it down into sounds and syllables in order to better understand it. When his father tells him that it doesn't break down into anything but is a complete entity in its own linguistic context, Ortiz realises that his formal education has complicated his comprehension of traditional language and culture. In order to understand his father's song, he must acknowledge that "language is perception of experience as well as expression" (77).

In his work, Ortiz examines the duality of influence which has shaped contemporary Native literature. Many of his poems, essays and short stories illustrate the violent history suffered by Natives at the hands of EuroAmerican society while also addressing the issues faced by Indian people in the modern world. Like Silko, Ortiz uses his writing to challenge stereotypical notions of English language dominance and of contemporary culture in general. As Berry Brill de Ramirez notes,

> By inserting the language of his people and his ancestry into his oral presentations and his writing before audiences and readers who are, by and large, unfamiliar with any of the pueblo languages, Ortiz takes a bold linguistic turn that categorically calls into question the primacy of English as the language of the United States and as *the* language of American Letters. (27)

Thus, the very structure of Ortiz's work challenges mainstream perceptions of Native American literature and has contributed significantly to his burgeoning reputation as an activist poet, political writer and spokesperson for the Native American population.

Although Ortiz chooses to write in English and utilises western literary forms such as the short story and essay, his work is profoundly influenced by the oral tradition and the Acoma community in which he was raised. In the preface to his short story collection, *Men on the Moon*, published in 1999, Ortiz asserts that "To me, identity is dependent on story. And to Native people whose aboriginal or indigenous identity is precolonial…oral narrative is 'story'" (ix). Such remarks illustrate the significant impact that the oral tradition exerts, not only over Ortiz's writing, but also on his personal life and sense of identity.

In the introductory essay to his collection *Woven Stone*, Ortiz states that "the oral tradition of Native American people is based upon spoken language, but it is more than that too. Oral tradition is inclusive, it is the actions, behaviour, relationships, practices throughout the whole social, economic, and spiritual life process of people… the oral tradition is the consciousness of the people" (7). This illustrates Ortiz's conviction that the oral tradition represents Native culture in its entirety and that tribal stories form a link between the past, present and future. In the same way that Silko uses her writing to ensure the survival of Laguna history and culture, Ortiz embraces the written word as a way of connecting the past and the present and ensuring continuance into the future. He claims that his youthful experiences of tribal stories "tied me into the communal body of my heritage. When I learned to read and write, I felt those [tribal] stories continued somehow in the new language and use of the new language and they would never be lost, forgotten, and finally gone. They would always continue" (*Woven Stone* 9). Ortiz's knowledge and understanding of the Acoma stories establishes his identity as a tribal person and provides a link to the landscape and the culture in which he was raised.

Like other New Mexico writers, in particular Silko, Ortiz's work engages with theories of place-based literature, as he configures notions of selfhood and identity in relation to the natural landscape which surrounds him. As Tom Lynch asserts in *Xerophilia: Ecocritical Explorations in Southwestern Literature*, for writers of the Southwest the desert landscape "is not a challenge to their identity, it is their identity" (94). This is an appropriate characterisation of Ortiz who consistently locates his identity within the natural terrain of New Mexico. In an interview with Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez, he acknowledges the significant influence the Southwest landscape exerts over its inhabitants:

> I would say in the Southwest, where I come from, stone is probably the main and the most significant and noticeable thing visually. It is the metaphor for what the Southwest is culturally. Going back and restoring culture and history of the people, stone is such an element, a cultural element in how people relate to stone. Stone comes from the original creation. (119)

Ortiz constantly affirms that the natural landscape in which he was raised has irrevocably influenced and shaped him as a Native American and as a Southwestern writer. In *Out There Somewhere* poems like "Mountains All Around" and "Kaweshtima Sharing its Existence with Me and Me Sharing My Existence with Kaweshtima" illustrate the strong ties he feels to the Southwestern landscape. In "Mountains All Around", he states that "Whenever I need to locate myself / I look for the mountains I know" (89). In her essay "Simon Ortiz: Writing Home", Patricia Clark Smith observes that the landscape of Ortiz's Southwest is 'storied', thus characterising the integral connection between Indigenous cultures and the Southwestern landscape:

> The monoliths rising from the plain surrounding Acoma all have stories attached to them. Here a giant pair of stone lovers yearn toward one another for an embrace; there is the rock where Grandmother Spider let Coyote Woman fall to her death, where she might have lain forever if

> Skeleton-Fixer had not come along in time to rearrange her scattered bones and sing her back to life. (*Cambridge Companion* 223)

This issue is also explored by Luci Tapahonso who asserts that Indian stories are particularly important because they illustrate the Native connection between place and consciousness. Tapahonso's own story "Just Past Shiprock" illustrates this, as she describes a tale told by her own cousin during a family outing. In this tale, a newborn baby dies and is buried in the desert. The cousin connects the incidents of the story to the known landscape, relating how "They said a long time ago, something happened where those rocks are", pointing to the rock formation they are passing (5). According to the cousin, whenever they pass that particular place, the family must remember the baby who died and must be very quiet as "Those rocks might look like any others, but they're special" (6). Tapahonso relates how this story has been told many times and has become connected to a particular location in the Southwestern landscape. According to her, this is a regular practice among Native cultures in the Southwest and a land that may seem "arid and forlorn to the newcomer is full of stories which hold the spirits of the people, those who live here today and those who lived centuries and other worlds ago" (6).

The Native practice of portraying the natural landscape as a living entity is also evident in the work of both Ortiz and Silko. In his short story "What Indians Do", Ortiz recounts his sense of outrage when he discovers a workshop where timber is mass produced for an American populace. Describing how the wood "cried against the steel" that hacked it to pieces, Ortiz depicts the sense of frustration and anguish he felt when thinking of the complete indifference modern society has show towards the destruction of the natural world (109). Rescuing one of the pieces of wood about to be thrown out as scrap, Ortiz states:

> I don't think anybody noticed me hugging that piece of wood as I walked up 18th street. I don't think anybody noticed the forests in me, the quiet footsteps I have taken in the Rockies and the Smokies. I don't think anybody knew the memory of touch in my hands of the trunks of great firs and pines and spruces.
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> The smell of sap drove me careening over broken sidewalks, made me so silently angry my thoughts refused to make any sense of that afternoon… Looking so hard for forests and clean and gentle mountain wind, I snuck up 18th street, a memory of white-pine needles cradled in my arms like a baby. (136-137)

Silko relates a similar incident in *Gardens in the Dunes* where white characters devastate the natural landscape for their own aesthetic appreciation. In this text Silko describes Indigo's horror as she witnesses two huge copper beech trees being ripped up and transplanted to another part of the grounds so that guests at a party might better admire them:

> Indigo was shocked at the sight: wrapped in canvas and big chains on the flat wagon was a great tree lying helpless, its leaves shocked limp, followed by its companion; the stain of damp earth like dark blood seeped through the canvas. As the procession inched past, Indigo heard low creaks and groans- not sounds of the wagons but from the trees. (183)

Such portrayals of the natural landscape as a living entity reflect the important role it plays in Native culture. Evelina Zuni Lucero notes in *Simon Ortiz: A Poetic Legacy of Indigenous Continuance*, that Indian homelands are "infused with a sense of the sacred in the land: specific mountains, mesas, rivers, lakes, and springs designated as sacred sites and places of power" (7). Clark Smith has also noted this, claiming that the Rio San José is significant to Acoma culture and to Ortiz's writing:

> The Rio San José arises in the Zuni Mountains, West of Acoma, and its course marks the way home for the Shiwaana, the western-dwelling ancestor spirits of the Acoma. The moist breath

> and spirit of people's lives, expelled at the moment of death, forms the big weather-bearing clouds. The Shiwaana travel back to the Pueblo by the same route the river follows in order to bless their old home and replenish the *Chunah* [Rio San José] with their gift of rain. Religious officials journey to shrines where they honor the Shiwaana and ask them to return; hence, the title of Ortiz's first book of poems, *Going for the Rain*. (*Cambridge Companion* 223)

This interpretation of the landscape as sacred is a common theme in both Silko and Ortiz's work and stems from a Native belief in the co-dependent relationship between humans and the natural world. In his introduction to *Speaking for the Generations: Native Writers on Writing*, Ortiz acknowledges the vital connection between the natural elements of the Southwestern landscape and the Acoma tribe:

> Believing the Chunah is more than a water source is an integral feature of an Acoma Pueblo belief that absolutely accepts- and therefore insists on the maintenance and continuance of – the reciprocal relationship that we as a human culture have with the natural environment in which we live…The water in the Chunah, the land that the water nourishes and is nourished by, and all other life elements, items, features, and aspects of Creation make up what we know to be Existence. This is what I mean when I say that the Chunah is more than just a water source, and as a writer this is what I try to make apparent in my writing because my own writing comes from a similar dynamic of reciprocity shared by the land, water, and human culture. (xv)

In an interview with Laura Coltelli Ortiz acknowledges the vital connection between Native and landscape asserting that "place is who you are in terms of your identity" (105).[74] Although to a lesser extent than Native writers, Anglo authors from New Mexico also experienced a vital connection with the landscape which provided a refuge from the corrupting influence of modern society. Ortiz

[74]This remark bears a striking similarity to Silko's assertion that "This place I am from is everything I am as a writer and human being", quoted in the previous chapter. Tapahonso also makes a similar statement in her first book of poetry "One More Shiprock Night".

recognises this commonality in New Mexico writing, acknowledging that writers from the region "have a kind of consciousness that leads us to share identifiable images, metaphors that could only be Southwestern geographically. This, in terms of an identifiable place. makes us Southwestern writers" (Dunaway, *An Interview* 16). Unlike La Farge, who expressed reservations about regional writing as a genre, Ortiz embraces the notion that his writing is part of a regional body of Southwestern literature. In a review written for the *American Indian Quarterly*, Ortiz states that "for several decades, literary regionalism seemed to have a bad or mundane flavour, that is, the Great American Novel was not a regional work. In order for any literary work to deserve attention as a great work, it had to be homogenic, that is, in a sense it had to be more a great 'white novel' or almost so" (123). In his work, Ortiz challenges the still prevalent assumption that regional literature must necessarily be categorised as ethnic, and therefore minority, literature. Instead, by drawing similarities between his own work and that of other authors from the same region, he challenges a canon which, despite obvious evidence that America has evolved into a multi-cultural nation, still equates American literature with white literature.

As a Native writer from northern New Mexico, Ortiz conceives of this region as a space where diverse cultures experience constant interaction. This cultural blending is evident in the multicultural literary consciousness which pervades his work and the work of other New Mexico authors: "It's very apparent that the Southwest's multicultural, multilinguistic, multiethnic populations and traditions provide a consciousness that other regions may not have" (*This is about Vision* 122). Thus, although Ortiz identifies himself predominantly as an Indian author, he does acknowledge that the cultural diversity of the Southwest landscape has significantly influenced his work. Like Silko, Ortiz's position in the geographic borderlands of the American Southwest places him at a cultural intersection which has had an immense impact on his identity as a Native American and as a writer. His writing supports the work of theorists such as Mary Louise Pratt and Gloria Anzaldúa who posit that cultural contact

zones are sites of contestation and fusion where distinct cultures meet. Ortiz's short stories, in particular, focus on these cultural encounters and the consequences for those involved.

As a genre of writing, the short story has been hailed by Frank O' Connor as a "national art form" of America (21). Virtually invented, and certainly perfected in the U.S. during the 1820s and 1830s, the short story has been utilised by authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James and Ernest Hemingway.[75] Historically the short story has been treated as tangential, seen as something between a lyrical poem and a fully developed novel, and therefore is often analysed in conjunction with these genres. However, recent academic criticism has focused on the short story as a distinct genre, analysing its characterisation, purpose and even its content.[76] In his earlier landmark study *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story*, Frank O' Connor identifies and discusses properties of the short story genre as distinct from its relative, the fully developed novel. According to O' Connor, the main difference between the two literary forms is "not so much formal…as ideological" (6).[77] In contrast to the novel, which can reflect "the totality of a human life", the short story is by definition, short, and so reflects a different frame of reference (7). As such, this genre is often plot driven, containing a "single guiding idea or mood…[which] achieves a perceptible overall aesthetic coherence" (Scofield 5).

If one examines the development of the short story genre, it is not surprising that it has emerged as a popular literary form in American society in general and Native American writing in particular. Its initial popularity among American writers can be attributed to the lack of a historical consciousness in nineteenth century America. Conceivably, a society built around the exploration and colonisation of new territory found more compatibility with an art form which demanded no great construction and

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[75] Indeed, Poe was the first to recognise and publicise the short story as a distinct genre.

[76] Significant sources include Charles E May's *The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice*, Martin Scofield's *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story* and Eugene current-García's *What is the short story?: Case studies in the Development of a Literary Form.*

[76]In his satirical work *The Devil's Dictionary*, Ambrose Bierce defines the novel as "A short story padded".

development of historical context, but rather focused on narrative and event. The success of the genre on the American continent can also be attributed to its ability to "give brief and vivid glimpses of new and 'exotic' places and ways of life… which awakened the imagination to new scenes and new experiences without subjecting readers to the extended treatment of a novel" (Scofield 8). During the late nineteenth century, America suffered a massive influx of immigrants from places such as Ireland, China and Eastern Europe, entire races of people destined to remain perpetual outsiders to the dominant American culture. The short story, in particular, emerged as a popular art form among these ethnic minorities for, as Victoria Kennefick states, "The fragmented nature of the genre itself seemed to reflect the disparate nature of the American experience" (34).

The development of American culture and civilisation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resulted in the formation of what Frank O' Connor refers to as "submerged population groups" those who existed on the fringes of mainstream society. According to O' Connor, the short story emerged as the appropriate form of expression for these minorities, as "Always in the short story there is this sense of outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of Society…as a result there is in the short story at its most characteristic something we do not often find in the novel- an intense awareness of human loneliness" (5). As such, the short story often functions as a microcosm of American society, witnessed from the point of view of the ethnic minorities which inhabit its peripheries. As Lucy Ferriss asserts, the short story presents "fragmentation as an accurate model of the world", a feature which may explain its popularity among writers of indigenous descent, including those from the Southwest region (178).

Martin Scofield posits that early contact between settlers and Indigenous tribes actually influenced the formation of the short story genre, suggesting that through this contact, "certain stories found their way into mainstream culture" (3). It is certainly possibly to draw a connection between the traditional

moral tales of Brer Rabbit and the Native stories of the trickster Coyote. The popularity of the short story genre among Indian writers challenges mainstream perception that poetry is the dominant art form of this ethnic group. Many Native writers, Ortiz among them, have acknowledged that they find poetry easier to write than prose due to its lyrical similarity to the oral tradition.[78] However, Ortiz develops and extends this lyricism into his prose, creating short stories which reflect his Native view of the world and challenge popular perceptions of conventional 'American' writing. According to David Dunaway, Ortiz's poems are "brief stories which form an epic of endless travel throughout an America burdened with a feeling of being lost at home" (150). This, I would argue, is also true when applied to his short stories, which examine in depth what it means to be considered an ethnic minority in America.

As Scofield notes, "the short story is notable for the leading part it has played in the fictional treatment of ethnic groups within American society: disseminating ideas of cultural diversity and bringing these groups into various relations to each other and to the often challenged concept of a literary 'mainstream'" (9). When viewed in this context, the work of Native writers such as Ortiz becomes significant in its implications for the American literary canon as a whole. Ethnic difference plays a vital role in Ortiz's fiction, thus challenging popular perception of Native culture's marginality in western society. Various stories from his collections *Fightin'* and *Men on the Moon* force the reader to re-examine and re-interpret events, activities and customs from a Native perspective.

A particular example is found in the short story "Something's going on", which depicts the interrogation of a Native woman by American police. The woman's husband is suspected of murder and so a white policeman questions his wife about his disappearance. One might expect that the Indian

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[78] In an interview with Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez, Ortiz acknowledged that "Poetry is intuitive; you are very spontaneous with poetry. I don't really "think" when poetry comes about until afterward when I make revisions…Prose demands more study and extended detailed attention. This is not to say that poetry doesn't require and demand that kind of detailed attention, but it seems like prose requires it more fully. It's more work to write prose" (*Poetic Legacy* 111). Silko also admits that Among the Pueblo people, a written speech or statement is highly suspect because the true feelings of the speaker remain hidden as he reads words that are detached from the occasion and the audience"(qtd. in Brown 173).

woman should occupy the subservient position, as she submits to the intrusion of the white policemen who question her in a language she does not fully understand. However, Ortiz inverts this placing the intruding policemen in the role of the 'other'. Throughout the interrogation, the Indian woman converses with the governor of the Pueblo in their Native language, a fact which annoys the policemen and excludes them from this interaction. To the intruding whites, the Indians provide only perfunctory answers until the frustrated lawmen give up the attempt to communicate and leave. Throughout this encounter it is the policemen who are intruders on the Indian world of the story. Ortiz uses this technique throughout his short story collections, as Native characters occupy the dominant role with representatives of western society being consigned to the marginal / other status. In doing so, he forces western society to reconfigure its perception of what constitutes an ethnic 'minority', and argues for a re evaluation of the American literary canon which continues to assign Native literature a peripheral role in contemporary American writing.

The story "Men on the Moon" depicts an old Indian's experience of the Apollo space mission, as witnessed through the modern medium of television. When Faustin's daughter gives him a television set for Father's Day, he is introduced to a whole new world. He can watch wrestling matches with his grandson and even sees the 'Mericanos' fly to the moon. Ortiz uses this story to criticise another form of American expansionism: that of space exploration, and the American desire to discover, explore and conquer new territories. When the old Indian expresses confusion about the reasons for the space mission his grandson tells him that the white men "say they will use it to better mankind…And to learn more about the universe in which we live" (11-12). Criticising the exploitation and self promotion inherent in exploration, Ortiz describes how the scientists "claim they don't know enough and need to know more and for certain" (12).

When his grandson tells him that the Americans are looking for knowledge on the moon, Faustin wonders "if the men had run out of places to look for knowledge on the earth" (20).

Rather than emphasising the scientific achievement of the moon landing, this story suggests that the modern search for knowledge is misplaced; instead of looking at the world around them, the scientists search for meaning on other planets. When Faustin learns that the Mericanos hope to find out "where everything began and how everything was made on their trip to the moon, he is incredulous and asks his grandson "Do they say why they need to know where everything began? Hasn't anyone ever told them?" (25). Ortiz does not emphasise the Indian's ignorance of the modern world in this story, but rather suggests that Native traditions and perceptions have much to teach contemporary society. The alternate view of Native culture presented in this story encourages readers to re-examine the hegemonic patterns which have historically defined Native culture in the American Southwest.

This issue is also examined in the story "To Change in a Good Way", which depicts the friendship between members of an Indian family from Laguna Pueblo and a white family from Oklahoma.[79] The two men, Bill and Pete, are employed by the same mining company and quickly become friends. When Bill's brother Slick is killed in Vietnam, he struggles to find meaning in this sudden death. At the funeral he is frustrated by his relatives' feeble attempts to explain that "Someone had to make the sacrifice for freedom of democracy and all that" (11). When Pete learns of the tragedy, he presents Bill with traditional Indian gifts to mark the passing of a loved one. He gives corn, a plant sacred to Native culture due to the range of its practical and religious uses. The gift of this plant demonstrates the Native belief that "life will keep on, your life will keep on. Just like Slick will be planted again. He'll be like that, like seed planted, like corn seed, the Indian corn. But you and Ida, your life will go on" (10). Pete also offers a cornhusk bundle "for Slick, for his travel from this life among us to another place of

[79] Ortiz renamed this story "To Change Life in a Good Way" in his later collection *Men on the Moon*.

being" (10). The presentation of these gifts and the beliefs associated with them encourages Bill to see life from a new perspective. The emblems of Pete's culture show him that life will continue and that his brother has found peace. Thus, Bill's outlook on life has been completely altered by his friendship with Pete. This story illustrates a different perspective of cultural contact. Rather than the Indian being altered and 'improved' by the interaction, it is the white man who is transformed by the exchange.

Oritz's challenge to the hegemonic perceptions of Southwestern culture is also evident in various essays which offer a revision of the history of cultural contact. In his essay "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism", published in 1981, Ortiz argues that the Indian culture was not extinguished by European invasion but rather adapted to it, incorporating elements of the invading culture into popular tribal practices. Using religion as an example, he illustrates how many religious practices, brought to the Southwest by the invading Spanish, were adopted by the Pueblo tribes. He claims that when Catholic rituals are celebrated in the Acoma community, they become part of that community and, as a result are inevitably altered: "celebration speaks of the creative ability of Indian people to gather in many forms of the socio-political colonizing force which beset them and to make these forms meaningful in their own terms" (*Towards* 8). Thus, Spanish practices have not influenced or eliminated Acoma religion but instead, by being exposed to tribal ritual and culture, have been transformed into something that is unique to the Southwest region.[80]

In her article "The Santos of New Mexico", Luhan makes a similar assertion about the mission architecture of the Southwest. Although the missionaries "carried along to the new world their memories of form and design" Luhan asserts that a prolonged presence in Native territory led to the

[80] A primary example of this are the Penitentes, believed to be descended from the Flagellantes, a religious sect which flourished in Europe during the middle ages. The exact origins of the Penitente religion are much debated. However, it is thought that the practices of this society were introduced during the early colonial period and after dying out in parts of Mexico the sect flourished and evolved in rural parts of New Mexico which were cut off from civilisation.

evolution of these designs to emulate Indian dwellings more suited to the landscape (127). According to Luhan, the Spanish priests "found the Indians living in the most practical houses; thick walled boxes of mud, warm in the winter and cool in the summer; and they quickly built themselves the same kind of homes. Thus the Spanish Mission architecture evolved- not very Spanish" (127). Willa Cather also examines this two way influence in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. In this novel, Cather describes how a prolonged residence in the Southwest has altered the Catholic priests, many of whom become half pagan, combining the conventions of Catholicism with the nature based religions of the Native cultures surrounding them. The protagonist of the novel is also affected by the diversity of cultural influence, so that he grows into his new environment, adapting his beliefs and altering his religious practices. Thus, Luhan Cather and Ortiz posit that the influence and adaptation of cultures in the Southwest was a two way process, resulting in the formulation of a distinct Southwestern identity.

In "Towards a National Indian Literature", Ortiz actively refutes the process of 'othering' which would assign Indigenous cultures a submissive role. Like Silko, Ortiz is familiar with the dominant paradigm of Native/white relations which consigns Indians to a marginal or 'other' status. In an autobiographical essay entitled "The Language we Know", Ortiz recalls his initial perception of this issue when his family was temporarily relocated to Arizona: "Although I perceived there was not much difference between *them* and *us* in certain respects, there was a distinct feeling that we were not the same either" (*Growing up Native American* 34).

Ortiz's conception of the divide between cultures is further emphasised by the common Acoma phrase 'Gaimuu Mericano', which expresses how fortunate it is to be a white American. This phrase illustrates the colonialist mindset imposed on Indigenous cultures which, again, cedes a privileged position to whites. Ortiz rejects this dominant ideology by arguing that the Pueblo tribes of the Southwest had a direct influence on the cultures which invaded their lands.

In the same way that Silko uses the opening map as a disruptive device in *Almanac of the Dead,* Ortiz's essay forces a re-evaluation of the paradigms which have dominated western society's conception of history. In "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism", as in his autobiographical essay "Our Homeland, A National Sacrifice Area", Ortiz presents the Indigenous cultures of America as a powerful force, capable not only of surviving the ravages of colonisation, but of exacting an impact on the colonising nations.

In *Xerophilia*, Lynch suggests that certain similarities are identifiable between writers from the Southwest region. Claiming that "Their perspectives are quite different, their voices quite distinct, their personal orientations strikingly diverse: yet their writings contain important areas of agreement" Lynch acknowledges the regional issues which connect authors from this desert landscape (92). Thus Ortiz's depiction of a multicultural Southwest is comparable to Anzaldúa's portrayal of the region as an 'open wound' which offers unique possibilities. Using language as an example, both authors call for a redefinition of the parameters which define the Southwest as a space of cultural production. In *Borderlands/ La Frontera* Anzaldúa states: "for a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not anglo…what recourse is left to them but to create their own language?" (55). According to Anzaldúa the multicultural nature of the Southwest offers new linguistic opportunities to its inhabitants, encouraging the development of a new language of the borderlands. Like Anzaldúa Ortiz focuses on the liminal, the permeable spaces of the Southwest where unique cultural and linguistic opportunities are available. Unlike other Indian writers who posit that Native culture was forced to adapt and change in order to survive colonisation, Ortiz asserts that this alteration and transformation was a two way process. In the autobiographical *Woven Stone,* Ortiz notes how, although Acoma was the principal language of the Pueblo, "a scattering of English words and phrases

and even Spanish… had been 'Acomized' and incorporated into the native tongue" creating a new language, neither English or Acoma but an amalgamation of both (6). This assertion challenges the predominant assumption of language dominance in Native/white relations and also suggests new ways of viewing the Southwest region as a multicultural space, altered but not subjugated by outside influence.

According to Ortiz, a similar transformative process has characterised the field of Native American literature. Again refusing to consider Native culture as subservient to white he rejects the notion that literature ceases to be Native when it employs western forms. He also refutes the idea that writing in English has led to the permanent loss of Native language and culture. Instead Ortiz argues that through the use of the coloniser's language and literary forms, Native American literature has evolved, thus proving its durability:

> The indigenous peoples of the Americas have taken the languages of the colonisers and used them for their own purposes. Some would argue that this means that Indian people have succumbed or become educated into a different linguistic system and have forgotten or have been forced to forsake their native selves. This is simply not true. Along with their native languages, Indian women and men have carried on their lives and their expression through the use of the newer languages. (*Towards* 10)

For Ortiz, language, literature and Native identity are inextricably linked. In "Towards a National Indian Literature", he asserts that "It is entirely possible for a people to retain and maintain their lives through the use of any language" (10). Thus the choice to converse and write in the language of the coloniser is not an act of subjugation, but of evolution.

This view is also expressed by Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird in *Reinventing the Enemies Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing of North America.* Harjo and Bird acknowledge the struggle

between the traditional and the contemporary, a conflict inherent in Indian writing. However they assert that, by writing and expressing themselves in the coloniser's language, Native writers are not rejecting traditional culture but are ensuring its continuance through contemporary forms. As Harjo asserts,

> When our lands were colonized the language of the colonizer was forced on us. We had to use it for commerce in the new world, a world that evolved through the creation and use of language. It was when we began to create with this new language that we named it ours, made it usefully tough and beautiful. (24)

Although their text focuses on female authors, Harjo and Bird share Ortiz's views of the subversive and transformative nature of Native American literature. Like Ortiz, they refute the notion that Native culture is subservient to EuroAmerican influence: that interaction between these two cultural groups inevitably results in the alteration and subjugation of a Native thought process. Instead, they argue that "in 'reinventing' the English language we will turn the process of colonisation around, and that our literature will be viewed and read as a process of *de*colonisation" (25). According to Ortiz, this process of renewal and evolution has taken place in the Southwest.

The natural landscape of northern New Mexico also plays a prominent role in this aspect of Ortiz's writing. In his short story "To Change in a Good Way", a white woman, Ida, is unable to grow crops in the dry red clay of the Southwest. The only water supply available to her is through the town system which runs dry every summer. As a result she produces only "stunted and wilty looking" corn (7). In contrast, the Native, Mary, draws on the waters of the Rio de San José and succeeds in growing a range of healthy vegetables. On one of their first meetings, Mary offers to help Ida plant and tend her garden, thus enabling her to produce healthy plants.

Again the Native characters occupy the dominant role, teaching foreigners how to survive in the alien climate[81]. Moreover, the landscape in Ortiz's work is not passive but is capable of destroying or sheltering its inhabitants. The representation of landscape as refuge is illustrated in the short story "Kaiser and the War", where the protagonist finds sanctuary in the surrounding hills when white men attempt to draft him into the army. In the same way that Silko's character Tayo escapes to the slopes of Mount Taylor, Kaiser finds refuge in Black Mesa, which, although it is familiar to the local Indians, is impenetrable to white men.

Similarly, in the story "Hiding, West of Here", the natural landscape provides a refuge for both white and Native characters. The white narrator seeks to escape the drudgery of his life and comes to the mountain to 'hide out'. In doing so he witnesses a ceremony performed by Indians who have also come to the mountain seeking isolation. All characters take refuge in the deserted slopes of the mountain. Although the story's narrator is white, he appreciates the power of his surroundings: "It's my time, the mountain at my back, over my shoulder, and I can't hear anything except the wind brushing through the trees and laying unto the cliffs, these here, at my feet. It's my time and the mountain's time" (69). However, it is the Native characters who exhibit a close connection to the natural landscape. Although the narrator does acknowledge that he has witnessed something "fateful", he does not fully comprehend the scene before him (71). He is an outsider, observing ancient rituals intricately bound to the natural environment. However, like the white characters of "To change in a Good Way", he has been altered by the experience. Noting that "I was sort of part of what they were doing, like they wanted me to, even though they didn't know I was there", the narrator feels that he has been changed by his unwitting part in the ancient ritual (71). He senses the "meaning of something" which gives him

[81] La Farge also discusses this issue in "The Bride at Dead Soldier Spring". In this story a white women seeks help from local Indians when her modern appliances break down. The Indians teach her to cook a meal the traditional way and in doing so she realises that she is "entirely happy, in good company, working like a frontier wife" (165).

a sense of peace and connection to the "quiet and the mountain and that praying that had been going on" (71).

The relationship between Native culture and the Southwestern landscape is once again illustrated in Ortiz's description of the Rio de San José. When Ortiz was growing up, this river was an integral part of Acoma culture, and was respected as such. His work *Out There Somewhere* includes a piece entitled "More Than Just a River" which describes not only the practical importance of the river, but its ceremonial significance to the Native people of the Southwest: "it was more than just a water source …it was a life giving water source that came eastward from the direction of Hee-shamih Quuiti in the Zuni mountains to the west and the continental divide, of which the mountains are a part, and the water in the chunah followed the same route the Shiwana did when they, as rain clouds, brought their sacred life-giving moisture to us" (xv). The Rio de San José is not just a water source to the Acoma people, but is connected to their religious beliefs and rituals. At the conclusion of this piece, Ortiz notes that, although he lives in Tucson, the river connects him to his home in Acoma Pueblo, his family who live there, and his traditional heritage: "When I arrive at home I will be assured that memory is more than just memory, just like a river is more than just a river" (110). In this piece, the Rio de San José represents the strength and continuance of the Pueblo culture and illustrates the strong link Ortiz feels to this culture and to the Southwest landscape.

In *Auto/biographical Discourses,* Laura Marcus asserts that "autobiographies are used to support developmental histories of human consciousness" (9). Ortiz engages with the struggle of what it means to be Indigenous in a world dominated by colonising forces. As such, much of his writing is autobiographical in nature. *Woven Stone* concludes with his autobiographical essay "Our Homeland, A National Sacrifice Area". This essay combines Ortiz's childhood memories with a history of the Spanish and American invasion of Southwestern territory and its impact on the Acoma people.

However, far from being an objective account of a historical event, Ortiz re-examines the experience from a Native perspective. He dismisses the Spanish as "mercenaries", "errand boys" and "mystics" while the American was "stealthy in his approach to the people…And so he became a very smart thief" (349).

Ortiz's engagement with the genre of autobiography, or life writing, is distinctive in both its form and content. Just as Silko's *Storyteller* manipulates the autobiographical form by presenting the reader with poems, stories and pictures, Ortiz juxtaposes poetry and prose in order to present an autobiography which reflects a Native worldview. Again like Silko, Ortiz engages with this genre at its most basic level, that of the written word. Replacing the conventional 'I' of personal autobiography with tribal consciousness, he locates the narrative within the collective view of the Pueblo community. His prose poem "For the Children" recalls the 'trading' of Acoma children for bells at San Estevan mission after the 1599 battle at Acoma. The narrative voice in this piece speaks for all Acoma people, who continue to wait in vain for their children's return. This technique is used throughout *Out There Somewhere.* where the traditional 'I' of autobiographical narration is replaced with the 'we' of the Indian people. In the preface Ortiz states:

> Many of us have lived away from our original homelands, cultures and communities in one way or another. Yet at the same time that we are away, we also continue to be absolutely connected socially and culturally to our Native identity. We insist that we as human cultural beings must always have this
>
> connection because it is the way we maintain a Native sense of existence.

Ortiz's writing supports Marcus' theory that autobiographical writing constructs and maintains a sense of identity, in his case one which is located within the Acoma community and in the connection he feels to the Southwest landscape. As he attests: "I've spent a large part of my life away from Acoma

Pueblo…but while I have physically been away from my home area, I have never been away in any absolute way" (*Out There* Preface).

Unlike many of his Native contemporaries, Ortiz identifies strongly with, and locates his work within, a distinctly Indigenous identity.[82] Other writers like Silko, due to their mixed blood ancestry, inhabit the peripheries of both the Indian and the white worlds. As a result, their writing is, at times, diplomatic in its treatment of EuroAmerican society. For example, in *Ceremony,* Silko ultimately assigns blame for violence and corruption of modern society, not to white people, but to mysterious *Gunnadeeyahs*, destroyers and exploiters whose origins predate the existence of white people. Ortiz's work is significantly different. His writing clearly displays resentment towards Native historical experience and frustration with regard to contemporary society's perception of Indian culture. His prose poem entitled "No Risks Allowed Unless Authorized by the American Way of Life and the U.S. Government" illustrates this frustration. This piece describes various encounters with white people who exhibit considerable ignorance towards Indian culture. One white man refers to the Acoma pueblo language as a dialect foreign to American soil, while another woman officiously announces that "Indians are hard to save" (*Out There* 11). The obvious ignorance of white people towards Native culture and identity is something which Ortiz constantly struggles with in his writing. Understandably, much of *Out There Somewhere* is subversive, urging action in response to such blatant condescension:

> What would happen if we put up a sign saying NO ENTRY. PRIVATE
>
> PROPERTY… Signs which state
>
> ATTENTION LIARS, THEIVES AND KILLERS

[82] When giving speeches Ortiz first addresses his audience in the Acoma language and in the traditional Acoma way, giving his lineage through his mothers and fathers clan. Luci Tapahonso also gives a traditional Navajo introduction when speaking publically. Both authors strongly emphasise both their Native heritage and their Native worldview by such introductions.

You have stolen enough land and life.

From here on out, you are no longer allowed access.

We claim back our land and life.

Go away.

Do not enter. (9)

For Ortiz, it is not enough to acknowledge the enduring colonialist mentality which continues to dominate Native/ white relations even into the twenty-first century. His work *Out There Somewhere* contains various poems and prose pieces entitled "Being Poor and Powerless. And Refusing Again" and "Our Children Will Not Be Afraid", thus rejecting a western epistemology which continues to assign American Indians a subservient status.

The destructive influence of white society is further examined in Ortiz's critique of the forceful education of Indian children following their removal from tribal lands and from their families. His short story "Pennstuwehniyaahtsi: Quuti's Story" tells the story of an Indian boy who is stolen from his family by "teachers of the belief of the Mericano" (98). Although these Mericanos attempt to educate Quuti in the white way, he eventually escapes and returns to his people. This story is similar to La Farge's depiction of white education in *The Enemy Gods*. Although La Farge and Ortiz belong to different cultural groups and write in different time periods, their work shares common themes, such as the destructive power of white society and its lasting implications for Indigenous races.

The protagonists of *The Enemy Gods* and "Pennstuwehniyaahtsi: Quuti's Story" experience the same level of degradation and dismissal of their culture at the hands of their white educators whose only aim is to make them useful to American society. In Ortiz's story, the character of Quuti has been trained to be a blacksmith because "the United States needs skilled workers" (100).

Similarly, in *The Enemy Gods,* Myron is encouraged to become a preacher in the hope that he will convert other Indians. Both writers focus on the Indigenous struggle against this forced acculturation. In Quuti's story, Ortiz describes the Indian school experience:

> We could not speak our own languages because that was not allowed and because there was no one else who spoke similarly. We were all different peoples from each other. But we found ways, and we even learned to talk with each other in our own ways even if we would be punished if we got caught. Sometimes I would go to the barn and talk to the cows. They would just look at me of course, but at least I could hear myself and I would not forget the sound of my own language. (99-100)

La Farge describes a comparable brainwashing experience in *The Enemy Gods,* where Indian children are "institutionalized, their Native language half forgotten" (21). In both works, alienation from Indian culture is represented by the loss of Indigenous languages. However, despite rigorous attempts to civilise them, both Myron Begay and Quuti succeed in going 'back to the blanket'. Although this choice is criticised by the representatives of white society in each story, both La Farge and Ortiz represent this return to the traditional in a positive light. Quuti's return journey to his people is successful due to the kindness, generosity and friendship of a strange family he encounters along the way. Similarly, when Myron returns to spend a summer on the reservation, he experiences genuine warmth and comfort at the hands of his aunt and uncle who encourage him to reconnect with his traditional heritage. What both Ortiz and La Farge emphasise in these works is the destructive influence of a white society which demands that Indigenous cultures remain subservient, useful only for the contribution they make towards the improvement of American civilisation.

This manipulation of Indian people is explored again in Ortiz's story "Kaiser and the War", where the protagonist, a Native man, has been drafted into the American Army. The white characters in this

story attempt to bribe Kaiser, informing him that, if he joins the army, they will teach him "how to read and write and give him clothes and money … so that he could start regular as any American" (87). When he is later jailed for attempted murder, Kaiser tells his friends that "he guessed he would be American pretty soon, being that he was around them so much" (95). However, when he returns to the reservation, Kaiser is changed. He does not talk or visit his friends and constantly wears a gray suit "just like he was an American" (97). Permanently altered by his experiences in the white world, Kaiser is unable to readjust to life on the reservation and is forced into a position of liminality, on the periphery of two cultures.

Through this character, Ortiz's engages with the 'reluctant return of the Native' theme which examines the problems faced by Natives who, having served in the American Army, were demobbed and returned to the reservation when the war was over. Born in 1941, Ortiz experienced World War II as a young child. His observations of white society's attitude towards Native veterans, both during and after the war, had a significant influence on Ortiz's writing and on his perception of what it means to be a Native in American society. Many of his short stories engage with this theme, either peripherally or centrally, as in his portrayal of Kaiser. The gray suit represents Kaiser's loyalty to the white world and the identity that he has been forced to assume in his dealings with contemporary society. He may be compared with Silko's character Rocky in *Ceremony.* Enthralled by symbols of white society such as magazines and football scholarships, Rocky believes his teachers who tell him the only thing holding him back from success in the modern world are the "people at home" (51). As a result, he strives to alienate himself from his traditional culture, belittling the views of his elders and constantly attempting to cure his grandmother of her 'superstitions'. Like Kaiser, Rocky yearns to be a true American and believes that his time in the army will enable him to infiltrate this society.

However, both these characters are manipulated and exploited by white society in general and the American Army in particular.

According to Silko and Ortiz, there is no place for these characters in the Native world. This is illustrated by their untimely deaths. Rocky is killed in the war, a victim of a Japanese attack and, although Kaiser returns home alive, his estrangement from his family and friends renders him culturally dead. He exists in a kind of limbo, a half state of being, until his actual death. However, Kaiser's last act is one of defiance. Before his death, he requests that his gray suit be returned to the American government: he returns his identity to the establishment that forced it upon him. This is a significant difference to Rocky who remains dutiful, never rebelling against the army or white society. As such, although both Silko and Ortiz resist the manipulation and destructive influence of white society, Silko's characters remain, for the most part, passive. In contrast, Ortiz focuses on actively undermining this oppression, in his creative and in his critical writing. The characters in his short stories make significant efforts to retake control of their lives after white society has rejected them. In Ortiz's story "Something's Going On", the narrator's father Willie is a Native veteran who, having lost a leg in the war is at the mercy of his white employer. However, rather than endure this degradation, Willie kills his employer and goes on the run. In "The Killing of a State Cop" the character of Felipe recounts how, when a white bartender refused to sell him drink even though he was dressed in his marine uniform, he urinated on the back door of the bar. Later in the story, Felipe and his brother Antonio kill a policeman with whom they have had a long standing feud. Thus, the characters of Ortiz's writing refuse to yield to a society which demands their submission simply because they have Indian blood.

The manipulation and destructive influence of EuroAmerican society is also illustrated in Ortiz's "The San Francisco Indians".[83] This short story depicts an old Indian's search for his granddaughter who moved to the city to attend school and has since been lost to white culture. The protagonist has come to the city to search for her, because he has heard that "this is where all the Indians go" (10). Like Tayo's mother, Laura, in *Ceremony,* the Indian girl of this story has obviously been seduced by the evils of modern society and so has abandoned her family and her culture. In both these stories, the urban environment represents the corruption of Anglo society which encroaches on tribal life and lures Indians away from their reservations with the promise of jobs and education. Laura's education teaches her to be ashamed of her own culture and to emulate the styles of dress and modes of behaviour of white people. Flattered by the attention she receives from the white men, she is lured into a life of alcoholism, depravity and violence. This also seems to have been the fate of the Indian girl in Ortiz's "The San Francisco Indians". The grandfather relates how "she came to school in Oakland, to learn about business work… we got letters from the school that she was not going anymore, and then she stopped writing. I asked the government, but they don't know about her anymore…someone said she came to San Francisco" (10-11). Although Ortiz never clarifies exactly what fate the girl suffered, it seems likely that she is just one of many Indians drawn to an urban centre and lost there.

Like the Gallup Indians in *Ceremony*, the city Indians in Ortiz's story are alienated from their culture. They have forgotten how to perform Native songs and rituals and rely on audio recordings of Indian Chants provided by a white girl who wants to join them. These city Indians have become so far removed from all things Native that they need the reservation Indian's guidance in performing even simple ceremonies.

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[83] Originally published in Kenneth Rosen's *The Man to Send Rainclouds*, Ortiz rewrote this story for inclusion in his later collection *Men on the Moon*. The version discussed in this thesis is that published in Rosen's 1975 collection.

However the old chief recognises that these Indians require more than some chants to re-establish a connection with their tribal traditions. Indeed he is doubtful if they have even identified the correct chants to use. His experiences in the city have convinced him that the search for his granddaughter is hopeless and he decides to return home. His parting declaration that "Indians are everywhere" is significant, suggesting that, if Indians are everywhere, then they can be at home nowhere; that their nomadic lifestyle is representative of a larger problem of dislocation and alienation from their culture (13). The story ends with resignation and defeat as the old chief recognises the futility of the situation and resorts to praying for those Indians lost to the white world. This story reflects an unusually defeatist attitude in contrast to Ortiz's later work, which actively opposes the implication that the act of colonisation has subjugated and eliminated Native identity. This is an issue which continues to dominate Ortiz's writing. Illustrating an insider's perception of life in the Southwest borderlands, he focuses on the interaction, contestation and ultimate fusion of races within a space devoid of one distinctly dominant identity.

In a recent article, Ortiz has asserted that cultural diversity "is a major lens through which Southwestern literary vision focuses" (*This is about Vision* 123). This diversity is a key theme in the work of many New Mexico authors of both Native and Anglo descent, and as this chapter has sought to demonstrate, Ortiz's writing. This writing plays an integral part, not only in the recognition of Native American literature as a forceful, independent literary field, but also in the construction of northern New Mexico as a unique cultural space.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to re-evaluate the literary history of northern New Mexico in order to account for the distinctive cultural identity which characterises this region today. Recognition of the region's turbulent history has been instrumental in a reconsideration of the forces which have influenced and shaped this landscape. Historical events like the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and the rise of the tourist spectacle have played a vital role in creating the cultural character of the region, representing the constant re-definition of boundaries within the Southwest and demonstrating the unequal power relations which have long characterised cultural interaction in northern New Mexico. The continuous clash of Indian, White and Hispanic forces within this region has resulted in a unique tri-ethnic identity specific to northern New Mexico. As stated in the introduction, this thesis does not seek to undermine or ignore the significant contribution which Hispanic literature makes to the region. Rather, while acknowledging the tri-ethnic identity of the American Southwest, this research has focused on the specific relationship between Native and Anglo races, a relationship which has been vital in shaping the region of northern New Mexico.

The comparative analysis offered in this thesis illustrates the shared characteristics in the work of Native and Anglo authors from northern New Mexico. The commonalities of theme, structure and content in the work of writers from both ethnic groups challenge perceived definitions of national and regional identity, while also de-stabilising preconceived notions of racial purity. Emerging theoretical models in contemporary scholarship, such as paradigms of place-based consciousness, have suggested new ways of understanding writing from regions like northern New Mexico. This thesis has creatively used the work of modern theorists like Scott Slovik and Tom Lynch in order to illustrate the trope of place-based aesthetics which informs so much of northern New Mexico writing. In particular, Lynch's

model of bioregional literature offers a new perspective on Southwestern writing and, when applied to a selection of authors from northern New Mexico, demonstrates the similarities between Anglo authors of the 1920s and contemporary Native writers.

This thesis has applied Lynch's paradigm of geographical identity to a selection of authors from the region in order to offer new insights into their oeuvres. When theories of place-based identity are connected to the writing of early Anglo authors Oliver La Farge, Mabel Dodge Luhan and Willa Cather, it is evident that, although they are not native to the Southwest, these writers display a geographical consciousness which links them to contemporary Native writers Leslie Marmon Silko and Simon Ortiz. This communal consciousness is evidence of the significant influence which geographical terrain exerts over the individuals who inhabit its spaces. In particular, the similarities evident between Anglo authors like La Farge and Native writers like Ortiz reinforce the theory that geographical and environmental influence supersedes racial identity in northern New Mexico.

Emerging trends in Border Studies have also suggested new ways of understanding the Southwestern landscape, an understanding which broadens our perception of the cultural production generated within its contested spaces. This thesis has drawn on such research, applying the border theories of Gloria Anzaldúa and José David Saldívar to contemporary Native authors like Leslie Marmon Silko and Simon Ortiz. These writers challenge the hegemonic patterns which continue to dominate Native/Anglo relations into the twenty-first century. Embracing a pan-American and postcolonial American Studies, both Anzaldúa and Saldívar suggest a remapping of literature around a new politics of location, illustrating how political and geographical borders inform cultural production. Thus their work offers productive insights into the writing of Silko and Ortiz who discuss the vital link between Native and environment in the Southwest. Such links are reiterated by John Muthyala in *Reworlding America: Myth, History and Narrative* where he asserts that "we are unable to abstract the

politics of American identity (who we are and profess to be) from the politics of worldly location (where we are situated in the world and positioned in society)" (xiv). Such theories are relevant to the field of Southwestern writing, and in particular writing from northern New Mexico which, as this research has proved, is significantly influenced and shaped by its unique cultural and geographical landscape.

The discussion of the two Indian authors offered in this thesis also highlights the issue of self-determination in contemporary Native American studies. Both Silko and Ortiz are key figures in the rise of American Indian literary nationalism and, as such, their writing challenges the Anglocentricity of the American canon. In focusing on the primacy of Native worldview as expressed through literature, both authors contest the notion that American literature is first and foremost white literature and challenge the dismissal of Indians as representatives of a socially marginalised culture. Contemporary Native writers like Silko and Ortiz contest the stereotypical notion of an idealised tri-ethnic community, instead presenting their readers with an insider's perspective on life in the unstable borderlands of the American Southwest. This aspect of their writing is also evident in the work of other authors from the same geographic region. Like Silko, the work of N. Scott Momaday and Luci Tapahonso has been interpreted within racial parameters, with both writers defined by their position as Indian authors. However, this thesis provides the framework productively to examine their work under new criteria.

Suffering the same fate as Silko, Momaday is considered such an iconic figure within the field of Native American literature that his work is rarely considered outside that context. When his novel *House Made of Dawn* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969, a member of the awarding jury declared that this text heralded "the arrival on the American literary scene of a matured, sophisticated literary artist from the original Americans" (qtd. in Owens 58). Both Momaday and Silko were considered leading figures

in the Native American Renaissance of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and continue to be regarded as major voices in the field of Native American literature. Consequently, their work is often discussed together. Certainly, there are many parallels between Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and Silko's *Ceremony*. Both novels feature Native protagonists who return to reservation life after fighting in World War II. Engaging with the 'reluctant return of the Native' theme, these texts depict the problems inherent in the attempted reintegration of Indians into tribal life after time spent in EuroAmerican society.

However, it is the representation of landscape that best illustrates the potential for future study of Momaday's work. The key role which the natural terrain plays in his writing locates Momaday firmly within the genre of place-based literature and thus established links with other writers from northern New Mexico, both Native and Anglo. In *House Made of Dawn*, the landscape is presented as more than simply setting but forms an integral part of the novel. It provides not only a refuge for the novel's protagonist, Abel, but also actively participates in his recovery. Like Silko's protagonist in *Ceremony*, Abel is disturbed and corrupted by his association with the white world and by his wartime experiences. However, like Silko's Tayo, he finds salvation and rediscovers his sense of self by reconnecting with the natural world and with his tribal heritage. As further analysis will illustrate, textual similarities in the work of Silko and Momaday stem from their position as Southwestern authors rather than Native American writers. This theory is supported by Luhan's treatment of the same issue in *Let's Get Away Together*. Momaday's protagonist in *House Made of Dawn* has much in common with Luhan's Native character, Jerry. Moreover, his portrayal of the Southwest landscape is strikingly similar to Luhan's own description in her unpublished manuscript. Such similarities suggest that we should look to regional rather than racial identity for a new understanding of these authors.

The issue of border experience and liminality so prevalent in the work of New Mexico authors Silko, La Farge and Luhan is also addressed by Momaday in *House Made of Dawn*.
The liminal existence experienced by La Farge's characters in *Laughing Boy* and *The Enemy Gods* could also be attributed to Momaday's character of Abel as he struggles to comprehend his interstitial position between the Indian and white worlds. Indeed, the negative aspect of liminality represented in both *Laughing Boy* and *House Made of Dawn* deserves further analysis. Despite the racial and generation divide that separates Momaday and La Farge, both present Native protagonists that are alienated by their position on the threshold of two cultures. Abel and Laughing Boy are cut off from tribal life by their associations with the white world. Both La Farge and Momaday resolve this issue in precisely the same way, as their protagonists both reject modern civilisation and return to a traditional way of life. Such aspects of Momaday's work, when viewed in light of emerging theoretical paradigms in Border Studies, illustrate the potential for further study of this author. Moreover a regional analysis of Momaday's oeuvre, in conjunction with the work of other authors from northern New Mexico, both Native and Anglo, demonstrates the commonalities of writing from this region.

The brief discussion of Tapahonso's work in chapter four not only highlights the potential for further comparative study but also illustrates the constricting parameters within which her work has consistently been defined. Like her contemporaries, Tapahonso's position as a Native American writer has long determined how her work has been studied in contemporary scholarship. However, the issues discussed in this thesis suggest new ways of understanding her writing. The prominence given to the region's landscape in her poems and stories identifies Tapahonso as a New Mexico author. In her first book of poems, *One More Shiprock Night*, published in 1981, she states "I know that I cannot divide myself or separate myself from that place- my home, my land and my people. And that realization is my security and my mainstay in my life away from there".

This statement, which echoes those made by Silko and Ortiz, illustrates that Tapahonso's identity is constructed in relation to the New Mexico landscape in which she was raised. However, other aspects of her writing, such as the use of Native language and her manipulation of the genre of autobiography, connect Tapahonso's work more emphatically with that of authors from northern New Mexico. Like Ortiz, Tapahonso acknowledges the influence that the oral tradition exerts over her writing, and, like Ortiz, she uses Native language in her work in order to challenge the primacy of the English language in an American canon which is increasingly defined by cultural diversity. Stating that if Native Americans "lose the language, then we're really not anything anymore", Tapahonso expresses the same conviction as both Ortiz and Ngugi Wa Thiong'O (Bruchac 91). In their writing, all three emphasise the vital link that exists between language, literature and culture. As Conrad Schumaker asserts, Tapahonso's use of the Navajo language in her poetry is "a way of showing ownership… of insisting that the poem is not written simply to serve an English-speaking audience but to include the speakers Native language and audience and to give them authority. It reminds us that we can participate in the poem but cannot completely understand it as outsiders" (51). Thus, like Silko and Ortiz, Tapahonso's writing repositions Native worldview as centre, challenging stereotypical notions of Native language and culture as subservient and destabilising normative assumptions of the American literary field.

Tapahonso's engagement with autobiography may also be seen as a Southwestern variant of a dominant American genre. In *Sáanii Dahataal/ The Women are Singing* she intertwines memories of her home in Shiprock with Navajo tribal myths and stories in an autobiographical text reminiscent of Silko's *Storyteller*. Also, in a further comparison with Silko's text, the authorial voice in *Sáanii Dahataal* is the voice of the Navajo people, rather than that of an individual person. Collecting tribal myths and stories and presenting them in conjunction with her own poems and memories, Tapahonso

re-inflects the standard autobiographical form, relocating the personal "I" of autobiography within the collective identity of the Navajo tribe.

A comparative analysis of Silko and Tapahonso's work would serve to highlight the importance of regional identity to both authors, as they manipulate the genre of autobiography in order to reflect their positions in a multicultural Southwest which is characterised by cultural complexity.

An important aspect of this project has been the recovery of Anglo authors long dismissed by scholarship. The revision of Oliver La Farge, Mabel Dodge Luhan and Willa Cather's work offered in this thesis also calls into question our understanding of Anglo literature from northern New Mexico, in particular writing from the early twentieth century. A reconsideration of Anglo writing illustrates that these authors were participating in what Saldívar refers to as the "cultural conversations of the Southwest borderlands" (*Border Matters,* 40). More importantly, a comparative analysis of both Anglo and Native writers demonstrates the continuum which exists in literature from northern New Mexico and thus forces us to re-assess our perception of early Anglo literature from the region.

Emerging theoretical models encourage a renewed assessment of iconic Anglo individuals such as Mary Austin. Although her writing is not discussed at length in this thesis, Lynch's theories of geographical consciousness offer new insights into Austin's work. As an Anglo author writing in the Southwest during the early twentieth century, Austin was well placed to witness the formation of the region's unique cultural identity. When re-interpreted in light of place-based theories, it is evident that Austin's work prefigures that of modern theorists. The prevalence of the landscape in her work demonstrates that, like Lynch, Austin recognised the pivotal role which the Southwestern terrain played in the societal and cultural struggles of the region. The author's much-quoted comment that in the Southwest "Not the law, but the land sets the limit", reveals the considerable influence this region had for both the author and her writing (qtd. in Anderson 116). Texts such as *The Land of Little Rain,*

published in 1903, provided readers with detailed descriptions of the arid landscape surrounding Santa Fe as well as in-depth accounts of the Native cultures which inhabited the region. Like Luhan and Collier, Austin's writing was profoundly influenced by one of the region's defining forces, the vogue for the primitive. As a result contemporary scholarship focuses almost exclusively on the author's primitivist discourse as a way of interpreting her work. However, this research has suggested new ways of interpreting her writing calling for a revision of Austin's work in light of paradigms of geographical consciousness, thus suggesting a remapping of identity around regional rather than racial markers.

The unique history of northern New Mexico sets it apart from other Southwestern regions and from the rest of the American continent. Recognition of this landscape's multicultural history, when combined with the region's hybridity calls for the opening up of a new literary field. The approach taken in this thesis has been to read to work of the modernist generation in New Mexico in conjunction with that of contemporary Native American writers from the region. This perspective argues for a revisionist view of a literary tradition which remains Anglocentric. This line of study could of course be extended; for instance the work of Mary Austin could be read in dialogue with that of Luci Tapahonso. Such an angle both emphasises that literature from New Mexico is an autonomous body of writing, one that contributes to and complicates our notions of what an American canon might be.

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