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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

RE-IMAGINING NEW MEXICO:  
GEOGRAPHY, LITERATURE, AND RUDOLFO ANAYA

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

PETER J. MCCORMICK  
Norman, Oklahoma  
1999

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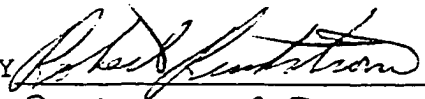

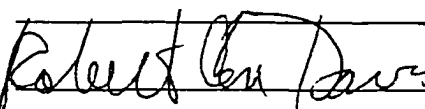
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RE-IMAGINING NEW MEXICO:  
GEOGRAPHY, LITERATURE, AND RUDOLFO ANAYA

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

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Any map of the world without Utopia is not worth a glance.

-Oscar Wilde



## **Acknowledgements**

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## Introduction

This dissertation is about a place that has held my fascination for nearly twenty years. I first visited New Mexico as a young child, riding in the backseat of my grandparents' car with my brother, destined for Santa Fé and Taos. We clipped along two-lane US 64 between Clayton and Springer, following a route similar to General Kearny's Army of the West who led the American charge into New Mexico roughly 130 years earlier. The grasslands and circles of alfalfa that I had been accustomed to in western Kansas gave way to the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Mountains are captivating for most of us native to the plains, but New Mexico, in the eyes of a seven-year-old, meant more than the mountains, say, of Colorado. The high desert of Santa Fé, the Taos Mesa, and the Rio Grande Valley felt different. Indeed the western desert, canyons, and mountains were far removed from the level, treeless high plain that I knew. But, the buildings were different too. And, for that matter, so were the people and the food. I made several return trips to New Mexico as a child, to the resort spots of Red River and to Taos. Later, while in college, I spent holidays and summers in Santa Fé, Taos, and Albuquerque. I acquired an affinity for

green chile and an appreciation for the aesthetic, the Santa Fé style.

The more time I spent in New Mexico, the more interesting the interaction of people in New Mexico places became; tourists and Taos Indians at the Pueblo, old Hispano and Anglo merchants in Old Town Albuquerque. I asked what seemed simple questions then: What made New Mexico tick? How did its people, who have held the fascination of outsiders for so long, deal with their precarious spot in the American imagination? Where did they fit within American culture? In particular, I became more interested in how its older Indian and Hispano communities adapted to the control of social, cultural, economic, and political systems held by outsiders. Later, I wondered how they reacted to the recent and drastic demographic and economic changes. I quickly learned that in New Mexico, as in any place, these questions are very complex.

During the summer of 1996 I was reintroduced to much of the literature about this "Land of Enchantment" in a course held at the College of Santa Fé. Included in the readings were selections by D. H. Lawrence, Mary Austin, Willa Cather, and Frank Waters. I also made my way through my first of many novels by Rudolfo Anaya. His novels were exactly what I was after. I wanted a New Mexico from an "inside" perspective. I realized, and continue to realize, that I could never spend enough time here to truly understand what it was like to be a New Mexican, or understand what it was like to have my roots



firmly planted in its soil. I could never fully appreciate the world as it presented itself from the New Mexico point of view. My summers on upper Canyon Road in Santa Fé and in Albuquerque's Old Town, and my weekends on the ski slopes at Taos, were only brushes with this place. I will always be an outsider, but I found in Anaya's writing a means to immerse myself in a very New Mexican experience.

In 1997 I enrolled in the University of Oklahoma Feaver-MacMinn Seminar, one focussed on Anaya. After devouring most of his texts I met Rudolfo and spent time with him in Norman and in Albuquerque. These occasions initiated a two-year long conversation about this place. In the meantime, I familiarized myself with Chicano/a<sup>1</sup> literature and activism, and his role within them. I also rekindled my armchair and academic interest in the history of the Southwest and today's New Mexico. The end result has been a complete overhaul, a reevaluation, or my re-imagination, of my New Mexico. Within his prose I found a place that was as compelling as the experienced landscape, one that had more guts than the image that had been stamped on my mind, and on those of millions of other outsiders. I was also drawn to his work because he stresses the role of people. His stories are about New Mexicans who reflect on the knowledge and understanding they hold about the world they live in. He also emphasizes choices

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<sup>1</sup> Chicano/a is a contraction of the term "Mexicano" (Xicano), and a self-inscribed identity of many southwestern Hispanics.

and possibilities for his characters and for New Mexico. There are numerous unresolved tensions. But Anaya always reminds the reader of the possibility of common human values. For me, New Mexico became more than a mere location on the map, and more than an aesthetic. I realized through Anaya that it also had moral and political dimensions.

This project is a culmination of my work on New Mexico and Anaya. It is also the fruit of many years spent as a student of cultural geography. Thus, I approach Anaya's literature with a focus on place. His characters move about a real New Mexico landscape, interacting with one another and the natural world. His novels also share company with a select group that can be considered the defining literature of the American Southwest.<sup>2</sup> His words are influential in shaping widely held ideas about this place. They will continue to be a vehicle for influencing American beliefs about New Mexico. Because of his popularity, I assume that Anaya's writing does have broad cultural, regional, and environmental implications. I ask what part the component of culture called literature has played in defining these entities. I also question what role Anaya's work has, and will continue to have, upon his readers and a future New Mexico. I agree with Kolodny (1984), who maintains in *The Land Before Her*, "our actions in the world...are

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The term emerged from the Hispanic rights movement of the 1960s.

<sup>2</sup> See Byrkit (1992), Teague (1997), and Hillerman (1976) for discussions of the numerous authors who have helped shape Southwest regional literature.

shaped by the paradigms in our head." While places shape the form of literature through place-imagery and setting, certainly literary production also has a direct effect on our perceptions and actions within places. Or, in the words of Tuan (1991, 692), "Fictional worlds can profoundly infect the real world."

While Anaya's popularity indicates that he holds company with other famous Western writers including Zane Grey, Tony Hillerman, Frank Waters, and John Nichols, I suggest that his books contain an important counterpoint. Anaya writes as a New Mexican, but he also writes as a Chicano/a. He is part of a vibrant cultural movement that has, in the past 30 years, drawn attention to the disastrous effects of American colonialism<sup>3</sup> in the region. More recent interest in the American West has cast an alternative gaze at the territory. Many academics suggest it is no longer a frontier, but a conquered land of multiple cultural interactions. This multidisciplinary project has brought forth numerous new interpretations of the Western landscape and its people. But Chicano/a contributions have been relegated to their own academic territory, and there have been few attempts at bridging Chicano/a studies and Western regional studies.

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<sup>3</sup> Colonialism is both the material and discursive conquest by an imperial power of a land and its people. The broad spectrum of effects of colonialism includes slavery, displacement, migration, and racial and cultural discrimination (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995, 7). Its effects, however, vary greatly by location. Colonialism also requires a discourse that legitimizes such actions.

This dissertation also expands geographers' use of literature and post-colonial culture studies. Humanistic geographers have a long-standing interest in literature and a new one in cultural studies, social theory, and literary criticism. The increased attention to post-colonial studies in geography, and the geographical studies being produced by non-geographers engaged in the project, focus on the lingering effects of colonialism in de-colonized societies. The microscope has been placed primarily on Africa, India, and to a lesser degree, Australia (Myers 1998, Gregory 1998, Godlewska and Smith 1994, Blunt and Rose 1994, Crush 1994). But, American geographers have yet to unravel the effects of colonialism on their own soil, particularly in the American West. Colonialism is central to the history of New Mexico, beginning with the initial Spanish influx and continuing through American annexation. Both have left their mark on the landscape and have shaped the culture and social realities of the state (Meinig 1971). Yet, the use of post-colonial ideas is infrequent in the study of New Mexico or the larger West.

I have selected seven of Anaya's most popular novels for inclusion in this study, including *Bless Me, Ultima*; *Tortuga*; *Heart of Aztlán*; *Albuquerque*; *Zia Summer*; *Rio Grande Fall*; and, *Shaman Winter*. I have also supplemented them with his scholarly essays and interviews. Chicano/a scholars and literary critics have given these writings deserved attention. But a close reading of his work contributes to the project of

redefining the West in many ways. Colonialism and neo-colonialism<sup>4</sup> in this region have produced new identities for its people and given new depth to its literature. One of these identities is that of the Chicano/a movement, placed as it is at the intersection of the inscribed colonial identities of Spanish, Indian, Mexican, and American. This evolving, hybrid identity is the product of 'racial' stratification and mixing, but it also merges numerous traditions into an ambiguous identity that subverts preconceived notions. In post-colonial discourse<sup>5</sup> analysis, it is within imaginative literature that these identities reveal themselves (Sharpe 1996, Said 1993).

Geographers engaging post-colonial discourse theory have turned to analytic approaches that attempt to assess issues of individual identity, in particular gender and social identity (Duncan 1997, McDowell 1997, Blunt and Rose 1994). Surprisingly, they have done so with little biographical detail (Myers 1998, 5; Dawson 1994). Pratt's (1992) and Blunt's (1994) work on European explorers in Africa demonstrates the value of biographical treatments for the development of broader

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<sup>4</sup> Neo-colonialism is a broad term that embodies the continuing effects of colonialism on decolonized, or post-independence, societies. It is the continuation of Western cultural imperialism, generally manifest in the global spread of capitalism and Euroamerican culture. Neo-colonialism is not limited to former colonies, but effects both post-independence societies and their former colonizers. The widespread impress of global culture and economics, imposes "structural features on the colonized and colonizing, everywhere" (Docker 1978).

<sup>5</sup> Discourses are systems of language "that embrace particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies, and

theoretical insights. Blunt (1994, 59-60) uses this approach to colonial discourse to show how such constructions "[illuminate] many discursive fields that are inseparable from wider matrices of power and authority" (59-60). Crush (1996) also has argued that a focus on individual biographical accounts will aid in the analysis of the effects of colonialism. Pocock (1994) agrees with this claim, noting that geographers using literature not only focus on place, but also on the author's social and cultural identity. More importantly, my choice to focus on a single author illustrates the role of human agency in shaping place imagery, and personal and group social identity (Pocock 1994, Shortridge 1991, Aiken 1979, Aiken 1977).

Whereas this study is not a historical or material assessment of the New Mexico landscape, it is important to contextualize Anaya's writing in time and place for two reasons. The landscapes portrayed in the literature do not operate in a vacuum, but are a product of the evolving processes of place-definition that include the author's experience in, and knowledge of, a place. Like Samuels (1981, 129), I weave an author's history into a landscape's biography. Grounding post-colonial discourse analysis in material landscapes "reminds us of just where and how colonialism lingers" (Myers 1998, 5). I also situate Anaya's writing within contemporary issues facing New Mexicans, including rapid

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signifying practices, each relevant to a particular realm of

economic and demographic change, and the lingering effects of colonialism, including racism, poverty, and cultural hegemony.

A grounding in the place and its history connects the local context -- New Mexico -- to a larger connecting issue -- the legacy of conquest in the West. It links post-colonial studies and imaginative literature to the unfolding effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism in the region. This is important, because it is from such a history that Chicano/as attained their identity. Moreover, rapid economic and demographic growth in the Southwest suggests that colonial relationships are ongoing here. By situating Anaya's writing in the context of these historical moments it is possible to understand the author's relationship with the world he seeks to narrate.

I am primarily concerned with Anaya's representations of landscape and place, in particular the cultural meanings he attaches to them. Such a process is phenomenological<sup>6</sup>, because it seeks to uncover symbolic significance and it is also

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social action" (Barnes and Duncan 1992, 8).

<sup>6</sup> Phenomenology is a philosophical framework designed to reveal the world, and all of its parts, as subjects of human experience. Phenomenology seeks to transcend, or strip away, the scientific, positivistic meanings ascribed to objects in order to understand their fundamental meaning to the human subject (Cloke, Philo, and Sadler 1991, 72-3). Humanistic geographers have used this theoretical grounding to study the meanings attached to the 'lifeworlds' people operate within, including both their experiences of everyday life (Seamon 1987) and also the landscape (Relph 1976). In literary criticism, phenomenologists study both the dynamics of written texts and the meanings prescribed by the author to the world(s) existing in such texts (Davis and Schleifer 1994, 159).

related to hermeneutics<sup>7</sup> (Tiffin and Lawson 1994; Ashcroft 1994, Duncan and Ley 1992, Cosgrove 1987, Seamon 1978, Relph 1976). By emphasizing the tropes, narratives, and metaphors common to post-colonial literature, I also weave into the analysis Anaya's self-conscious constructions and reactions to residing in the margins of American society.

But this dissertation is not a representation nor a complete deconstruction of Anaya's work. It is a conversation or dialogue between New Mexico, Anaya's representation of (and reaction to) it, and myself. In doing so, I draw directly from Rundstrom (1993) who applies Tedlock's (1983) "dialogic anthropology" to cross-cultural geographical research. The discussion represents the "ongoing give-and-take of cross cultural conversations in which one person is trying to grasp the essentially alien ideas of another" (Rundstrom 1993, 27). Because of his popularity and the critical acclaim he has received, I consider Anaya's texts to be a speaking subject in this exchange (Clifford 1986, 14). I also employ Collins' (1990) position of the importance of dialogue, where "everyone has a voice, but everyone must listen and respond to other

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<sup>7</sup>Hermeneutics is a philosophical framework that explicitly recognizes the subjective nature of research. Unlike objectivism, hermeneuticians recognize the unavoidable bias of their interpretations (i.e. ethnocentrism). While other theoretical stances also are interpretive, hermeneuticians explicitly recognize and theorize the site of their representations. Hermeneutics also acknowledges the numerous texts brought into a piece of research, their selection, and their roles in producing a new text (Duncan and Ley 1990, 8-10).



voices" (1990). By interweaving my interpretations, Anaya's voice, and various theoretical and scholarly efforts, I hope to broaden geographical understanding and bridge academic and cultural divisions. The conversation, then, represents an intertextual<sup>8</sup> process and an attempt, in the words of Collins, to "[foster] dialogue and [encourage] groups to transcend their differences" (1990).

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<sup>8</sup> Intertextuality is a process whereby meaning is produced from text to text rather than between the text and the world it represents (Duncan and Ley 1992, 9). This process is used frequently in geography, where numerous texts about places and people produce an endless field of meanings (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, Duncan 1990, Duncan and Duncan 1988, Crandell 1993, MacCannell 1992, McGreevy 1995).

## **Chapter 1**

### **Towards a New Understanding of Geography, Literature, and the American West**

In this chapter, I consider historical and recent literary and academic constructions of the American West and New Mexico. I contend that representations of the region are largely based on external Anglo structures, particularly those of culture. I also establish the theoretical and epistemological contexts of the study through a review of humanistic geography and post-colonial theory.

#### **Redefining the West in general and New Mexico in particular**

For over a decade geographers, historians, anthropologists, and literary critics have been coming to terms with the emergence of a new American West. Numerous compilations of essays, art, and photography portray a landscape marked by physical and human diversity and the representations made of it. The consensus of many of these writers is that the West, and the Southwest in particular, has undergone drastic demographic and economic change during the latter half of the Twentieth Century. The evolution of an urban West is central to these accounts (Wrobel and Steiner

1998, Robinson 1998, Etulain 1997, Francaviglia and Narrett 1994, Temple 1990, Norwood and Monk 1987). The historical representations of the region via academic accounts, art, and literature also have been examined and reinterpreted (Teague 1997, Limerick 1987). Others have considered the social and environmental ramifications of water use and resource exploitation (Rothman 1998, Marston 1989). In sum, the boundaries between cultures have been redrawn, history revised, and thus a new West has been exposed (Robinson 1998, Teague 1997, Limerick 1987).

Despite the emergence of the new West, and its numerous subregions from the Great Plains to the Pacific Coast, depictions of the social and physical landscapes remain tied to American lore. For example, a handful of geographers and literary critics have identified several key factors within academic, literary, and artistic texts that have given rise to the Southwest of the American imagination. The region is defined by a desert landscape, a cowboy and Indian legacy, and an element of exoticism that includes Hispanic and American Indian people and landscapes (Teague 1997, Blake 1995, Byrkit 1992). This is perhaps best captured by D.H. Lawrence, who wrote of New Mexico in the late 1920s:

New Mexico, one of the United States, part of the U.S.A. New Mexico, the picturesque reservation and playground of the eastern states, very romantic, old Spanish, Red Indian, desert mesas, pueblos, penitentes, all that film-stuff. Very nice, the great South-West, put a sombrero on and knot a red kerchief round your neck, to go out in the free spaces...

Lawrence continues:

That is New Mexico wrapped in the absolutely hygienic and shiny mucous-paper of our trite civilization. That is the New Mexico known to most of the Americans who know it at all (1936, reprinted in Hillerman 1976, 30).

Lawrence's assessment is definitive, for it is exactly this aesthetic that continues to be repeated by Western scholars. Despite the multidisciplinary effort to reevaluate the physical and human landscapes of the West and the relationships between the two, there remains a tendency to categorize the peoples of the region, their experiences, and their interpretations of the landscape on the basis of cultural divisions. Nowhere in the West is this more true than in New Mexico. Here, it is the consensus both in the annals of the state and in more recent accounts, that there are three distinct groups -- Anglo, Hispanic, and American Indian -- and that these people have separate histories, geographical experiences, and equally independent voices. As Don Meinig wrote in his seminal volume *The Southwest: Three Peoples in Geographic Change*: "The social geography of the area might be characterized as old Hispano country encompassing rigid compartments of Pueblo lands and riddled by

Anglo intrusions" (1971, 97).

This version of New Mexico remains the standard, brought about by academic, artistic, and literary accounts since the turn of the Twentieth Century. Lawrence (Sagar 1982) and Jung (1963), for example, spent ample time describing American Indians, failing to sufficiently note that there are dozens of groups that vary geographically, linguistically, and culturally. Anthropologists and archaeologists gave a universal pre-history to native peoples suggesting both a common origin and a common present (Hinsley and Wilcox 1996). Historian Horgan dedicated much of his career to the Southwest, and Santa Fé in particular, once claiming that it was the "Spanish feel" of Santa Fé that was its most important quality. He also published a definitive volume on the social history of the region aptly entitled *The Historic Triad* (1964). Horgan and Southwest historian Lavender, in their pieces *Great River* (1984), *the Centuries of Santa Fé* (1954), and *the Southwest* (1981), rested their analyses of the state's culture on the three-culture hypothesis. Geographers Meinig, Nostrand, Carlson, and Jett reinforced these notions, focussing on the Anglo, Hispanic, and American Indian groups, respectively. The three groups were viewed as having separate histories, settlement patterns, and equally unique relationships with the environment, although many acknowledged the disparities in socio-economic status and the problems of politics and conquest.

This consensus suggests that since contact each group

retained autonomy, lived a separate existence, and when there was contact it was generally harmonious (Etulain 1994). But this conceptualization of New Mexico's culture is a gross oversimplification, for other stories of the Southwest suggest multiple interactions among many peoples (Wright 1994, Limerick 1987, Lavender 1981). When faced with the New Mexico landscape, J.B. Jackson observed: "this vision, repeated by artists in many parts of the country, seems in retrospect to have been less a reflection of reality than a way of expressing a nostalgic version of history" (1994, 23). Yet, little attention has been given to the exchanges between the groups, an omission that interferes with our ability to understand their mutual experiences and confrontations (Wolf 1997, 7). The urge to trichotomize New Mexico's cultures comes not from the reality of such a supposition, but from the state's history. The tendency to continue to separate them is part of a legacy of conquest, a reification of the distinctions made by colonists, and the colonized, since the point of contact. Since Spanish and American conquest the region has undergone dramatic change, altering both the physical and cultural landscapes.

More recent accounts of the West acknowledge the diversity of its people, and have paid attention to cultural and social relations based on ethnicity and gender (Etulain 1994: Temple 1990; Norwood and Monk 1987; Francaviglia 1994; Gish 1996). Yet, the refrain that stems from colonial history is still being repeated. The panopticon of the former West

has been replaced by a kaleidoscope that appears only to have fractured a larger view into smaller pieces. When fused together, the polyphonic West resonates with the traditional schemata. The most recent version is that of Anglo-America, and because of the nature of colonization its cultural norms and discourses have been privileged for over 150 years. As Byrkit notes: "land, sky, and people combined alchemically to create an almost hallucinogenic "Land of Enchantment" for the self-professed Northeastern intellectual/aesthetic/spiritual patricians"(1992, 335).

It is equally disturbing to find contributions from the Chicano/a and American Indian groups to the academic project of redefinition to be few and far between. The scant attempts to give voice to these people -- sometimes almost as an afterthought --continue to slot them into the preexisting categories. Moreover, there have been few attempts, at least in geography, to bridge the boundaries that exist between Anglo, American Indian, and Chicano/a scholarship. This continued emphasis on the cultural triad leads to misunderstanding, and, by extension, silences the voices coming from the latter two groups (Teague 1997, Gish 1996, Reid 1998). To understand the West requires that an equal amount of attention be paid to the voices of its colonized peoples. As Cosgrove urges:

voices that in the past have been defined as culturally the "other" to the universalizing discourse of Euro-American, white, male, middle-class culture, which these voices long claim dominated the texts of cultural geography [and also the literary and academic discourse of the West] now demand an audience for their own imaginative constructions of what the world means(1994, 394).

There have been a few attempts at uncovering the imaginative geographies of under-represented New Mexicans (Teague 1997, Norwood and Monk 1987). But even these critical evaluations, sensitive as they are to issues of ethnic and gender identity, fall into the dominant discourse of separation and compartmentalization. In particular, the representations of the relationships between ethnic groups and the landscape have been entrenched in the discourse. In sum, American Indians continue to be seen as noble savages who live in harmony with and have reverence for the landscape; Hispanics revere the land as a mother; and, Anglos view the landscape for its aesthetic and economic value (Teague 1997, Norwood and Monk 1987, Rothfolk 1982). There has yet to be an excavation by a geographer of a new New Mexico and a new West that decenters this dominant aesthetic and its discourse. Decentering does not mean that students of the West produce a place that has relative meaning or no meaning at all. It is important to search for the particular, a way of seeing New Mexico that does not fall prey to cultural globalization where ideas, emotions, and expressions are boiled down to compressed replications of images (Jameson 1991, Clifford 1988, Adorno and Horkheimer 1972). Instead, we should not forget



permanence, stability, meanings, and attachments to place. As Pocock notes, such a focus is important "in a society increasingly mobile and a world of increasing homogeonisation" (1981, 15). These interpretations should stand in the way of a fluid postmodernity that refuses authority, and should reconfigure American ideas about the region and its people. In New Mexico, at least, there are writers and artists -- American Indian, Chicano/a, and Anglo -- with connections that speak of the landscape, but also converse with it (Teague 1997).

#### **Humanistic Geography, Post-colonialism and Literature**

An alternative means for understanding the meaning of the American West lies within the component of culture called literature. In *Topophilia*, humanistic geographer Tuan writes that studying human "perception, attitude, and value" of the landscape will "prepare us, first of all, to understand ourselves, and by extension, others" (1974, 1). Literature, a creation of the human imagination, and tied to cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes, provides an avenue in which the cultural landscape is not only represented, but also a means by which it acquires meaning. Literature shapes collective attitudes about places and the people that inhabit them. This is the case with New Mexico. Its landscape has played a pivotal role in the images gleaned from, and applied to, the state over the past two centuries. History and ethnicity are equally important, each adding critical dimensions to the state's aesthetic.

There are two dominant ways that geographers have used literature in their studies of place. Early humanistic geographers used literature to compare the imaginary geographies within literature to material places. Subsequent to this work, geographers have engaged literary discourse theory, not only focussing on the places depicted in the literature, but also stressing the conventions, social mores, and political ideologies of the writer.

### **Humanistic and Critical Approaches to Literature**

Geographers have long admired the writing abilities of novelists, in particular their abilities to express -- with vivid description -- the senses stimulated by the landscapes and places that form critical parts of the narrative (Meinig 1983). D. H. Lawrence, after years of writing and travel, best explained this important quality: "different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, differently polarity with different stars; call it what you like. But spirit of place is a great reality" (1923, 8-9). Clearly, one of the most important aspects of writing includes imparting the effects of location on the individual writer, the plot, and characters. Cultural critic Williams (1973) calls this notion a "structure of feeling," and humanistic geographers, by and large, consider it to be the concept of "sense of place."

Literary geography is part of the broader humanistic movement in cultural geography which countered the structured

analysis of spatial science. Humanists sought to 'repeople' human geography, and brought to surface the subjective meanings of space and place. For many humanists, the roots of the movement lie in a single quotation from Carl Sauer's "The Morphology of Landscape" (1925),

The best geography has never disregarded the aesthetic qualities of landscape to which we know no other approach than that of the subjective (1925, 48).

Sauer continues:

the task of geography is conceived as the establishment of a critical system which embraces the phenomenology of land-scape, in order to grasp in all of its meaning and color the varied terrestrial space (1925, 25).

This is an obvious invitation to the geographer to tap the subjective meanings embedded in imaginative literature. Sauer seldom used literature, nor did most of his students. However, his conception of geography fostered the broadening of the subdiscipline by incorporating such approaches to the study of landscape and place.

Of equal importance to the humanistic movement, and to literary geography, is John K. Wright. In the 1920s, Wright, a historical geographer and cartographer, called upon professional geographers and other scholars to explore literature in their research (1924a). One of the initial American contributions to the subject was his use of Dante in reconstructing the environment of Italy in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries (1924b). Roughly twenty years later, Wright published a hallmark piece, "Terrae Incognitae: the

Place of Imagination in Geography" (1947), which became a sounding board for humanistic inquiry. In uncovering geographical knowledge and imagination, Wright argued, geographers should seek out alternative sources of human experience, literary materials being an essential part of such a project (Noble and Dhusa 1990).

It was not until the 1970s and the larger humanistic movement that literary geography matured. Salter organized a special session at the 1974 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers entitled "Landscape in Literature." Among the papers presented were studies on urban novels, children's literature, and ideas of utopia. Salter spearheaded the use of literature, writing several articles and an AAG research paper dedicated to the methodological fundamentals upon which literary geography could be built (Noble and Dhusa 1990). Salter suggested geographers tap the subjective reality of literature in order to answer commonly asked geographic questions. The author and her/his characters react to the landscape, including settlement patterns, land use, transportation, and sacred spaces. These reactions reflect the author's cultural preferences. Individual landscape preferences, too, are reflected in the author's descriptions of the built landscape -- houses and gardens -- and the social landscape -- the people, their language, dress, and their means of livelihood (Salter 1978, 74-5).

Equally important was Tuan's widely read *Topophilia*, and his subsequent calls for the use of literature in geographic

research. He identified three areas in which literature could be of use to geographers interested in the human experience: the role of landscape in forming the author's point of view, the role of setting to the overall plot, and the subjective meanings given to people and place (Tuan 1978). The paramount role of literature for Tuan was its ability to allow humanistic geographers to synthesize subjective and objective realities, merging the author's point of view with the actual landscape (1978). This phenomenological perspective, a theoretical axiom for early geographic humanism, emphasizes the world of human experience (Cloke, Philo, and Sadler 1991, 72). Pocock (1981) expanded this idea suggesting the dialectic relationships between the imagined space and the actual place serve the role of expanding the reader's awareness. Thus, for geographers literature became a databank for "exploring the experiential foundations of our world" (Pocock 1981, 1). The collection of essays in his volume, *Humanistic Geography and Literature*, focussed on the world as a phenomenon of human experience. Contributors to the volume explored humanistic themes of insideness/outsideness, rest, movement, at-homeness, rootedness, exile, and restlessness.

These themes, which may be combined as a uniform interest in literary 'senses of place,' defined literary geography during the 1970s and early 1980s (Pocock 1981). McManis, for example, brought attention to the role of setting in Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers mystery novels (1978). Aiken produced four pieces on the links between the imaginary and

actual landscapes of Faulkner's and Agee's South (1977, 1979, 1981, 1983). His works on Faulkner emphasized the importance of contextualizing the literature in its historical and geographical settings. Moreover, Aiken brought to attention the important role Faulkner has played in producing place-imagery about the South. The author's continued popularity, he argues, will have an affect on both the actual and imagined landscapes of the region (1979). Shortridge (1991) continued this theme, and earmarked a long list of novels that have a strong influence on place-imagery in the United States. His work was followed by Blake (1995), who took one such author, Zane Grey, and linked his novels to present-day ideas about the American Southwest.

The orthodox manner for the use of literature had centered on the powerful abilities of authors to create a sense of place, and by extension, the power of their novels in producing images about places. Pocock clarifies this position: "The writer therefore articulates our own inarticulations about place...providing therefore a basis for a new awareness" (1981, 3). Meinig expanded the notion, arguing that for the geographer, imaginative literature was an unproblematic warehouse of "vivid descriptions of landscape and life"(1983, 316). Daniels (1985, 149) criticized this orthodox position for stressing writing abilities over the popular literary conventions and social mores of the day. Cosgrove's piece on Ruskin (1977) was an exception. Using biographical information and literary texts, he framed Ruskin

as an important writer who had his own theory of landscape and his own cultural geography. Both of these, Cosgrove argued, were effected by the social lens through which he viewed the world. Cosgrove has continued this theme, suggesting that landscape is a "way of seeing -- a way in which some...have represented to themselves and to others the world about them and their relationships with it, and through which they have commented on social relations"(1984, 1). This other use of literature became important as geographers and others began to acknowledge the filters through which authors saw the worlds they were describing (Simpson-Housley and Paul 1984, Butler-Adam 1981, Jeans 1979). Brosseau (1985) extended the criticism of traditional literary geography, arguing that the orthodox use of literature failed to acknowledge its most important role, that of destabilizing our positions. Sharpe's work on Salman Rushdie illustrates such a position, emphasizing the effects of colonialism upon the author, his characters, and the geography of his novels (1996).

This critical turn in literary geography represents the broad influence of literary cultural studies upon human geography. For example, post-structuralists have turned to deconstruction, a literary tool that unravels the chords of setting, time, and plot, but also the use of literary tools such as metaphor and word choice that are representative of dominant discourses and exercises in power (Barnes and Duncan 1992). Geographers have employed deconstruction theory in their analysis of landscape representations, under the

assertion that not unlike literature, geographic descriptions are only representations of reality (Barnes and Duncan 1992, Duncan and Ley 1992, Duncan 1990). This approach to both landscape and literature operates under the assumption that both are cultural texts (Barnes and Duncan 1992, Cosgrove and Daniels 1988). As Gregory and Walford write "our texts are not mirrors which we hold up to the world, reflecting its shapes and structures immediately and without distortion. They are, instead, creatures of our own making, though their making is not entirely of our own choosing" (1989, 2 cited in Barnes and Duncan 1992, 2). If the ways we represent the world around us are but cultural texts, then they are also a part of larger discourses. In literary discourse theory discourses are understood as "...conventional and historical. It assumes that discourses and the 'truths' that they construct, vary among cultural groups" (Barnes and Duncan 1992, 8).

### **Post-colonialism**

Post-colonialism is a critique of Western historicism and discourse, and it is argued that from post-colonialism emerged the logic of post-structuralism and post-modernism (Slemon 1994, 17). Two modes of thought important to this study have emerged from post-colonialism. The first branch started to unravel the creation of colonial space and colonial subjects by the European empires. This literary project is best illustrated in the works of Said (1993) and Pratt (1992), who deconstructed colonial narratives. The second branch, borne out of the subaltern studies group in India, has sought



to uncover the effects of colonialism upon its subjects. The initial focus was on the recovered voices of the colonized, particularly those expressed in literature, because literacy coincided with the production of ethnic relations, educational practices, development policy, and the production of space.

Post-colonial discourse theory pays attention to the process of "writing back," whereas the literature of colonized peoples is seen as charged with a politics of opposition (Said 1993). Simply, post-colonial literature challenges and attempts to debunk the narrative archetypes of Western culture and its dominant ideology (Ogunsanwo 1995, 41). No literature is seen as "pure," yet due to the nature of colonization and the layering of cultures on one another, the post-colonial (or subaltern) voice is trapped by the process of colonization itself (Spivak 1988). Like the people, the literature has been altered, unable to speak separately from that of the dominant society. The voice is not inaudible. Like those of the colonizer, it is a mutated, hybrid mix.

The concept of colonization as the gradual overlay of one culture on top of another would suggest that when this cultural process is viewed from cross-section there would exist a top layer, the imperial, and a bottom layer, the subject or the indigenous. The process of writing back from the point of view of the subject would suggest two options: that the voice would be a homogenized tone of cultural unity, or nationalism; or, there would be little, if any, voice left at all in the wake of cultural conquest. However, such a

construction is overtly problematic. Colonization is not a process where the imperial culture completely annihilates any and all pre-existing cultural traits. Post-colonial discourse emphasizes the survival of cultural traits even under the most powerful forms of oppression. These remaining characteristics become fundamental parts of colonized culture during the reactions following imperial contact. Yet the emphasis is not on the remaining core characteristics alone, but how they have been altered by, and how others have been replaced by, cultural characteristics of the imperial power. Post-colonialism regards all cultures, regardless of historical and geographic context, as hybrid (Sharrad 1994, Orr 1994, Gilbert 1994, Achebe 1973, Dash 1974).

The idea of hybridity implies a cultural cross-fertilization between two groups. Yet, before post-colonial discourse theory had applied it to the de-colonized world, European and American scientists were grappling with it as a phenomenon of 'racial' mixing. Not only did the process of colonization produce hybrid cultures, but it, as well, produced hybrid peoples. Perhaps the best example of this process is that of post-colonial Latin America, where the physical union of Iberians and Meso-American and Andean Indians produced a mestizo population. Spanish colonial authorities arranged social stratification to include the miscegenated population. But even in the late Nineteenth Century, many European scientists who were largely influenced by environmental determinism, believed that such people were

degenerate and would become extinct. Robert Knox, Scottish anatomist and racial theorist illustrates the consensus: "the hybrid was a degradation of humanity and was rejected by nature"(Young 1995, 15). The successful union of these preconceived races in Latin America and the rise of the dominance of mestizo populations throughout the region ultimately invalidated this hypothesis.

The notions on which cultural hybridity largely rest are those of cultural, ethnic, and racial difference. They are based on the Western assumption that all are stable constructions with impenetrable boundaries. Hybridity, in both its cultural-discursive form and biological form, is a powerful idea. It subverts the dominant discourse that separates the authenticity of the colonizer and the authenticity of the subject. The use of hybridity allows for the construction of a theoretical "third space" that lies between the categories of Western discourse.<sup>9</sup> According to Bhabha, this process will "open the way to conceptualizing an international culture based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the

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<sup>9</sup> Theoretical "third space" is a product of post-colonial and post-structural analysis that attempts to decenter the dominant modes of representation. The third space exists between constructed categories of the dominant discourse (e.g. those of gender, race, and ethnicity) (Bhabha 1994, Young 1995). Geographers have used this theoretical construct most widely in the study of gender in an attempt to dissolve inequities in power derived from polarized gender identities (male/female) and their manifestations in place (McDowell 1996, Duncan 1996, Blunt and Rose 1994).

inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (1994, 38, his italics).

Hybridity, at this point, becomes a form of cultural difference, what Said calls "hybrid counter-energies" (1993). Post-colonial cultures present themselves as a compounded and composite form that subverts preconceived connotations and disavows the standard discourse (Fanon 1967). Such a conceptualization of culture, which lies between the polarities of categories, allows for people freely to "negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference" (Bhabha 1994, 38).

Hybridity foils the colonial equation, and subverts the discursive practices of the Western society. So, too, does mimicry, the masking of the colonized voice with the patina of the dominant society. A major charge of the post-colonial project is for colonized subjects to enter the dominant discourse, what Said (1993) calls "taking the voyage in" through forms of dress, manners, customs, and political organization. In discourse, mimicry is represented by the use of standardized metaphors, tropes, and narrative styles. Yet, mimicry masks the subject. As Bhabha writes: "mimicry represents an ironic compromise...the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (1994, 86).

Mimicry is used to gain recognition within the dominant discourse. Yet, because it is different, it disrupts

authority. It allows colonized subjects an avenue into the dominant discourse, but also mutates it with new cultural codes and meanings.

Post-colonial authors, like Rushdie, are known for interweaving myth into their narratives, an important part of recalling their cultural history and self-definition. (Sharpe 1996, Slemon 1988, Dash 1974, Alexis 1956). This literary form, 'magical realism', is subversive for it mixes the transcendental with the fixed, whereas Western ideology sees the 'fantastic' as separate from the 'real.' Post-colonial authors mimic accepted forms of Western literature, including folklore and storytelling, and often obfuscate 'fact' and 'fiction.' This hybridized discourse encodes resistance and subversion by using fruitful metaphors that are not tailored to the normalized ideological structure of the West (Slemon 1988).

### **The Role of Place**

Post-colonialism has been broadly applied across several continents. It is a discourse of relationships and of intersections, primarily between the western world of the Enlightenment and modernity and the 'Others' who Wolf calls "The People Without History" (1997). At one level, post-colonialism is the movement of ideas across geographic space, literally across physical landscapes, and it is reflected by an imprint upon human communities and the environment. But it is also the construction of spatial relationships, in particular where the grand narrative of western historicism

and the many counter-narratives from the post-colonial world are negotiated. These discourses intersect at numerous sites, or in places, where social relationships are constituted.<sup>10</sup>

The process of recovering and reconstituting post-colonial identities and voices is concomitant with the rewriting of places and their history (Carter 1987). The process of colonization, which includes exploration and settlement, essentially turns the assumed empty landscape into place (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1993). Landscape features, like its people, acquire names and a history that fit into the discursive norms of the dominant society. The inscription of place onto the imperial map and into its history produces names, or imperial signifiers, which become tools for control over place and people. In post-colonial rewriting, places that were written into being by the colonial society are recovered by the subject (Slemon 1994, Hodge and Mishra 1991). Here, post-colonialism is congenial to humanistic geography, as these "imaginary geographies" represent discursive constructions of places (Blunt and Rose 1994, 5).

In post-colonial literature, the process of re-writing is often difficult. The imposition of language by the outside power causes a schism between the experience of place and the

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<sup>10</sup> Cultural 'space' is where a culture declares its presence in discourse (Carter 1987). Place, on the other hand, is both a specific location within discourse and the material world where social relations intersect, are constituted, and given meaning (Agnew 1987, Tuan 1974, Carter 1987). See also Curry (1996) and Gregory (1993).

descriptive powers of an imported language. Often this causes a sense of displacement. While many colonial subjects retain pre-colonial toponyms and meanings, the gap between the experienced environment and the power of language alienates both those who speak the new imperial tongue (e.g. English or Spanish) and those who speak it as a second tongue. Languages also mix, resulting in hybrid dialects and, thus, new meanings for places (Slemon 1994).

Shifts in settlement patterns following conquest alter the morphology of the land and the meanings ascribed to it. In particular, the diaspora of colonial subjects enhances feelings of displacement. The establishment of settler colonies also alters the physical landscape and produces new places and new meanings for them. The huge investment of cultures in the construction of places reveals that all places have multiple meanings, reminders of the separations between colonizers and colonized and their hybrid interpretations (Lee 1974). Places are written and over-written, or are a multi-dimensional text. Versions often intersect reflecting an intertextual process (Barnes and Duncan 1992; Carter 1987, 377; Bhabha 1994, 148). Moreover, in post-colonial politics each version represents a struggle over power and knowledge (Blunt and Rose 1994, 5).

Identities in post-colonial space surface most prominently in the political and artistic venues of de-colonized and neo-colonial societies (Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin 1994). In post-colonial analysis, the final identities

are those of *difference*. They are identities that run counter to those given them by the imperial power. The academy (and the Empire) typically fails to comprehend the actual self-naming and articulate subject who enunciates the historical, social, and geographic effects of living in a colonized place. Difference involves a continual reevaluation of relationships that stem from colonialism and neo-colonialism (Tiffin and Lawson 1994, Bhabha 1994). From such encounters emerge dynamic, compounded identities that are inevitably hybrid, often masked by mimicry, and appear unconventional to those using normalized discourse. Once apparently polarized, cultures in opposition often intersect and constantly re-negotiate their relations. Hybridity, mimicry, and their manifestations in language, literature, identity, and place are found on all sides of the colonial equation.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Colonial and Neo-colonial New Mexico, Chicano/a Voices, and Rudolfo Anaya**

This chapter offers an alternative story of the West and New Mexico: a post-colonial one. I then discuss the emergence of a self-named culture, Chicano/a, and its connection to the legacy of conquest in the West. Lastly, I introduce Rudolfo Anaya, a key player within the Chicano/a movement and in the literary arena of the West.

#### **Colonial and Neo-Colonial New Mexico**

1848 is a watershed year in the history of the American Southwest. When political control of Mexico's northern frontier was transferred to the United States, hundreds of thousands of American Indians and mestizos (Hispanos) were encapsulated by a foreign power. This process had happened once before, when Spain conquered the Southwest in 1598. By the time America had annexed the Southwest, the area had been Hispanicized, the landscape -- its rivers, mountains, valleys, and forests -- had acquired Spanish names. The landscape had been transformed by the Laws of the Indies. It was dotted with missions for the purpose of conversion, and covered by townsites and a political geography that allowed for Spanish control. The colonists and the American Indians had been in

co-existence for 250 years. Southwest culture, however, was not homogenous. American Indian communities proved to be resilient, as evidenced in their resistance to total assimilation and the continuance of the usage of Indian toponyms for the land. Relationships between the settlers and the Indians was not harmonious, but it was not always one that was separated along lines of ethnicity or race. The history between the two groups had been turbulent at times, as Spanish and Mexican governors and their military partisans were constantly rebuking Indian attacks and mounting campaigns against numerous tribes. But the colonial equation here does not boil down to a simple dichotomy of Spaniards and Mexicans versus the American Indians. The numerous tribes of the Southwest had an intricate system of alliances and distrusts, and an equally dynamic set of inter-relationships of trade and warfare. Numerous skirmishes pitted Pueblos against Hispanos, and Utes and Apaches against Pueblos and Hispanos (Lavender 1981). Spanish missionaries forced Catholicism upon the Pueblos, but aspects of many native religions simply went underground. Pueblo skill at accommodation led to syncretism, and celebrations borrowed from Catholic ritual (Quintana 1990). The localized Catholicism borrowed from the Indian religions as well, producing a regionally distinct system of beliefs and rituals. They shared agricultural and water management practices and adopted similar building styles. There also was intermarriage, sometimes consensual, sometimes not.

Spanish civil and religious authorities also instigated

social stratification, with peninsulares (or 'racially pure' Spaniards), politicians and Catholic leadership (including French nationals) at the top. At the bottom of this ladder were the Pueblos and the numerous other southwestern tribes. In the middle were the people of mixed ancestry -- miscegenated, but diverse groups of Mexican mestizos, Aztecs (Nauhatl speakers), Mexican Indians from Zacatecas, creoles, and Africans (Tjarks 1979, Simmons 1968). Moreover, there were the Genizaros, nomadic Indians who had been captured by the Spanish. Many were brought into households and communities as workers. They were partially socialized through language, customs, and religion providing further evidence of early mixing and blurring of cultural boundaries (Nostrand 1992, 44). Many Pueblos, as well, were incorporated into the dominant society as workers, others as slaves. Perhaps the best example of the blurring of identity comes from the commander of the Spanish entrada. Juan de Oñate, who for some time was cast as Spanish, was not Castillian, but rather Basque and Indian (Simmons 1993). Despite stratification, colonists culturally and biologically mixed with the native population, leading all away from ever returning to a pre-contact existence.

When the United States seized control of the Southwest, the hundreds of thousands of Mexican subjects within the cession began a new chapter in history, one that resituated ethnic relationships. The Hispanos, who had largely dominated New Mexico, became colonial subjects. They were considered

Mexican, but they chose to identify with their Spanish-ness because the term 'Mexican' was considered a racist, derogatory term by Anglo society (Nostrand 1973). Becoming subordinate, Hispano communities lost many of their land grants, first to Anglo speculators and later to federal agencies, especially the U.S. Forest Service. Hispanos and Indian tribes had built their communities around precious resources, water and land, and had equally distinct views of the landscape. Their history of cultural exchange proved to be a basis for a degree of solidarity when confronted with Anglo policies and actions that stripped either group of their collective rights (Padilla 1996, Quintana 1990). Yet, because of the complications of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the American choice to deal with each group individually, compounded by the existing cultural differences, the effort to thwart American colonialism was not a unified venture (Quintana 1990).

As more and more Americans from numerous locations and ethnic backgrounds moved into New Mexico during late Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, many Hispanos and American Indians slid further down the social ladder to occupy the margins of an urbanizing, increasingly technology- and resource-driven Southwestern economy. Demographic and economic change instigated by World War II caused a diaspora of many Hispanos and American Indians into the Southwest's urban centers during the 1940s and 1950s (Nostrand 1992, Etulain 1994). By the 1970s there were more urban residents identifying with these groups than those who lived in the

historic rural communities and on reservation lands. While both groups, by and large, remained less affluent than Anglo New Mexicans, rapid economic growth in some sectors in the 1980s allowed some to climb the socio-economic ladder. Hispano control of rural communities and American Indian control of reservations assured some socio-spatial autonomy. They were directly confronted with Anglo culture, especially language and educational systems, but also by using Anglo transportation and communication systems. Many residents in urban areas were siphoned into mainstream society (Etulain 1994), continuing the history of conflict, mutation, and exchange.

Over the latter half of the Twentieth Century, New Mexico and the greater Southwest have undergone tremendous demographic and economic change. The historical influx of Anglo-American culture has been compounded by large-scale recent immigration and its effects on the social, cultural, and economic structures of the state. Before the Second World War many Anglo migrants to New Mexico had been drawn to the state because of its ethnic diversity. Artists and writers established colonies in Santa Fé and Taos. They were lured by the physical and cultural landscapes which they represented on canvas and in print (Weigle and Flore 1994). Government-funded weapons and technological development reconfigured the landscapes of Los Alamos and White Sands, and required a skilled labor force that was ethnically diverse, but highly stratified. The rise of the ski industry in the late 1960s

produced large-scale tourism and resort development.

The contemporary migration into the West is characterized by a movement of metropolitan dwellers from the East and West coasts to smaller Western communities (Manson and Groop 1996). Many of these migrants are moving to the West in search of a rural idyll (Rudzitis 1989). Industrial relocation of particular technology, computer, and information industries, has brought a major migration of skilled workers into the region. The rapid transformation has caused conflicts between locals and new residents (Waldrop 1991, Rudzitis 1989). Many communities see the migration as a threat to traditional ways of life. Land prices have skyrocketed, resulting in the demise of ranching and mining, and the transformation of open spaces into large residential neighborhoods. Newcomers have been characterized by a pretentious show of wealth and a naive conception of the landscapes and communities they have chosen to inhabit (Walker 1994). Many others are part-time residents, drawn to New Mexico's land and cultures, but unwilling to make permanent commitments to place and community. New residents and new industries have shifted the political and cultural balance, aggravating the 400-year history of ethnic interaction (Quintana 1990).

This transition is, of course, manifest in the landscape. On the outskirts of cities, large chunks of land have been transformed into large technological compounds. Many residential developments are surrounded by walls. The

newer homes mimic adobe, yet the internal skeletons, like their inhabitants, reflect mainstream America. New developments are often walled, segregating the latest arrivals from other New Mexicans. The adobe has become commodified, not unlike the residents, evident in the spread of Santa Fé Style during this time (Wilson 1997). New residents began moving into barrios and the centers of towns, gentrifying them, raising taxes, and ultimately driving the residents out. As this process continues, native inhabitants will be pushed further and further to its margins (Lewis 1992). This process has aggravated ethnic tensions, has caused increased poverty, and some observers consider this link to global economy and culture a neo-colonial, contemporary invasion (Rodriguez 1994, Lujan 1993).

#### **Chicano/a voices**

When Southwestern Hispanics performed the act of naming in 1969, giving themselves the self-inscribed title "Chicano/a," they took an important step in de-colonizing their existence. They initially looked to their American Indian heritage -- being "indio" -- and made this paramount. Chicano/as inscribed their people as La Raza, "the race," and took a strong stand against racism and discrimination while seeking greater political power (Pulido 1996). A more remarkable part of this plan was their search for a homeland, which they designated Aztlán. Borne out of Meso-American creation myth, Aztlán was supposed to have been the ancient home of Aztec tribes, and located somewhere in the

Southwestern United States (Forbes 1973). The new ethnic identity and a proclaimed homeland gave the Chicano/a cause the elements of a national movement. Several activists even suggested that they should be afforded regional autonomy (Gomez-Quinones 1994). By and large, Chicano/a artists, academics, and activists, many who considered the idea of "internal colonialism", characterized Chicano/as as a conquered proletariat, victimized by Anglos, with an emphasis on the loss of their land (Blea 1995, Padilla 1993).

Chicano/a writers and artists came to the front of the movement, including Rudolfo Anaya, and began a long search for their cultural heritage. This included the excavation of ancient Aztec mythology, the recollection of Southwest Hispanic folktales, and a fleshing out of the links between these traditions and those of American Indian tribes. Before the Chicano/a movement, Hispanic American culture was not infertile. It was largely oral, and anecdotes and tales were passed on from generation to generation in relatively isolated communities (Cheuse 1981, 15). Hispanic New Mexican writers began publishing these stories (or cuentos) in the 1950s. Ulibarri's *Tierra Amarilla* (1964) and Cabeza de Vaca's *We Fed Them Cactus* (1954) were the first to enter the public arena. These two authors were outstanding exceptions. Despite their historical ties to New Mexico, the size of the Hispanic population and its strong influence in New Mexican culture, their writing remained overshadowed by dominant Anglo texts

The newly formed Chicano/a movement also had political



problems with Ulibarri's and Cabeza de Vaca's romanticizing of their Spanish heritage. Initially, many Chicano/as winced at the notion that they should herald their Spanish heritage, finding the European connection but a part of the greater Anglo-American colonial hegemony. Others, however, insisted they acknowledge both their North American and Iberian heritages (Gomez-Quinones 1994). In turn, there was an acknowledgement of their historical role in the Spanish conquest of the Americas, and an excavation of Spanish colonial and Mexican literature and history. The New Mexico Hispanic literary tradition also was recovered and sewn into the emerging Chicano/a tradition despite its romantic overtones. Chicano/a critics saw much of early Twentieth Century Hispanic literature as idyllic. It glorified the Spanish identity and failed to recognize their hybridity. More importantly, though, it was a tradition that glossed over hegemonic Anglo-American and Spanish colonial practices both of which led to immense social disparities in the American Indian and Hispanic communities (Calderon 1990, 66).

Despite the flourishing of Chicano/a literature, art, and academic interests, few outside the Chicano/a circle acknowledge the self-inscribed identity of Chicano/a. Equally troublesome is a lack of cohesion within the group itself, compounded by numerous people rising through the economic classes during the 1980s, and the mass migration of Mexicans and other Latin Americans into the Southwest since the 1970s (Pulido 1996). There were other problems, including a lack of

deep commitment to a radical program, a lack of resources and leadership, and a lack of a common ideology (Gomez-Quinones 1990, 144). While Chicano/a Studies still flourish on many academic campuses in the United States, as do its art and literature, the cohesion that was the goal of the original movement remains elusive. Many Southwestern Hispanics, particularly those who were part of the initial movement and their descendants, identify themselves as Chicano/a. There are those who still insist on the labels of Mexican-American, Tejano, Hispano, or Latino. These differences are compounded by divisions in gender and socio-economic status and by the fact that the larger American public and government largely fail to acknowledge Chicano/a as a legitimate identity (Pulido 1996).

The American public and the academy do not fully acknowledge the process of miscegenation between Hispanics, American Indians, and Anglos. More importantly, though, the reluctance to acknowledge intermarriage and racial mixing has lead to the continued play on the fixed identities when dealing with cultural phenomena, including history and the landscape. Unlike art and literature, most humanities and social sciences (with the obvious exception of Chicano/a Studies) insist on the codified distinctions. Geographers, in particular, are led to believe in a distinct Mexican-American landscape (Arreola 1988) and a unique Hispano landscape (Carlson 1990, Nostrand 1992). More attention has been given to what makes these landscapes distinct than to what other

traditions their peculiarities are owed, although Nostrand (1992) acknowledges the mixed blood of the Hispanos, and Arreola's insistence on using the term Mexican-American suggests recognition of a mixed identity.

In New Mexico, the polarization towards Spanish-ness is a direct result of the racial connotations of the term Mexican. Hispanos, thus, were seen as a Spanish folk culture, an identity that, arguably, comes from the Anglo-American discourse of the early Twentieth Century. During this time these native New Mexicans were idealized and romanticized, and considered to be a surviving folk tradition. Padilla writes:

Anglo-American intellectuals, writers, and artists, who came to New Mexico at the beginning of the 20th Century invented an aesthetic discourse of myth and romance that deeply inscribed itself upon the popular consciousness and provided one of the few forms through which Hispanos could compose their lives for public view (1991, 3-4).

It should be no surprise that the idea of the Spanish Hispano survives, not only in the minds of Hispanos themselves, but within the academic accounts. As Nostrand (1973, 405) points out, many older Hispanos still insist on their Spanish identity, but a large section of the younger age groups identify with Chicano/a.

The politics of Chicano/a identity also have environmental implications. A central tenet of the Chicano/a movement has been the loss of land, and the demise of agro-pastoral systems in the wake of superimposed Anglo-American

political and economic structures. The ties to the Southwest landscape have earned Chicano/a literature a reputation as being one of ecology and the environment (Gish 1996, 108). Recent contributions to Chicano/a studies have reinforced this notion, bringing to attention the plight of historic agricultural systems (Pulido 1996, Pena 1998). A key to the success of Hispanos in New Mexico and Colorado was their adaptation to the environment via the development of acequia-based (ditch) irrigation systems and grazing practices (Quintana 1990, Wright 1992). These systems integrated the communities with the actual landscape; many Chicano/a communities were, and some remain, land based. These agricultural systems and practices were concomitant with the development of a worldview that, like the people, was bound to the land. Thus, the politics of identity, which have been criticized for being intangible and removed from material practice are, at least in the Chicano/a case, inherently tied to the physical landscape.

Chicano/a artists, activists, and writers have brought attention to environmental issues in the Southwest. Their vistas, too, have expanded into the arenas of gender relations and identity. The Chicano/a voice is not uniform. The community is united, however, by location and the lingering effects of Anglo-American hegemony. Chicano/as are situated at the very site of the operation of multiple colonial powers, swiveling between colonized and colonizer, part of one imperial enterprise, but oppressed by another. They are

agents of mediation between places, Latin America and the United States, and between constructed races, Mexican, American Indian, and Anglo. They are both mediator and mediated, excluded from the unmediated authority of empire and from the unmediated authenticity of the indigenous. Chicano/a artists and intellectuals are part of what West (1990) calls the "new cultural politics of difference." Their politics are no longer just oppositional to mainstream culture and discourse, but rather

distinct articulations of talented (and usually privileged) contributors to culture who desire to align themselves with demoralized, demobilized, depoliticized, and disorganized people in order to empower and enable social action and, if possible, to enlist collective insurgency for the expansion of freedom, democracy, and individuality (1990, 20).

They are in the process of creating "culture" or ethnogenesis, drawing from the history of a people, and selectively using history and myth to create a compounded synthesis, La Raza. They, too, are creating "place" by inscribing new values to their Southwestern homeland, Aztlán. These processes are all in the wake of colonialism, speaking for it, and from it. As Anzaldua proclaims "I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture" (1987, 8) and Anaya continues "or someone else will do it and get it all wrong" (1995, xvii). Their attention, as well, has focussed on the new Southwest, addressing the emerging landscape resulting from the impress of neo-colonialism. Not only have they aligned themselves with the disenfranchised mestizo

population of the Southwest, but those of all the Americas.

As Gish notes: "Chicano/a vistas are not just of the U.S. and Mexico, but of North and South America" (1996, 108).

### **Rudolfo Anaya**

In 1971, Rudolfo Anaya was awarded the Premio Quinto Sol national Chicano/a literary award for his novel *Bless Me, Ultima*. The award recognized his skill as a writer and earmarked the earliest stage of a writing career that includes nearly a dozen novels and over two dozen short stories, essays, and poems. Anaya is a native New Mexican, born in the small village of Pasturas along the Pecos River south of Santa Rosa. His family eventually moved to Santa Rosa and later Albuquerque where he attended high school. He earned masters degrees in both literature and counseling, taught high school, and later taught literature at the University of New Mexico (Anaya 1995a, i-ii).

Anaya is known as the godfather of the Chicano/a literary genre, speaking from the Southwest and for the Chicano/a cause. Chicano/a and literary scholars including Lattin (1990), Gish (1996), Gonzales-T.(1990), Cantu (1990), and Davis (1999a) have recognized his pioneering efforts within the literary arm of the movement, which seeks to reverse the injustices of ethnic marginalization and to ultimately re-define who Chicano/as are. Anaya urges, "We must tell who we are and define ourselves as a people, define our humanity..."(1995, xvii). For Anaya, and the Chicano/a movement, this includes asserting their cultural heritage,

which is linked both to their history in the Southwest and their ties to its landscape. Anaya acknowledges this importance in the essay "Mythical Dimensions/Political Reality:"[I am] still tied to the people and the earth of the Pecos River Valley, the small towns of Santa Rosa, [and] the villages of Puerto de Luna and Pastura" (1988, 4).

Anaya's essays focus on this experience, the majority of them set in New Mexico. For him the landscape is "the place where imagination and the image-laden memory begin their work, and the three forces -- place, imagination, and memory -- are inextricably wound together in my work" (1977, 98). So important is the New Mexico setting that he claims "the discovery of place was very important to me, and very crucial to the writing of *Bless Me, Ultima* and *Heart of Aztlán*" (1977, 93). He continues, "My writing before that discovery was busy duplicating false models: it had no flavor to it, no characters, no story" (1977, 100). While critics have recognized his ties to the landscape (Gonzales-T. 1995, Lamadrid 1989, Cantu 1990), there has yet to be a full exploration of the role of geography in his novels. His work begs this as Chicano/a scholar Gonzales-T. writes:

as a writer, he has a keen sense of the great importance of spiritus loci, the spirit of place of the writer. This is central to Anaya's understanding of the power of the storyteller and the significance of the writer. Writers do not create the physical and human spirit of a place; that spirit, rather, must inspire and guide them (Gonzales-T. 1995, xvii).

The settings within Anaya's works span the New Mexico landscape from the Llano Estacado to the Rio Grande Valley to the Sangre de Cristos. The places Anaya knows best, the Pecos Valley and Albuquerque, are the stage for many of his novels and essays. *Bless Me, Ultima, Silence of the Llano*, and "Walt Whitman Strides the Llano" are centered around his boyhood home in the rural Pecos Valley. *Albuquerque, Rio Grande Fall, Heart of Aztlán*, and *Zia Summer* are focussed on the state's largest metropolis. Anaya's characters move throughout the state, though, from the southern Rio Grande (*Tortuga*), Santa Fé (*Albuquerque, Rio Grande Fall, Zia Summer*), Chimayo (*Albuquerque*), to Los Alamos (*Zia Summer, Shaman Winter*). His writing reflects an intimate understanding and relationship with New Mexico. And, many of his novels reflect his own experiences in the state, where characters can be seen as analogs to him. Many of his novels can be considered poetic autobiographies.

Many critics, including Gish (1996), Lamadrid (1989), Vassalo (1992), and Padilla (1990), indicate that a cornerstone of Anaya's work is spirituality. The New Mexico landscape, and its people, acquires mythical dimensions in all of his novels (Lorbiecki 1985, Padilla 1990). The mythic links between Anaya's characters and the landscape are paramount to his writing. Critic Gonzales-T. notes "Anaya [insists] that we must listen to the people and to the spirit of a place" (1995, xxi). So important is the land, that all of his characters are driven by a quest to link themselves to



it. He tells us "[characters] who have become separated from their land and sense of place become frustrated, alienated human beings" (1977, 101). Anaya uses Hispanic folklore, Pueblo, and Aztec mythology as avenues through which his characters can connect with the physical landscape.

While New Mexico is the imagined terrain for Anaya's fiction, cultural politics underscore his entire repertoire. The initial push of the Chicano/a movement gave Anaya and others the momentum to comment on the effects of American colonization and the resulting marginalization of Southwestern Hispanics. He has frequently reflected on the fact that as a Chicano/a he is writing in "colonial space" (Jussawalla 1992, Dick and Sirias 1998). He works against total assimilation by dominant Anglo-American culture. He has also attacked the marginal position Chicano/as occupy in U.S. society. Like many other Chicano/a activists and writers, Anaya makes direct links between Chicano/as and contemporary and pre-historic Mexico. In an autobiography, he writes "I will not rest until the people of Mexican heritage know the great cultures and civilizations they are heirs to from that country to the south" (1990, 387). He has been an emissary in the push for the acceptance of minority writers in American literary production. As a teacher, he has also been very influential in bringing multiculturalism to the classroom.

When he focuses upon New Mexico, his writing deals directly with historical and contemporary issues that have had disastrous effects on the Indian and mestizo populations.

Anaya's characters move through plots that draw the reader -- his last three books are mystery novels -- but also directly mirror issues that face the state and the larger Southwest. In *Albuquerque*, *Zia Summer*, and *Rio Grande Fall* the characters are caught in the manipulation of the state's cultural and natural resources. High stakes water development in *Albuquerque* seeks to transform the desert metropolis into a Southwestern Venice. The developments ultimately threaten American Indian and Hispano water rights and cultural autonomy. In *Zia Summer*, environmentalists who are threatening to hijack trucks carrying radioactive waste from Los Alamos Laboratories to the White Sands hold the state captive. The effects of urban sprawl and high tech industry are the key to the plots of *Zia Summer* and *Rio Grande Fall*. By weaving these important issues into his texts, Anaya is commenting on the effects of rapid urban growth on natural resources; he also illustrates the insensitivity recent immigrants have towards the local populace. Gentrification and class colonization come to head in *Rio Grande Fall*, as the transformation of old Albuquerque and Santa Fé neighborhoods from Hispano homes to tourist meccas is veiled in the marginalization, commodification, and forced migration of its native population. Here Anaya is no different than other minority Southwestern writers including Mcmaday, Silko, and Anzaldua, all three of whom use the novel to dissolve inequities in power and use them as a forum for the exchange of ideas on the environment and political change (Teague

1997).

While Anaya weaves this commentary into his novels subtly, he makes more profound commentary on these issues in his scholarly essays. The most influential include "Mythical Dimensions/Political Reality," (1988) a concise statement on the social, cultural, and environmental situation of the contemporary Southwest. The region's legacy of colonialism and conquest, which he sees as a strength, has been heightened by economic and political globalization. In turn, he argues that people have lost touch with their historic roots, and with the landscape, and fears that the centers of traditional Hispano and American Indian cultures could be lost. Out-of-control growth threaten both the environment and local residents, both themes he continues in "Bendicime, America" and "At A Crossroads." He directly addresses the marginalization of Hispanics in "Take the Tortillas Out of Your Poetry" and "On the Education of Hispanic Children" making strong arguments for the inclusion of multicultural education and critiquing the hegemonic educational system and the canonization of Euroamerican literature and academic practices.

Perhaps one of the most important contributions he has made to the Chicano/a movement is his successful integration into mainstream literary circles, using contemporary popular forms, as illustrated in the quartet of mystery novels and two children's books. The use of myth and the Southwestern setting have proven to be successful. *Bless Me, Ultima* was published

by a small Chicano/a publishing house, and the first edition sold over 200,000 copies. Its success required numerous reprints. His subsequent works *Heart of Aztlán* and *Albuquerque* were printed by the University of New Mexico Press, indicating his popularity, but also his role as an important Chicano/a writer from New Mexico. His last five works, including the mystery novel sequence and a spiritual guidebook, *Jalamanta*, were published by New York publisher Warner. But, his success with large publishing houses and with the larger reading public did not come without struggle. Giant publishers have, until recently, steadfastly rejected works by Chicano/a writers (Dick and Sirias 1998).

As a writer and an activist, Anaya is most persuasive when he deals with issues of cultural identity and the fragile relationships between humans and the natural landscape. He has fully explored what it means to be a Chicano/a and what it means to be a native of the Southwest. The end result has been a complete reconstitution of ethnicity and a deep exploration of the idea of homeland; both extend beyond the parameters of the Southwest. As many critics are quick to note, Anaya's work is not solely characterized by its regional flavor. His novels and stories revolve around worlds defined by basic human values (Lattin 1990). Basic issues of good and evil, rather than culture, ethnicity, or class, are the focus of the plots (Gonzales-T. 1995). His narratives are not limited to the mythical New World but are blended with European, Asian, and African lore. He frequently escapes the

geographic and ethnic boundaries placed upon him as a Chicano/a writer from the southwest. He branches out and fully explores his relationship with the human community and with its home, the earth.

As his novels indicate, he is always lured back to the American Southwest. In 1981 he proclaimed that "When people ask me where my roots are, I look down at my feet and I see the roots of my soul grasping the earth. They are here...in the Southwest" (Cheuse 1981, 15). Nearly twenty years later he echoed the same refrain "New Mexico is my home, stability, and history. It has the feel of my ancestors. Their spirits are here. They speak to me. If all this is happening and I live in a spiritual place, why would I leave?" (Dick and Sirias 1998).

### Chapter 3

#### **Aztlán and New Mexico: The Roots of Rudolfo Anaya's Geographical Imagination**

This chapter explores the foundations of Rudolfo Anaya's geographical imagination. I contend that it came from two cultural and geographic sources. First, the Chicano/a movement and its proclamation of the Southwest as its homeland of Aztlán provided the initial push for Anaya. I interpret this space, in particular its association with indigenous and pre-columbian Mexico. I discuss Anaya's role within the nationalist movement and how he uses the concept of Aztlán, in its most orthodox form, in his novels. Secondly, I explore New Mexico as Anaya's geographic homeland. I then draw upon his actual experience of New Mexico places, how they shape his work, and conversely how he uses them to illustrate his intimate understanding of them. Finally, I link the concepts of Aztlán and Chicano/a nationalism to that of New Mexico as his homeland, and discuss the relationships between cultural politics and geographical imagination and experience.

## Chicano/a Nationalism and Anaya's Discovery of Aztlán

For Chicanos the concept of Aztlán signaled a unifying point of cohesion through which they could define the foundations for an identity. Aztlán brought together a culture that had been somewhat disjointed and dispersed, allowing it, for the first time, a framework within which to understand itself.

-- *Aztlán, Essays on the Chicano Homeland*, ii

Perhaps the most enduring and contested legacy of the Chicano/a movement has been the legend of Aztlán. Borne out of Mesoamerican creation myth, Chicano/as claimed Aztlán was the homeland of the Aztecs, who abandoned the land far to the north of the Valley of Mexico (today's American Southwest) in the Twelfth Century. Aztlán was reclaimed by the Chicano/a movement in the late 1960s when they asserted their rights to the Southwestern United States as their ancestral and contemporary homeland.

Aztlán is a controversial and elusive concept. Chicano/a activists and scholars have never been able to confirm this place in the historical or pre-historical record, and its actual location, most likely, was not in the Southwest but in northern Mexico. The actual meaning of Aztlán to Chicano/as has never been reconciled, partially because there are numerous interpretations. The greatest tension in the debate remains whether it is a historical fact or a metaphor.<sup>11</sup> The only consensus is that it represents a

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<sup>11</sup> Forbes (1973) produced a compelling ethno-historic and historic study of the location of Aztlán. The results were inconclusive, although he placed it somewhere in northern Mexico. Sauer (1932) placed Aztlán (Aztatlán) firmly along Mexico's northwest coast. For complete discussions on the

cultural space and a tie to the indigenous.

Despite elusiveness, Aztlán became and remains an important rallying point for a people who felt dislocated from Anglo-America, Mexico, and also from one another. The initial claim to a home was part of the political protest and subsequent propaganda that permeated the Chicano/a cause of the late 1960s and 1970s. However, the idea of the Southwest as the Chicano/a homeland endures, tied inherently to politics, but also to the history of Chicano/as in the Southwest. Aztlán is the central place, the home, of the Chicano/a movement.

The act of naming, and subsequent suggestions for regional autonomy, went beyond a simple recognition of time-space attachment. Aztlán became a space for the creation of Chicano/a culture. It linked Southwest American Hispanics to indigenous Mexicans (Aztecs), acknowledging a mestizo ancestry. Aztlán also provided the geographic sounding board for the creation of a new cultural history. As Anaya and Lomeli maintain:

Aztlán exists as a symbol and archetype. It is a symbol which speaks of origins and ancestors and it is a symbol of what we imagine ourselves to be. It embodies a human perspective of time and place (1989, iii).

In this manner, Aztlán became a nationalistic metaphor, used as a vehicle for the creation of what Fanon calls an "imagined community" that created its own self-image in order

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nature of the Aztlán idea see Alarcon (1992) and Davis (1999b).



to liberate itself from Anglo-American hegemony (Fanon 1967). The Chicano/a response was not unlike numerous other nationalistic drives. It was a response to the control of the land by Anglo-Americans, which produced economic, political, and economic suffering (Blaut 1987, 36).

Whereas the idea of Aztlán is intimately linked to American colonialism, and the effort to subvert it, Aztlán is also an idea that continues to provide direction and hope for Chicano/as as a people. It created culture, bringing together peoples with mestizo backgrounds into a spatial framework that allowed for the creation of a new mythical, prehistoric canon affiliated with Mesoamerica. It was a means for the creation of a "stable unitary assumption of collectivity" (Bhabha 1985, 153). Aztlán became a historical, geographical, political, and mythical point of reference. As Leal maintains:

As a Chicano symbol, Aztlán has two meanings: first it represents the geographic region known as the Southwestern part of the United States, composed of the territory that Mexico ceded in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; second and more important, Aztlán symbolized the spiritual union of the Chicanos, something that is carried within the heart, no matter where they may live or where they may find themselves (Leal 1989, 8).

In *Aztlán: Essays on the Chicano Homeland*, Anaya and Lomeli insist that Aztlán is "historical, anthropological, and symbolic" (1989, iii). It had changed from a legend to an "anthropologically sound and historically reliable" fact (1989, iii). In essence, claims to the Southwest were justified viz-a-viz Mesoamerican legend.

What followed the self-naming of Chicano/as and the claim to Aztlán was a renaissance of arts and culture, concomitant with political activism. The Southwest became the Chicano/a verandah that faced directly south. Activists, writers, and artists then produced an array of discursive and artistic -- yet overtly political -- appropriations of cultural elements into a nationalistic banner. Aztlán became a durable, political symbol of cultural nationalism, and was used to legitimate Chicano/a identity tied to Mexico. Many scholars agree that this idea of Aztlán has its roots in the original "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán," written in 1969. The main points are worth noting here:

-Chicano/as claimed their rights to the "northern land of Aztlán" by ancestral birthright, claiming to be descendents of the Aztec, whose homeland was somewhere in the American Southwest, and by linking their mestizo background to Mexico;

-Unity was stressed and nationalism was the "key or common denominator" that transcended all internal differences within the Chicano community, uniting all in the struggle against the dominant Anglo culture; and,

-Aztlán was proclaimed as a nation, and the Plan called for the establishment of an independent political party at the local, regional and national levels.

(Anaya and Lomeli 1989, 2-5)

Aztlán, in both its sense as a national region and as ancient utopic homeland, became, and remains, a durable metaphor. Yet its conception is dubious. Its existence was justified simply as a reaction to European and Anglo-American colonization and oppression. It also failed to grapple with

the mestizo colonization of American Indian lands in the Southwest. Nationalism could not override internal differences, in particular those based upon gender, as Chicanas have argued; and, the tendency to gloss over regional differences in the cause became quite clear (Alarcon 1992). Activists in Texas and California, for example, were grappling with different issues and a much different experience than those in New Mexico. Aztlán was also firmly fixed in the Southwest, yet it claimed universally for Chicano/as everywhere. It also disregarded others living in the Southwest, namely the Anglo "colonizers," African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and most importantly American Indians. Moreover, the link to being indigenous did not ensure a Chicano/a claim to the Southwest. The dominance of the association with Mexico and on pre-historic Mesoamerica reinforced the displacement Chicano/as felt from Mexico. In the context of New Mexico this is particularly important. While some of the original colonists in 1598 were mestizo Mexicans and Mesoamerican Indians, in 1969 most New Mexican mestizos had been isolated from central Mexico for centuries. They had not been in direct daily contact with Mexican nationals for over 100 years (Cobos 1983). The Mesoamerican connection also entrenched their distance from mainstream United States culture, and neglected the ties they had to the Southwestern landscape and the American Indians residing there.

Regardless of these shortcomings, Aztlán did

reinvigorate the imagination of the Chicano/a community. By the late 1970s, activism declined and the movement's center transferred from the ranks of the workers and social activists to the creative and critical minds of writers, artists, and academics. Within this intellectual arena Chicano/a exclusivity and the Mesoamerican/Mexican Aztlán was perpetuated by a process of double-colonization. Chicano/as were seen by the dominant society as different and thus marginalized under the guise of the need for American homogeneity. Yet, the nationalist thrust evolved through a similar process, where the writers and intellectuals appropriated cultural patterns from Mexican nationalism. These quickly gained credibility and were assimilated and internalized by its proponents.

#### **Anaya, Mesoamerica, and the search for the Indigenous**

Anaya became an important member of the movement, helping to define its values, its history, and its traditions. The Chicano/a movement also allowed him to rediscover Aztlán. He reflects on the creation of the Chicano/a homeland:

The naming ceremony, or redefinition of the group, occurred within the ranks of the Indohispanos of the Southwest in the 1960s. Leaders within the Hispanic community - educators, poets, writers, artists, activists - rose up against the majority presence of Anglo-America to defend the right of the Hispanic community to exist as a national entity within the United States (1989, 231-2).

He also reflects upon the condition of many Chicano/as in the Southwest, and the need for the creation of a

nationalistic banner and its home, Aztlán. It became an inspirational force, rooting Chicano/as in physical and symbolic space. He maintains:

It was a time when we saw our community assaulted by poverty and oppression; the denigrating effects of racism ate away at our pride and our stamina. Assimilation, on the other hand, only raised false hopes for our people, so it was a time of crisis, a time that begged for the "senores of the communal time" to once again insist on our right to our values and history. If this didn't happen, our community was doomed to existence as a tourist commodity, admired for its quaint folkways but not taken seriously by the world of nations (1989, 233).

Fanon writes, "the contact of the people with the new movement gives rise to a new rhythm of life and to forgotten muscular tensions, and develops the imagination" (1967, 155). Likewise, Anaya noted "a group defines itself not only politically but also defines its character, that is, its soul" (1989, 233). For him, Aztlán allowed Chicano/as to better understand their "psychological time (identity), regional makeup (place), and evolution (historical time)" (1989, iv). More importantly, it gave a sense of dignity to those involved. He writes, "one can not deny the benefits of reinvigorated pride" (1989, 240).

Anaya was like other Chicano/a activists of the time. His search went south of the U.S.-Mexico border, to Mesoamerica and the legends of the Aztecs. His use of this form of cultural hybridity became a hallmark for many other Chicano/a writers. Younger Chicano/as continue to draw on multiple cultural sources from Latin America in their poetry,

literature, art, and theater (Lamadrid 1989, 247). As critic Paredes writes, even the...

new generation of Chicano writers [have] reaffirmed their ties to the cultures of contemporary Mexico and Latin America but also rediscovered...their aboriginal heritage (1982, 61).

Anaya laid a foundation, providing his contemporaries and future writers an avenue for the exploration of the possibilities for regenerating the culture that he and others produced and claimed in the 1970s. Eventually, they constructed what Perez-Torrez calls a "strategic mestizaje," a hybrid identity that was counter-hegemonic and emancipatory (Perez-Torres 1998, 155). Chicano/a culture thus grew out of the intersection of Hispanic and indigenous peoples. Anaya maintains:

For too long the community had only projected its Spanish history and heritage, for that projection suited the powers that deal with this community as a tourist commodity and as a community that could do service work for the society of power...that identity left out the reality of our mestizo heritage (1989, 234).

Unlike other Chicano/a writers, Anaya also acknowledged his connection to American Indians in New Mexico. For him, Aztlán also...

meant reviving the history, myths, spiritual thought, legends, and symbols from Native America which were part of the Chicano's collective history. The search found the umbilical cord which lead to Indian Mesoamerica and the Pueblos of the Rio Grande: that is, in the in the act of declaring our identity and nationality, we acknowledged our Indian American parentage (1989, 234).

The link to Mesoamerica, however, was the most orthodox manifestation of the indigenous in Chicano/a literature, and it tightened the bond with Mexico (Anaya and Lomeli 1989, Anzaldua 1989). This is illustrated graphically on the bookcover of a collection of essays co-edited by Anaya, *Aztlán: Essays on the Chicano Homeland*. The illustration is dominated by a pre-columbian glyph strikingly similar to those associated with pre-historic Mesoamerica (Figure 1). Anaya's use of Mesoamerican culture is not obvious in his first and most highly regarded novel, *Bless Me, Ultima*. The legend of the golden carp, the mythical fish of the Pecos River, by way of association or coincidence, does find its roots in Mesoamerica. But his richest use of the Chicano/a nationalistic impulse is found in *Heart of Aztlán*. In the novel, the barrios of Albuquerque acquire a Mexican flair, as the text is spiced with italicized myths from Tenochtitlán. For example, in Chapter Two: *The gods had demanded blood and now it bathed the sun in red* (HA, 23).<sup>12</sup>

This overt connection to Aztec ritual is but one of numerous myths from central Mexico. In the following passage the archetypal deer is summoned from central Mexico north to New Mexico, where he will reunite with, and guide, his clan:

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<sup>12</sup> From this point on, novel references will be abbreviated as follows: *Bless Me, Ultima* (BMU), *Heart of Aztlán* (HA), *Tortuga* (T), *Albuquerque* (ABQ), *Zia Summer* (ZS), *Rio Grande Fall* (RGF), and *Shaman Winter* (SW).

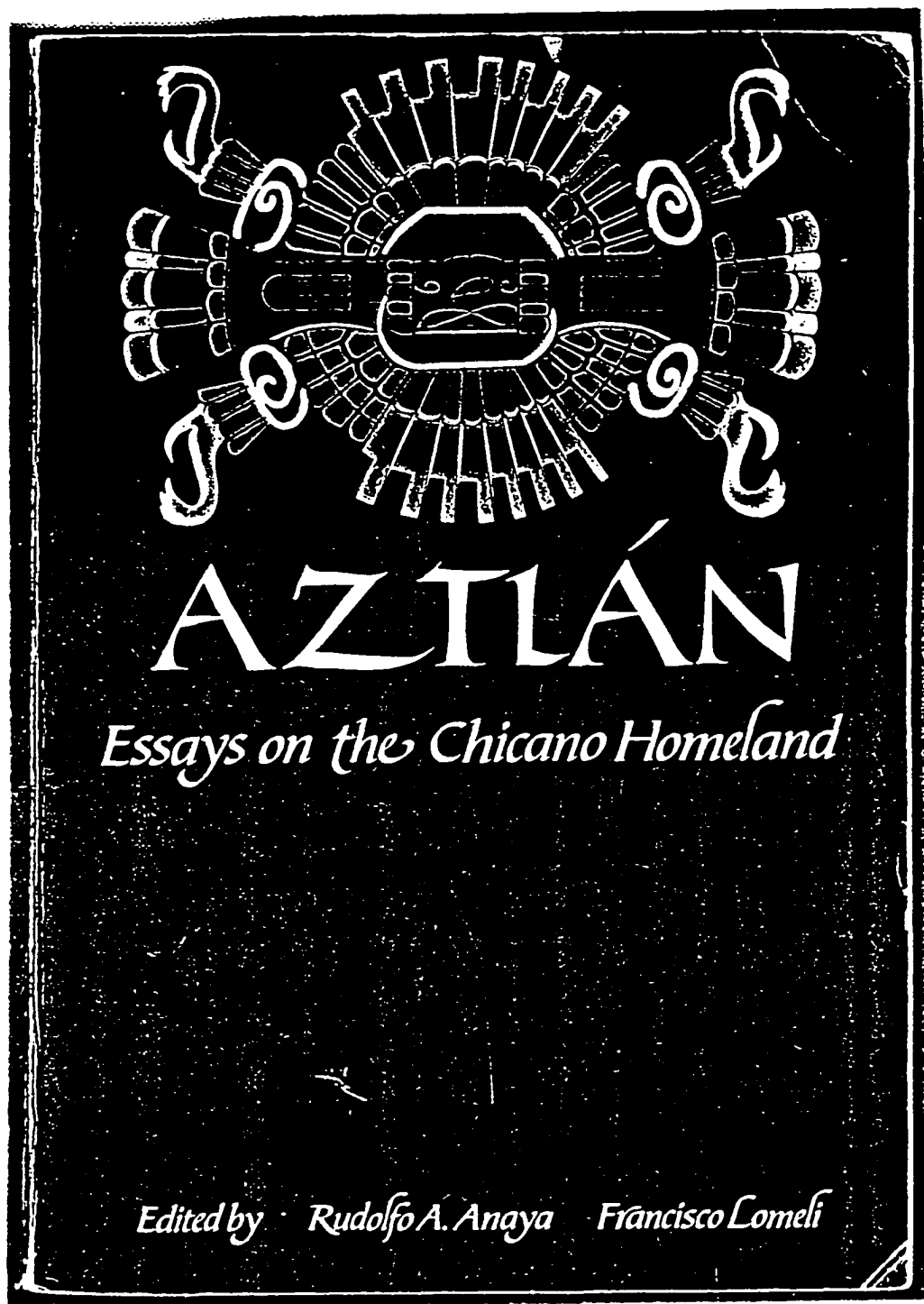


Figure 1. Cover of Anaya and Lomeli's anthology, dominated by a pre-columbian glyph similar to those from central Mexico (reproduced with permission from University of New Mexico Press).



And where was the deer of the ancient legends? Did he sleep in the lands south of Aztlán, unaware of his people? Would his sister, the new moon of the new year, rise without him?

The golden deer stood still. He pawed the fresh earth of eternity, sniffed the fathomless space of his journey, then he leaped northward into a trail of blazing glory that would take him to his people... (HA, 201).

Aztec ritual sacrifice and the golden deer are only two of the numerous allusions to the valley of Mexico. Anaya also uses the turtle, part of Mesoamerican creation myth of Turtle Island. The myths soothe the sense of suffering, alienation, and confusion on the part of the characters of the Barelás barrio of Albuquerque. But, it appears as if ancient Mexico is coming to save its lost and mistreated children of the Rio Grande.

The Turtle Island myth is reintroduced in *Tortuga* (symbolizing both a young boy and a mountain near Truth or Consequences), and reappears in his latest novel, *Shaman Winter*. Myth comes to fruition in the story *Lord of the Dawn: Legend of Quetzalcoatl*, a title that could not be more direct. Mesoamerican connections also appear in the first of four books about present-day urban New Mexico, *Albuquerque*. In the novel, Ben Chavez, a novelist (and an analog to Anaya) illustrates to the protagonist, Abran, his loyalty to the idea of Aztlán in his stories. In one such story, Juan Chicaspatas and Al Penco, Ben's modifications of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza -- Norteño<sup>13</sup> folk legends -- there are mythical and

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<sup>13</sup> Norteño refers to northern Mexican folk culture.

spiritual links to Mexico.<sup>14</sup> In the Sonny Baca series (*Zia Summer*, *Rio Grande Fall*, and *Shaman Winter*) the connections reappear. Characters are continually reminded of Mesoamerica in dreams and visions, ones they are assured "[are] as old as the Aztecs" (RGF, 122). In *Zia Summer*, Aztecs become an analog to the people of New Mexico; the heirs to a great civilization that is threatened by external forces and internal upheaval (ZS, 271). In *Shaman Winter* the link becomes a sacred bowl from the Toltec Civilization that surfaces in the Rio Grande Valley. The main characters covet the bowl, for it holds many of the answers to their past and their future.

The Mexican connections do not overpower Anaya's focus on the New Mexico experience, yet it leads readers to believe that the historical and mythical roots of New Mexico are not in the Rio Grande Valley, but rather much further south. The lack of a historical validity for such claims -- what some critics have called a "superficial" tracing of origins -- hinder the actual embodiment of Chicano/a history, conflict, and change in the Southwest.<sup>15</sup> As Anaya's work attests, there remains the need in Chicano/a culture to assert a pre-colonized heritage, which means pre-Spanish. Thus, there

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<sup>14</sup> The story is similar to Anaya's *The Adventures of Juan Chicaspatas*, where New Mexico Chicano/as are embedded in a mythic folktale in the American Southwest that has a fundamental, pre-Columbian Mesoamerican component.

<sup>15</sup> Chabram and Fregoso (1990) and Alarcon (1992) discuss the critique of the orthodox use of Aztlán, pointing to its exclusive, essentialized connotations.

is a constant struggle with a cultural difference based on a place over a thousand miles, and over five hundred years, from contemporary Santa Fé. All along there has been the material, historical, and experiential evidence, at least in New Mexico, available for a focus on the local and the specific.

#### **Anaya's Re-discovery of Native New Mexico**

Anaya's affinity for American Indians in New Mexico, in particular the Pueblos, becomes more and more prominent in his last four novels, *Albuquerque*, *Zia Summer*, *Rio Grande Fall*, and reach fruition in *Shaman Winter*. In his latest novel, the New Mexico Chicano/a is generated, not by the union of Spanish and the Aztec, but between the Iberians and the Indian people of New Mexico. Although this connection to the Pueblos comes much later in his work, it was partially a product of the social climate during the early stages of the Chicano/a movement:

It was in Mesoamerica that we rediscovered the legend of Aztlán...rooted in the tribal memory of the Aztecs. Why was this legend not readily available to us, say in the legends of the Pueblos of the Rio Grande? Perhaps it was, but by the middle of the twentieth century we as "Hispanos" were separated from the Pueblo Indian world of our ancestors. A color consciousness which has been such a negative element in the history of the Americas affected our own people, and, falling prey to the pressure, the large mestizo population moved to identify with that which was hispanic. Indian thought, once accessible to our ancestors, was withdrawn to the inner circle of the Pueblo (1989, 234).

Chicano/as also neglected their relationships with Southwestern Indians because they were overly concerned with Mexico; the insistence that they were Mexicans trapped within

the United States. But Anaya's conception of Aztlán slowly diverges from the dominant view. The Rio Grande Pueblos, and the complex set of relationships they had with the Spanish and the mestizo population -- from religious interaction, agricultural adaptation, and intermarriage -- are slowly integrated into his work. For Anaya, the cultural and conceptual core of Aztlán eventually moves from Mesoamerica to the northern Rio Grande. Despite the recurrence of its most orthodox form in his most recent work, Aztlán becomes a striking metaphor for the New Mexico landscape, and the Mesoamerican version of Aztlán recedes more and more through his repertoire. It is slowly replaced by a stronger emphasis on Southwestern Indians, in particular the Pueblos. He explains,

separation from roots created vulnerability because our worldview was centered in community and its relationship to the earth(1989, 234).

Anaya reunited himself, and by extension the Chicano/a, with the Pueblos and the New Mexico landscape, a union that can be validated in history and which becomes central to the culture of his characters. Many are constantly reminded of their Pueblo heritage, of intermarriage, and their syncretic agricultural and religious systems. These cultural connections and spatial relations do define much of New Mexico, and they eventually surface in his writing. The progressive emphasis on Southwestern Indians, rather than pre-columbian Mexican Indians, reflects Anaya's understanding of

New Mexico's history, and ultimately his immersion in place.

His appropriation of American Indian New Mexicans still exemplifies the Chicano/a drive to connect with the indigenous. Thus, it falls into the pitfalls of essentialism and obfuscates the binary relationships between colonist and indigenous, imperial and colonized, center and margin. The use of both Mesoamerican and American Indian culture can be considered an imperial move on the part of Chicano/as themselves. While these issues will be discussed in greater detail later, what is important is the change in focus from Mexico to New Mexico. In discovering a native New Mexico, Anaya's identity, sense of place, and history become anchored to his home rather than the orthodox Aztlán.

#### **The Discovery and Experience of New Mexico**

I could walk anywhere in the world and feel I was a citizen of the world, but it was Nuevo Mexico that centered me...  
--New World Man, 356

Anaya's work can not be completely separated from the initial impulse of nationalistic Aztlán. In his first three works, *Bless Me*, *Ultima*, *Heart of Aztlán*, and *Tortuga*, Aztlán can also be considered a metaphor for the discovery of place, or the recognition of New Mexico as the homeland. It is not the ancient Aztec homeland, but rather Anaya's realization of the importance of the New Mexico landscape to his writing:

My sense of place helps me define my center, and that center becomes the point of view from which I observe life. The discovery of place was very important to me, and very crucial to the writing of *Bless Me, Ultima* and *Heart of Aztlán* (1977, 100).

Anaya's family history can be traced back to Seventeenth Century and the Atrisco Land Grant that encompasses much of the high mesas west of present-day Albuquerque. It was from this initial land grants that his family developed an attachment to, and an understanding of the landscape:

The old land grants of New Mexico, including the Atrisco Land Grant, were established for the good of the community, for the good of the settlers who would work the land. The land did not belong to any particular group of individuals. In fact, the land did not "belong" in the way we think of today when we own title to a piece of land. The land belonged to the community, it was cared for, it was the mother earth which nurtured us (1983, B-3).

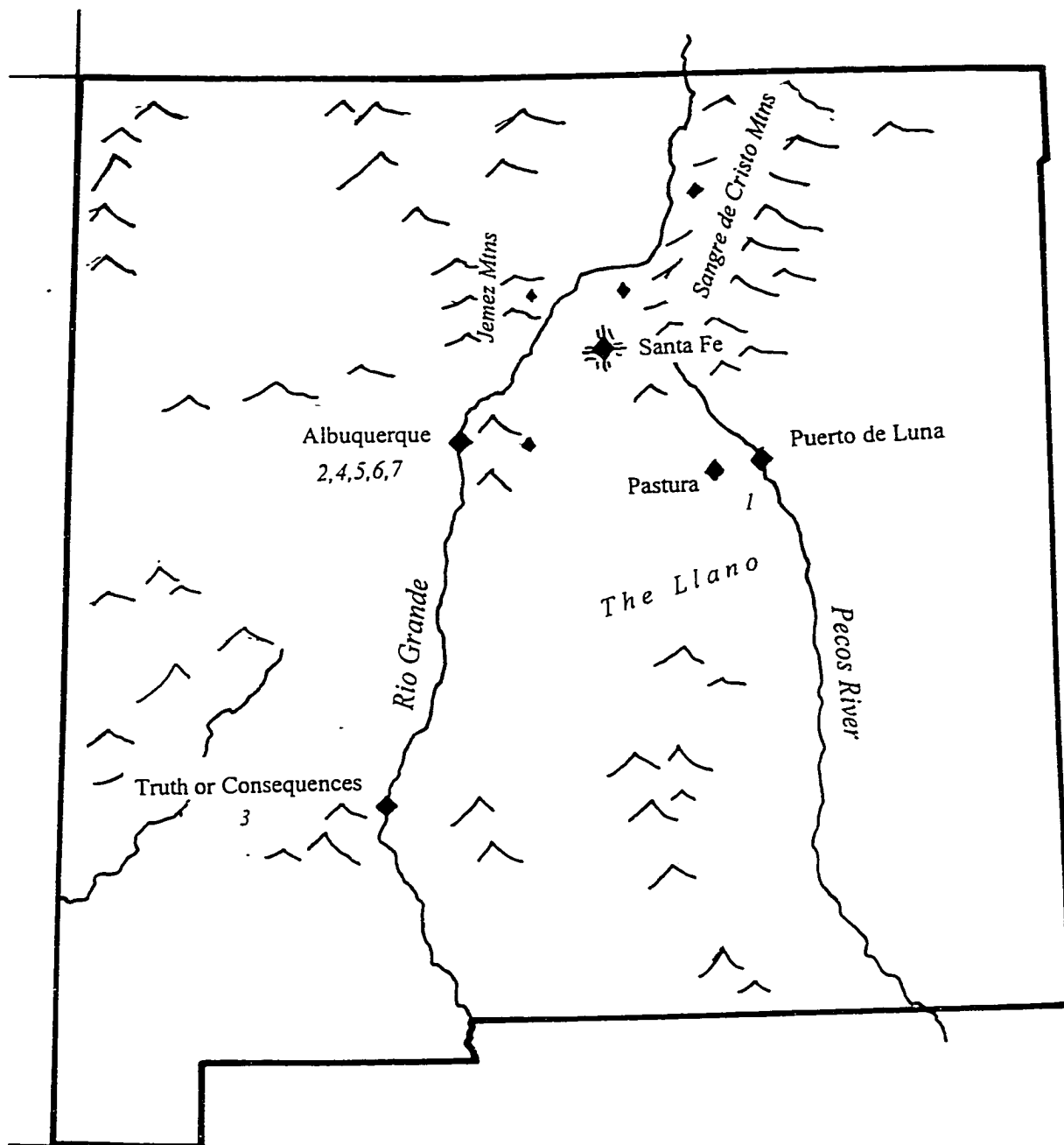
The Atrisco Land Grant, a legacy of the Spanish settlement of the northern New Mexico, is fundamental to the development of the culture of his characters. Yet, his point of view comes largely from his attachment to the places in New Mexico he knows best. All of his novels provide enlightening instances of his reliance on New Mexico places as points of inspiration. They are more than just setting, as he notes:

My writing before [the discovery of place] was busy duplicating false models; it had no flavor to it, no characters, no story (1977, 100).

The recognition of the power of place is evident in the settings for his novels. His boyhood home in the Pecos Valley and the llano of eastern New Mexico and Albuquerque are center stage in his *Heart of Aztlán* trilogy and in the Sonny Baca

mystery novels. This should be no surprise, for Anaya spent his childhood in the Pecos Valley and later moved to Albuquerque, where he attended high school, the University of New Mexico, and where he presently resides (Figure 2). Clearly, these places, and his experiences therein, provided the impulse for most of his work. Many literary and Chicano/a scholars have recognized the important role of place and the landscape in his work (Teague 1997, Gish 1996, Gonzales-T. 1995, Lamadrid 1989). However, the rich repository of subjective place description in his writing begs for a geographic interpretation, in particular one that illustrates the meaning of his homeland and the many places that comprise it.

In his most influential novels about New Mexico, beginning with *Bless Me, Ultima* and ending with his recently published *Shaman Winter*, Anaya can be seen as a regional specialist in cultural geography. Because his novels reflect his experience of New Mexico they are also autobiographical (Figure 3). His descriptions of the state articulate a humanistic "sense of place," an "immersion in, or inpenetration with, the world" (Pocock 1981, 17). In simplest terms, Anaya's sense of New Mexico can be illustrated in his descriptions of the land and its people. He takes the New Mexico of geographical fact and uses it to give life to his fiction (Aiken 1977). In other words, the characters articulate Anaya's own experiences of the landscape. This calls into question a commonly held idea about the separation



- |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 - <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> | 5 - <i>Zia Summer</i>      |
| 2 - <i>Heart of Aztlán</i>  | 6 - <i>Rio Grande Fall</i> |
| 3 - <i>Tortuga</i>          | 7 - <i>Shaman Winter</i>   |
| 4 - <i>Albuquerque</i>      |                            |

◆ Major settings in novels

◆ Minor settings

Figure 2: Locations of Anaya's major novels within New Mexico.



Novel	Date	Primary Characters	Place	Time Period
<i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>	1972	Antonio, Ultima	Pecos Valley Villages	early 1940s
<i>Heart of Aztlan</i>	1976	family of Clemente Chavez	Barelas barrio Albuquerque	1950s
<i>Tortuga</i>	1979	Tortuga, Salomon	Truth or Consequences	1950s
<i>Albuquerque</i>	1992	Abran, Ben Chavez	Albu'r'querque	mid 1980s
<i>Zia Summer</i>	1995	Sonny Baca, Don Elisco	Albuquerque	1990
<i>Rio Grande Fall</i>	1996	Sonny Baca, Don Eliseo	Albuquerque	early 1990s
<i>Shaman Winter</i>	1999	Sonny Baca, Don Eliseo	Albuquerque	late 1990s, 1598-present

Figure 3. Location, major characters, and time periods of Anaya's major novels.

of people and place, that, in the words of cultural critic Williams, "the very idea of landscape implies separation and observation," (1973), or of author Orwell "nobody involved in the landscape actually sees the landscape" (1946, 38). To the contrary, Anaya and his characters are acutely sensitive to the New Mexico scene. Many of his characters are rooted, but they are not "at home in an unself-conscious way" as Tuan has argued (Tuan 1980, 4). They have a commitment and attachment to the land, and many times the people and place become reciprocal. Other characters are further distanced, many of

them displaced, and are driven by a quest to link themselves to New Mexico. This illustrates yet another tension that defines much of the Chicano/a situation: torn between a sense of belonging to, and being alienated from, place.

### **Ancestral Place and Home Place**

Anaya's attachment to the Atrisco Land Grant, and its association with the land and social rights movement of the 1960s, can be seen as a point of departure for his bond with New Mexico. Yet, Anaya's first place, his home, is a critical part of his world. The villages of Las Lunas, Pasturas, and Santa Rosa left a definite mark in determining how he perceives the world. He acknowledges his ties to the people and the place of the Pecos Valley (1995a). But the best evidence is in the novel, *Bless Me, Ultima*. A curandera (folk-healer), Ultima, lands in the small villages of the Pecos Valley and takes under her wing a young boy, Antonio. The story is one of delivering peace and tranquility to the people of the valley, allowing Antonio an insight into the landscape that surrounds him:

She took my hand and I felt the power of a whirlwind sweep around me. Her eyes swept the surrounding hills and through them I saw for the first time the wild beauty of our hills and the magic of the green river. My nostrils quivered as I felt the song of the mockingbirds and the drone of the grasshoppers mingle with the pulse of the earth. The four directions of the llano met in me, and the white sun shone on my soul. The granules of sand at my feet and the sun and sky above me dissolved into one strange, complete being (BMU, 12).

Antonio has discovered his place in this paragraph near the beginning of the novel which initiates a discovery of the power of the New Mexico landscape and all of its parts: the topography, the grass, the river, the animals. Ultima leads Antonio, as Anaya leads the reader, further into the spirit of this place. Anaya then begins to articulate his understanding of the imperative role of this place to his family. Perhaps the best example comes from the two communities that are critical dimensions in the novel. Antonio's mother and father are from the two villages that straddle the Pecos. Antonio's father is from Pasturas, his mother El Puerto de la Luna. His father's family are ranchers, horsemen, and vaqueros from the llano. They are nomadic herders, people of the wind:

The wind says the llano gave us good weather, it gave us mild winters and rain in the summer to make the grass grow tall. The vaqueros rode out and saw their flocks multiply; the herds of sheep and cattle grew. Everyone was happy (BMU, 191).

According to his father, the vaquero is also at the hands of the dry spells that shrivel the grasses of the plain: "the llano can be the most beautiful place in the world - but it can also be the cruelest" (BMU, 191).

Antonio's mother is from El Puerto de la Luna (an analog to the real Puerto de Luna), a farming community, and she does not like the people of Pasturas, the vaqueros, and their life of wandering and tragedy (BMU, 123). El Puerto acquired its name from two mesas at the southern end of the Pecos Valley

that hold the moon:

it was fitting that these people, the Lunas, came to settle in this valley. They planted their crops and cared for their animals according to the cycles of the moon. They lived their lives, sang their songs, and died under the changing moon (BMU, 123).

Much of Antonio's struggle is making the transition from childhood to adolescence. And part of this is coming to terms with the differences between his mother and father and their family homes. But Antonio also realizes how his family defines the world outside of the Pecos valley. His father, of the nomadic Vaqueros of Pasturas, yearns for another place, and another life:

Another day and more miles of that cursed highway to patch! And for whom? For me that I might travel west? Ay no, that highway is not for the poor man, it is for the tourist - ay, Maria, we should have gone to California when we were young, when my sons were boys - In California, they say, the land flows with milk and honey (BMU, 51).

Antonio's mother retorts: "Any land will flow with milk and honey if it is worked with honest hands (BMU, 51), a response grounded in her ties to the farmers of El Puerto, but also her attachment to the land.

In the subsequent novel, *Heart of Aztlán*, Anaya's world moves from the Pecos to the state's largest city. Clemente Chavez and his family leave the mythic town of Guadalupe for Albuquerque, a move similar to that of Anaya's family from Santa Rosa to the state's metropolis during the middle of the

Twentieth Century. At the time many New Mexican families left the countryside for the cities, forced from a life of farming and ranching into urban centers throughout the West as a labor pool for the growing defense industry. The sense of displacement from the home of Guadalupe is clear. Clemente Chavez, the father of the family, despairs as he contemplates selling his land and compromising his attachment to the llano:

His soul and heart were in the earth, and he knew that when he signed he would be cutting the strings of that attachment. It was like setting adrift on an unknown, uncharted ocean. He tried to understand the necessity of selling the land, to understand that the move provide his children a new future in a new place, but that did not lessen the pain he felt as the roots of his soul pulled away and severed themselves from the earth which had nurtured his life (HA, 3)

He realizes the effects of the move:

old customs and traditions would fall by the wayside, and they would be like wandering gypsies without a homeland where they might anchor their spirit (HA, 3).

Clemente, and his family, despair over the separation from their home, and their recollections of Guadalupe bring both peace and turmoil to their displaced hearts. At the whim of outside cultural and economic forces, the family members are displaced nomads, and their new home in the barrio conjures up a fuller appreciation of their home place. The severance was almost death, as Clemente exclaims "what will become of mi familia! What will become of my land, my roots" (HA, 5).

The response to the barrio landscape of the fictionalized Barelás of Albuquerque is a drastic turn from the amorous depictions of eastern New Mexico in *Bless Me*,

*Ultima*. The family lives in a neighborhood overwhelmed by the industrial, heartless yards of the Santa Fé Railroad:

His eyes were fixed on the water tank that rose out of the dark buildings at the end of the road. It towered above the barrio, so that Jason could read the letters on the faded cross. SANTA FÉ. The black tower of steel loomed over everything. Around it trains thrashed like giant serpents, and when they coupled the monstrous act gave unnatural birth to chains of steel. Jason cautiously approached the labyrinth of grimy buildings, steel and boxcars. The houses near the yards were dark with soot and the elm trees withered and bare. A chain link fence surrounded the yards (HA, 22).

As the novel progresses, the family becomes more comfortable in the barrio and more at ease in the city. The family's sense of displacement is never completely resolved. But by the end of the novel they realize their roots have not been completely severed with the New Mexico landscape. More importantly, in *Heart of Aztlán*, Albuquerque begins to emerge as the central focus of Anaya's experience.

In *Tortuga*, Anaya's third novel, the plot and characters have moved further south, to Truth or Consequences (formerly Hot Springs), a place described by one character, much like in reality, as "a town full of old arthritics, old people who think they can escape the pains of old age by dipping themselves in... healing waters " (T, 3). The protagonist, 'Tortuga' (an analog to both Anaya and to Benjie in *Heart of Aztlán*) is at a hospital for crippled children. He has been in an accident, much like Anaya was during his youth, and is encapsulated by a body cast. The cast becomes a metaphor for Turtle Mountain that lies outside the hospital windows:

His eyes sparkled as he looked at the volcanic mountain that loomed over the otherwise empty desert. It rose so magically into the gray sky that it seemed to hold the heavens and earth together. It lay just east of the river valley, and the afternoon sun shining on it after the rain covered it with a sheen of silver (T, 3).

During his stay 'Tortuga' yearns to be set free from the cast. The mountain has played an important role in his life, the backdrop to the terror of living in the children's hospital:

I will always remember the way the sun rose over Tortuga's hump, bringing with it the wail of the sirens and the terrible screams of terror which filled the halls (T, 182).

While his stay in Truth or Consequences has had an indelible effect on his life, the adolescent yearns for home. After being released from the Hospital, the boy heads north to Albuquerque, the landscape welcoming him:

Around us the desert opened its arms to receive us. It gaily wore its spring-green coat. Off to the side, hidden in the thin line of budding trees, the river flowed south; it flowed from the north, from the green mountains that were home. That's all I wanted to think about, home (T, 196).

Albuquerque represents a place of stability during Tortuga's stay in the hospital. His yearning and eventual return home represents Anaya's own return to his own familial home - the Atrisco Land Grant - and the backdrop for the remainder of his novels. By the time Anaya writes *Albuquerque* (1992), the state's largest city has acquired center ground.

### **Albuquerque: the Center of Experienced Place**

It is safe to assume that because Anaya has spent the largest portion of his life in Albuquerque, it has become the center of his world. Within *Alburquerque*, and the later mystery novel sequence of *Zia Summer*, *Rio Grande Fall*, and *Shaman Winter*, the cultural geography of the city comes to life. The urban landscape is the backdrop for Abran in *Alburquerque*. Later, Sonny Baca, a "free-wheeling thirty-one-year-old Chicano [detective] from the north valley" of Albuquerque leads the reader through the streets and alleyways of the city (SW, 127) (Figure 4). Both characters venture throughout the state, as Abran leaves Albuquerque north through Santa Fé and Chimayo, and Sonny Baca's missions find him departing the city for Taos, Los Alamos, and Santa Fé to the north and to the Estancia Valley and the llano to the east.

The character Baca, who lives in the northern Rio Grande Valley, the Ranchos of Albuquerque, perhaps best illustrates Anaya's affinity for the state's largest city. Sonny awakes one summer morning, goes out onto his front porch, and immerses himself in the sights, sounds, and smells of home:

[Sonny] sniffed the air. The calm, hot morning was heavy with the aroma of green leaves, alive with the twittering of sparrows outside the window, the darting flight of the swallows from the river. He smelled coffee brewing, tortillas cooking on a comal, beans boiling, and simmering green chile; the aromas of home and peace (ZS, 3-4).



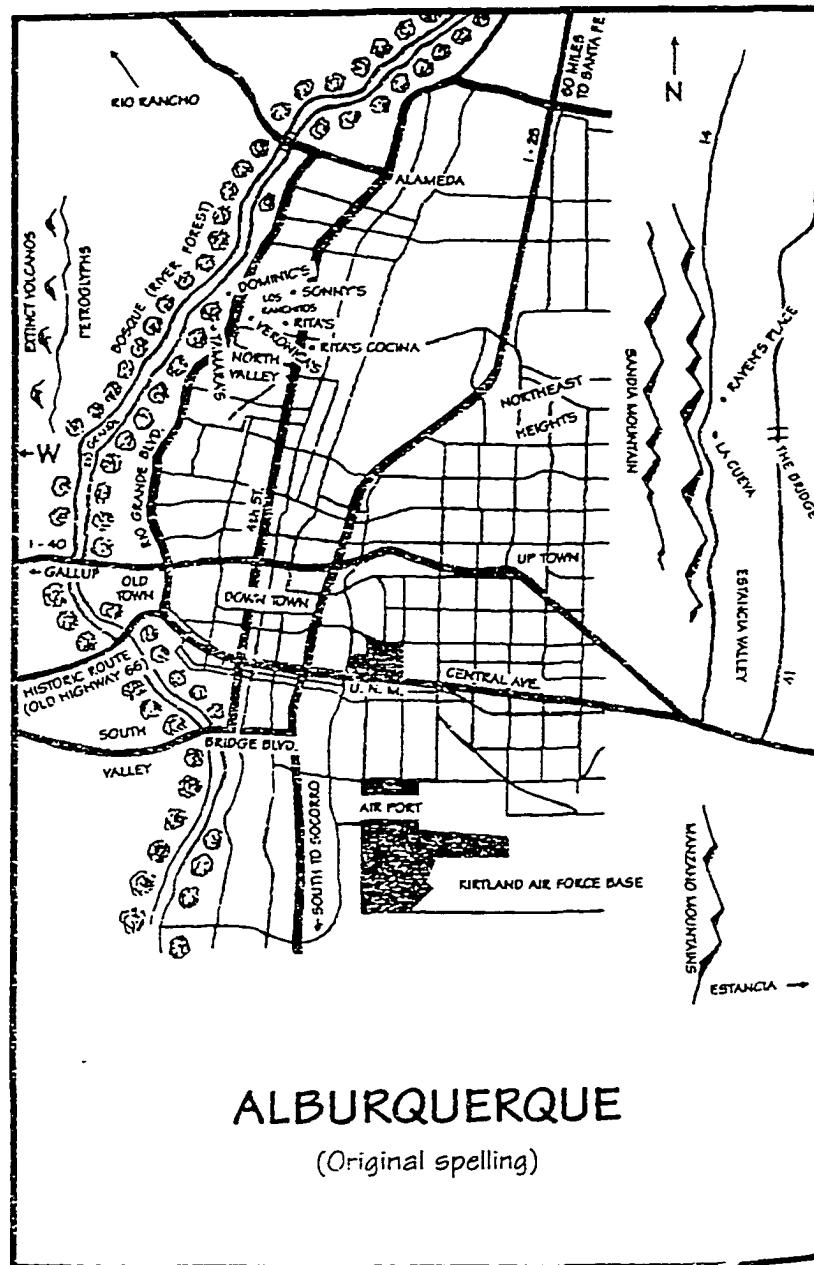


Figure 4. Sonny Baca and Anaya's hometown, Albu'r'querque. Map inset from *Zia Summer* (reproduced with permission of Warner Books).

Sonny also spends time with his older neighbor, the important character Don Eliseo. Together with other Albuquerque old-timers, Don Eliseo tells Sonny of their personal histories of the north valley. These tales exemplify

the attachment to Albuquerque, reflected in both their affinity for the landscape and the how it changes through the calendar year:

On and on they went, telling about spring planting, the cleaning of the acequias, the summer milpas that needed constant care, the harvest of the fields under a moon so full it was a sun that embraced the Rio Grande valley, filling it with a light so bright it cast shadows (SW, 21-22).

Sonny and Don Eliseo's homes in the north Valley become the pivot of experience within the city itself. Sonny ventures throughout the town, into real places, ones that Anaya has come to know intricately. He mingles with local plebs in the old country club district south of Old Town. Sonny also canvases the streets of Albuquerque, and its most important east-west corridor, Central Avenue:

the original Highway 66, which ran east to west through the city. Before the interstate was built, old 66 had cut through Tijeras Canyon and entered the city. It ran through the town before it crossed the Rio Grande and climbed up the long slope of Nine-Mile Hill. There it dipped into the Rio Puerco Valley, crossed the continental divide somewhere around Gallup, crossed the deserts of Arizona, and ended on the California coast (ZS, 188).

Route 66 had brought many travelers and migrants into Albuquerque. But in the simple description of its relationship to the city and its topography it becomes an east-west-axis connecting Albuquerque to the rest of the southwestern United States. Central also has a life of its own, its own people, and its own seasons:

They went out into the December night and into a cold wind gusting down from the West Mesa, driving all but the homeless of the streets. On Central Avenue, around Jack's Cantina and the Blood Donor Center a few shivering figures in shaggy overcoats hurried down the avenue (SW, 311).

In *Zia Summer*, Sonny spends a good amount of time in downtown Albuquerque, in particular Lindy's Diner on Central Avenue, a real coffee shop. From there he takes Central eastbound, goes under the railroad tracks of the Santa Fé Railway, and up to Nob Hill where the University of New Mexico (UNM) sits above the valley. Sonny went to school at UNM and still uses its library for archival research. Anaya also attended UNM and later taught there. His descriptions of the campus illustrate its important role in the life of the city, the state, and his own experience:

[the] campus spread across the hill just east of downtown. Pueblo on the Mesa it was called, a pueblo of learning. The library, a stunning example of New Mexican pueblo-style revival architecture, sat in the middle of campus. The stuccoed walls, vigas, and wood interior gave the sanctuary of books a warm, intimate feeling, something felt as New Mexican in character. Something close to home (SW, 45).

Anaya's characters also take Central westbound, across the Rio Grande, and onto the West Mesa, past "townhouses snuggled against the slope of the mesa near the river bosque (RGF, 257). It is here where Ben Chavez, the author in *Albuquerque* lives. It is also where Anaya currently resides. Ben explains why he chose the sight: "I built my home on the West Mesa so I could watch the sun rise in the morning" (ABQ, 8). From this elevated vantage point he develops his narratives

about the center of his world: "From there I watch the city. A man never runs out of stories to tell when he has a city like this" (ABQ, 8).

To the north of the fictional - and the real - author's home lie Albuquerque's newer and expanding suburbs including Rio Rancho, "the all-American City." Across the river is the older Northeast Heights, home of walled subdivisions and the "homogenized" middle-class culture. Sonny also visits the barrios on the south side of town to see his brother, a used-car dealer. Sonny reflects on the San Jose barrio, which is the fictional Barelás barrio in *Heart of Aztlán*, and still plagued by similar problems:

They passed in silence through the neighborhood that lay along the railroad tracks, inhabited almost exclusively by Chicanos and Blacks. Decades ago the men from San Jose had worked in the railroad yards, but when the roundhouse was shut down in the late fifties, the barrio fell on hard times. The men and women of the barrio...struggled to support their families with odd jobs. They struggled to keep their sons and daughters from the drugs that flowed in the streets (ZS, 117)

Together with their visits to the southeast side of town and Kirtland Air Force Base, Anaya's characters canvass all four quadrants of the city; a city divided north and south by Central Avenue, and east and west by the Rio Grande: "a serpent winding its way south" (ABQ, 11). The center of Anaya's world is bounded on the west by the mesa, on the north by the Pueblos, and the south by the barrio. The eastern edge of Albuquerque is the most definite, as the suburbs crawl up

the foothills of the Sandia Mountains, and the topography calls to halt the expanse of the city. From the West Mesa Sonny Baca observes these important markers in August:

Across the valley, the Sandia Mountains - blue, granite faced peaks born of a fault in the earth long ago...On many summer evening the mountain blushed, the color of a ripe watermelon (RGF, 9).

The city lies in a cradle seen outside Chavez's and Anaya's home: "River, the mountain, the valley that held the oasis of the city" (ABQ, 11).

### **Observing the New Mexico outside of Albuquerque**

Outside the parameters of the central place of Albuquerque lies the vast terrain of New Mexico. Anaya's characters, in particularly *Albuquerque's* Abran and Sonny Baca, know this New Mexico and the people who reside there. The significance of all of New Mexico is established in one of Sonny's dreams. He remembers his travels as a young boy with his father:

fishing up in the Taos mountains; to see the maples turn red in October in the Manzanos; driving up to the Jemez to lie in the hot mineral springs that bubbled up from the depths of the ancient volcano; exploring the Bosque de Apache, to see the arrival of snow geese and the whooping cranes in fall; watching the Navajo fair and rodeo in Gallup in August...(RGF, 38).

Sonny's experiences reflect Anaya's own ventures through the state. As Sonny's father points out in the dream, it is paramount to being a New Mexican: "I want you to know your land, his father had said. It was part of their education" (RGF, 38).

### **Los Alamos and the Jemez**

While Anaya and his characters canvass all corners of New Mexico, the Rio Grande Valley and the adjacent mountains and valleys define the core of his New Mexico. Sonny Baca, for example, is ushered to the Pajarito Plateau and the Jemez Mountains frequently. He visits the Los Alamos laboratories and the Valle Grande of the Jemez. Anaya also knows the area, and in real life spends much of his summers near Jemez Springs. Sonny articulates Anaya's own knowledge of the topography, the people, and the season in the southern Jemez:

The same red rock stratum, which north of Jemez Pueblo formed a spectacular small canyon. He had often driven past Jemez Pueblo to the Red Cliffs, where pueblo women sold corn bread to hungry weekend tourists. There the red was crimson, not bright but imbued with light, a light emanating from within the earth....a sight that always took the breath away (SW, 160).

### **Santa Fé and the Sangre de Cristos**

North of Albuquerque along Interstate 25 Anaya's fictional New Mexicans climb over the bajada and towards the state's capital city, Santa Fé. From the crest of the Bajada, in either direction urban centers sprawl across the landscape. The ridge, and the foothills of La Cienega, take human form in the New Mexican winter:

Outside, the gray clouds of the storm front swept in from the west, their shadows mottling the landscape. The juniper-covered hills on the way to Santa Fé took on a deeper hue. The winter earth was the color of skin, pink fading into brown, a tawny color of the sere grass, the soft curves of the hills. Like the soft curves of a woman (SW, 159).

The cast makes numerous treks north to the capital city, where they observe, like any visitor who has been there, that it is also a tourist mecca, the quintessential southwest. Even in the heart of winter visitors canvass the center of town:

An overcast sky turned the day chilly; still, tourists wandered around the plaza. Many came from Texas, California, New York to ski, to vacation, to revel in the southwestern atmosphere (SW, 60).

North and east of Santa Fé, past Fort Marcy and towards Baldy Peak, Sonny Baca visits one of the newer developments, "A chic place in the eastern foothills" (SW, 62). The detective also understands the value of the land on the road to the ski area, and like all of the property skirting the city, it would be slowly eaten up by development:

The road to the ski run was priceless property, and the proposed condos and golf course would take a lot of water from an often thirsty and growing Santa Fé (SW, 63).

### **Chimayo**

Santa Fé stands in stark contrast to the New Mexico many characters know. But north of town, past Tesuque and the pueblos, lies Chimayo, a town that has retained its sense of place and brings about in Sonny Baca a sense of home:

The aroma from the kitchen and the cedar burning in the fireplace created a feeling of well-being, a feeling of home. Sonny sniffed the pleasant food fragrances and thought of his mother (SW, 160).

It is also a spiritual place, a religious shrine for

many New Mexicans. Both Sonny and *Albuquerque's* Abran visit the village and its sacred center:

The Santuario was timeless. It was the mecca of New Mexican Catholics, the Wailing Wall and the Temple on the Mount all rolled into one. A small, simple church constructed of adobe bricks made from the earth of the valley, it was a holy place of prayer and miracles. Pilgrimages to the Santuario were common. People in need promised a visit, and promesas made had been kept. People came from all over the world to fulfill their promises (SW, 161).

### **Taos**

North of Chimayo Sonny Baca travels along the Taos Canyon Highway that snuggles the Rio Grande. He squeezes past Embudo Station and arrives in Taos on the way to solving one of many crimes. He stops in the middle of town at the old plaza where men from the Pueblo are selling jewelry and the trees seek shelter from the winter wind:

Last night's dusting of snow was gone, but the day was chilly. A breeze whipped the blankets of the Taos Pueblo men as they walked across the plaza. The trees around the plaza huddled like withered old men, raising bare branches to the gray sky and dreaming of sap and buds (SW, 169).

Sonny stops at a local bar. Inside the watering hole he describes the social landscape of the northern New Mexico town:

It was packed with a wide assortment of local characters who were smart enough to come in out of the cold. Taos writers, artists, and wannabes in one corner, and raza in the other (SW, 170).



## **Estancia Valley**

Interstate 40 winds east out of Albuquerque through Tijeras Canyon and onto the llano of the Estancia Valley. It intersects State Highway 14 where motorists turn north to the backside of the Sandias and then on to Madrid and the back road to Santa Fé. Here, amongst the piñon and juniper of the eastern foothills of the Sandias, some of Anaya's characters have a spiritual compound. But most of his characters turn south onto Route 337 to the backside of the Manzano Mountains and the grass covered valley:

The eastern foothills of the Manzano Mountains were ridged with arroyos and dark mesas. The pines of the heights gave way to scrub oak, thick green junipers, pinon, and that gave way to yucca and llano grass as the hills flattened into grazing land. It was ranch land, and barely good for that (ZS, 205).

Travelling south on 337 are several old mestizo villages, home to ranching families, with a way of life that has a precarious relationship with the semi-arid grassland. Anaya inflects a sense of time, a sense of place, and the ecological reality of the valley:

The old Nuevo Mexicano families of the villages along the slope, Chilili, Tajique, and Torreon, clung tenaciously to the land. Some ranchers still ran a few head of cattle, a few sheep. Before them the land had belonged to the nomadic Indians of the eastern plain, and maybe that was the truth of the land, that it had been molded for the nomad, not for the settled farmer or rancher (ZS, 205).

On the back side of the mountains that define Albuquerque's eastern flanks, Anaya creates a fictional

village La Cueva.<sup>16</sup> It is isolated by distance, time, and culture from the metropolis. Its people hold on to a vanishing way of life and to the land:

The village of La Cueva lay nestled in the juniper - and pinon-dotted hills on the eastern slope of the mountains. It was one of the last old Hispano villages left intact....An old Nuevo Mexicano village, La Cueva clung to its roots...A few of the old rancheros still ran cattle...To remain on the land of their birth" (ZS 126).

The fictional village, like the characters visiting there, comes to life. The crumbling community, and its eroding way of life huddle around the Catholic church. They cling to tradition much like they do to the land:

La Cueva was a dozen homes clustered around an the church. Beaten down barbed-wire corrals and old, weathered-wood outhouses were set at the back of each house. The small church shone with a fresh coat of white paint, blue trim on the door and windows, and today it was surrounded by trucks and cars. It was San Antonio's feast day; the small village would be celebrating with a mass (ZS ,127).

### People/Place Symbiosis

Nowhere else in Anaya's work do we find more evidence of people being linked to the landscape than in *Bless Me, Ultima*. Antonio becomes a child of the landscape, and the people of El Puerto and Pasturas are part of the physical environment. But there are also numerous other examples of people being united in some way or another - physically, spiritually, and symbolically - to the land. The bonds these people make with

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<sup>16</sup> The real La Cueva is located in the eastern foothills of the Sangre de Cristos in Mora County.

place, in essence, fashion their identities. In *Zia Summer* Sonny Baca is visiting an old friend on the Santo Domingo Pueblo. The man is an heir to a lineage of people that have been in the Rio Grande Valley for centuries. However, his mother is a Chicano/a. Here we find not only Anaya's proliferous use of Nuevo Mexicano cultural hybridity, but also a direct link to the indigenous and the landscape:

The Calabasa family had been Santo Domingo people since the beginning of the world. They lived at the center of the earth, according to their legends. That was stability(ABQ, 47).

The father of the family constantly reminds the man to retain this imperative attachment. He continues: "Never give your land away, be proud you are a Santo Domingo man" (ABQ, 48). The Rio Grande valley is not only a point of reference, but a site where the people are physically and symbolically grounded.

In the novel *Albuquerque*, Abran travels with his girl friend, Lucinda, north of Chimayo to the high villages near Trampas and Truchas. They ascend into the high country of northern New Mexico to the village of Cordova:

They drove out of the Chimayo valley into the hills spotted with juniper trees and yucca, and on into pinon country, taking their bearing from the blue mountain of Picuris, which was still snowcapped. They wound in and out of the hills and small valleys, until they came to the valley that held the small village of Cordova (ABQ, 165).

During their stay Abran realizes the importance of Cordova and the Picurís Peak that rises to the east. In the

meadows below the mountain her family had become part of the landscape, adapting to its features, grazing sheep and cattle, hunting in the forests, and fishing in its creeks. The young girl was intimately bound to the land: "The mountain was her earth, her home" (ABQ, 178). And the Sangre de Cristos would be her home again: "Lucinda would return to the mountains someday, and her children would grow up here. The soul of the mountain was within her" (ABQ, 171).

In *Shaman Winter*, detective Baca's neighbor and guide into the rhythms of the New Mexico landscape passes. Sonny reflects on Don Eliseo's connection to the Rio Grande Valley: "This valley of the Rio Grande had been home to Don Eliseo. The Romeros had been in the valley for centuries. They farmed and raised crops, they married and had children" (SW, 361). And when Don Eliseo dies, much like his ancestors, his remains were fused with the place: "The Rio Grande had been the river of his ancestors for hundreds of years, and so the bones and blood had seeped into the water" (SW, 289).

#### **The People, the Seasons, and the Land**

Anaya's own experience of the physical environment goes beyond vivid description. His last four novels, *Albuquerque*, *Zia Summer*, *Rio Grande Fall*, and *Shaman Winter* all correspond to a season (*Albuquerque* is set during spring time, and not as obvious.) The seasons usher in different concepts of time, different moods, and a different sense of place:

Cycles - the seasons of the valley moved in cycles. Each season created its distinct flavors, colors, sounds(RGF, 235).

The novel *Albuquerque* is set during the New Mexico spring. The characters move about a landscape awakening from the dormancy of winter. In a neighborhood in central Albuquerque, the protagonist Abran stops and senses the sounds of the season. The wind, the people, and the animals are restless:

A spring windstorm was sweeping over the city, raising dust. In the neighborhood behind the bar the tall elm trees were already green with seed clusters. Somewhere in the apartments nearby a woman called a child, and a screen door banged. In the parking lot someone had run over a snake that had come out of the garden with the warmth of spring (ABQ, 7).

Later, Abran retires to the patio outside Ben Chavez' house on the West Mesa. The landscape calms, but is not completely released from the jaws of winter. The trees and the people, however, sense the arrival of the summer:

The wind had died down, as it usually did in the late afternoon. The apricot trees had already flowered; if there was no late freeze there would be fruit, the golden fruit of the early summer. The first purple buds had also appeared on the lilac bushes that lined one side of the garden. When they bloomed spring would change to summer, and the passion of summer would flood the valley. Spring was the time of transition, the time of awakening (ZS, 10).

Spring gives way to summer in the first of the three Sonny Baca mystery novels, *Zia Summer*. The novel is flavored by the strength of the southwestern sun, a paucity of rain, and the summer winds. Sonny travels east of Albuquerque, to the eastern foothills of the Sandias, where the land reflects

the season:

The dry hills baked under the June sun. There had been no rain since May, so the land was scorched. The wind swept across the dry grasses. Behind him rose the peaks of the Sandias, and to the east the hills of pine and juniper sloped down into the flat land of the Estancia Valley (ZS, 127).

Sonny returns to the valley later in the novel, and later in the summer season. A change in the weather is on the horizon. The sky, the animals, and the vegetation await the return of the late summer rain, and the arrival of the monsoon season and eventually autumn. It breaks the pattern of drought and wind and rejuvenates the people and the natural landscape:

Time and time again the seasons came and renewed the earth. The drought was broken and now the grasses and the land would green up. Across the broad expanse of land, the leaves of grass would feel the blessing of the rain. Plants and animals and the families who struggled for survival would give thanks (ZS, 321-22).

Baca returns in Anaya's second mystery, *Rio Grande Fall*. The detective partakes in the events of the New Mexico autumn, including the Albuquerque balloon festival. In his adventures, he travels to Los Alamos and the Jemez. From the peaks he sees New Mexico doused in fall colors. Its diverse topography, from the mountains north of Taos to the canyons south of the Jemez, produce a mosaic of colors; a hallowed landscape brought to life by the Southwestern sun:

In early October, high in the Taos Mountains when the aspen shimmered, gold leaves quivered with light. Then a person felt the light impregnating the leaves and trees. Or driving down in mid-October from the Jemez Mountains through the canyon. The red cliffs of the Jemez caught and held the light of the golden cottonwoods. The earth had its sacred places (ZS, 186).

Autumn brings serenity to New Mexico. It also means the land and the people prepare for the dormancy of winter:

The fall ushered in a calmness over the land, backyard gardens matured, the cosmos and the marigolds overran their plots. The people of the valley began to prepare for winter (RGF, 143).

Late Autumn settles in on the Rio Grande Valley, and the change in weather and the change in season ushers in a new conception of time:

In the orchards, apples took on a crispness with the first frost. People hung red chile ristras for winter. ...Even November would be pleasant if the jet stream didn't dip south. The people of the valley were spoiled by the mellow transition of time. They sighed, a breath of satisfaction as life slowed to a crawl (RGF, 234-35).

Fall gives way to winter in the last of the Sonny Baca novels. In *Shaman Winter*, the New Mexico landscape reflects softer, more subtle colors of the solstice sun. The characters partake in a much different New Mexico, including Christmas festivities in Santa Fé and Taos and dances at the pueblos. Fall rains turn into winter snows that affect different parts of New Mexico in particular ways. While in the Jemez Mountains, Baca and the healer Lorenza are engulfed in a snow storm. They realize that snow in the high mountains does not necessarily mean snow in the valleys:

The snow that minutes ago had covered the road now grew thin. They knew that by the time they descended into the valley, only wisps of the storm would remain. That's the way it was with a storm like this, it would drop snow in the high elevations, but merely dust the lowlands. That's why in New Mexico during the winter people could ski and golf in the same day. From Jemez to Taos, the high peaks would get snow, in Albuquerque, nada (SW, 107).

The seasons dictate the sense of time and the sense of place in Anaya's New Mexico. But, the physical elements also have a profound effect on the disposition of the people. In *Zia Summer*, Sonny deliberates the effect of the sun, wind, and heat on Albuquerqueans:

He knew the moods of the city swung to the moods of the weather. The desert people of the high, arid Rio Grande plateau were like horny toads, they could go a long time without rain, but they paid the price. The dry electricity in the air created a tension within, a fiery disposition that put nerves on edge. There were more family arguments, more traffic accidents, more drinking bouts, more shootings, more graffiti splashed on vacant walls, and more anxious cops. People looked more often to the west in the search of rain clouds. They grew envious as the nightly weather reports reported summer thunderstorms gathering over the northern mountains of Santa Fé and Taos (ZS, 200).

#### **Water**

Anaya's keen sense of the changes brought about by the seasons is exemplified in his understanding of the New Mexico landscape, particularly during the summer. In *Zia Summer* the characters are constantly reminded of their precarious relationship with the desert land and its lack of water:



Water was the element of survival. Without water there was no life on the burning land. Life gathered around the oasis of the windmill tank. Each new tribe added its bit of technology to the land and thus changed the landscape. Human life could exist only within the radius of the small oasis men had created (ZS, 207).

So important is water to New Mexican people that its paucity becomes part of their daily existence. During the summer, when it seems as if the desert will never escape from the scorching rays and heat of the sun:

People prayed for rain...The Pueblos danced for rain, life-giving rain. In the high, arid plateaus of New Mexico, rain, as well as the sun, was sacred.

He continues:

It was so with desert people. They dreamed of what they did not have: bubbling fountains, running brooks, exquisite gardens, cool temples, rooms where the gurgle of water sounded just outside the window, rooms where one could make love, read books, enjoy a respite from the heat. From every room the lover of beauty wanted to hear the sound of running water (ZS, 208).

Even during the heat of the summer, the New Mexico land is not seen as a wasted, oppressive wilderness, but a place where both people and the land have learned to endure. In *Zia Summer* the late-August weather has taken a toll on the plains east of the Sandias:

But now the flowers and grasses of the llano lay shriveling under the heat. Alive, but just barely. The flowers were like the people, they withstood the blows of nature; they would survive (ZS, 205).

This final metaphor between the landscape and people depicts New Mexicans as permanent, reflexive fixtures, adapted to the changes in the weather. The people not only respond to the landscape but they, like other living things upon it, are

at the will of the forces of nature. Anaya's characters are part of the landscape; their moods, their souls, their ways of life are one with the physical environment. They are children of the place.

#### **Summary**

Aztlán just happened to be the northern Rio Grande Valley

-- *Shaman Winter*, 79

From his descriptions of the landscape, and the relationships between the people, the land, the seasons, and the weather Anaya illustrates his intimate understanding of New Mexico. Perhaps Tuan (1976) coined the best term for such a relationship: topophilia, the love of place. But he also has the same attachment to the people, the characters he has created to give human life to the land. All of them are mestizo New Mexicans - Chicano/as - and there is a parallel to the sense of peoplehood brought about by the Chicano/a movement and Aztlán. They fit tightly with concepts like "la raza" and "la gente," the people, a specific group living in association in an imagined space. Anaya's cast of characters, from the Santo Domingo man to Sonny Baca, are part of that selective group, and Antonio, Ben Chavez, and Benjie can be seen as analogs to him. Thus, there is an exclusivity to this experience of New Mexico, based on being native to the place and a member of a particular culture.

Anaya's New Mexico is directly related to the Aztlán idea and the impulse that followed its instigation, for both

are vehicles for the construction of identity and regional character. "Without any one of these ingredients," he and Francisco Lomeli write, "we would be contemporary displaced nomads, suffering the diaspora in our own land, and at the mercy of other social forces" (1989, iv). Anaya's New Mexico and its cast are literary manifestations of the Chicano/a homeland, and vehicles for the political mission and a sense of belonging. Anaya and Lomeli continue: "Aztlán allows us to come full circle with our communal background as well as to maintain ourselves as fully integrated individuals" (1989, iv). The Chicano/a creation of the new political space was a sounding board for Anaya's discovery of a cultural and geographic space: New Mexico.

There is also a stronger connection between Aztlán, Chicano/a activism, and Anaya's New Mexico. All are spatial and social points of reference aimed at challenging the hegemonic social system they operate within. In past and contemporary Chicano/a scholarship, the activism is manifest in numerous ways. There is a renewed interest in material life, with focus upon the interaction between actual Chicano/a communities and the natural environment. Such studies point to the socio-historical and economic relationship between villagers and the land (Pena 1998, Pulido 1996). This work comes from the same impulse as the creation of Chicano/a nationalism and is informed by the Aztlán idea. Anaya's writings work hand-in-hand with other more concrete efforts to liberate an existence intimately attached to cultural, social,

and economic oppression. All Chicano/a activism is aimed at countering the material and discursive manipulation of the Southwest by Anglo-America. Thus, both the idea of Aztlán and Anaya's experienced New Mexico are re-creations of space materially and ideologically controlled by the outside.

Anaya's role in this reappropriation is most easily detected by his use of Mesoamerican legend and history. It is possible to tie his use of Mesoamerica to resistance towards dominant social beliefs and practices. His New Mexico is undeniably tied to Mexico, and this runs parallel with Chicano/a hybridity and the appropriation of the indigenous. These moves counter any pre-established notion of what is truly the historical and contemporary experience of Chicano/as. Thus, Anaya reinforces the cultural and social divisions between Chicano/as and mainstream American society. He defines the *difference* of Chicano/a culture from Anglo-American culture and sets up a discursive polarization illustrating the Chicano/a situation, torn as they are, between the United States and Mexico and between being both indigenous and European.

But, there is also something tangible about the New Mexico Anaya presents to the reader. Underpinning the influence of cultural politics is a lived experience. Thus, we arrive at a place where an imagined and politically charged nationalism confronts the tangible. A real, physical, lived space merges with the romantic, infinite space of cultural politics. Aztlán is mythical, yet it is made real by the act

of naming and thus given life in the pages of Anaya's texts. But, unlike New Mexico, it appears absent from the history of the Americas and is not inscribed on maps of the Southwest. Thus, both Anaya's New Mexico and Aztlán are places of political contention and theoretical mediation in his work; they occupy a third space (Bhabha 1994; Ashcroft 1994, 35).

If Aztlán is only a metaphor for the Southwest as a homeland, and a point of political inspiration, then Anaya's Aztlán is New Mexico. Albuquerque and the Pecos Valley are the center of Anaya's worldview and the places where his geographical imagination goes to work. These places, intricate pieces of the Chicano/a homeland, have their own meanings, and their own place in his experience. By association, his characters are involved in the creation of Chicano/a culture, and are driven by a quest to link themselves with the New Mexico landscape. His characters also begin to recognize their relationships with Southwestern (rather than Mexican) Indians, and the hybridity that results. Here we see another value of place in Anaya's writing. Place grounds a tenuous cultural identity that oscillates between two different nations.

The lived experiences of many Chicano/as and Anaya's understanding of New Mexico are not as hypothetical. The combined Chicano/a academic and artistic efforts -- idealistic, poetic, and materialistic -- show how the initial impulse of Aztlán is imperative to the Chicano/a cause. Anaya's ties to New Mexico are equally important. It is possible to track these two parallel worlds - Aztlán and New

Mexico - through his novels. Such a process reveals that the mythical homeland is more than a metaphor for the Southwest. It also carries greater weight than the politics of Chicano/a identity. His goal is to merge this dynamic, utopian idea with a New Mexico that he knows very well. This process, in fact, is what the rest of this dissertation is about.

## Chapter 4

### Utopian New Mexico

This chapter evaluates Anaya's construction of the state's historical and contemporary social geography. I begin with the narratives of space and time, and how New Mexico (and the larger West), as a cultural space, has been created by multiple cultural interactions and by many texts. I add to this multi-textual space Anaya's historical geography using his most recent novels. Then I discuss his construction of the more recent and contemporary social geography of the state using his historical geography as a point of reference. In the final section, I bring together Anaya's New Mexico and its relationship to Chicano/a culture and the legacy of conquest in the West.

#### **New Mexico as Utopia and the Narratives of Space and Time**

La Nueva Mexico was becoming the crossroads of the southern belly of the continent, the womb. Here all could mix, produce the mestizaje, and here all could make war against each other

--*Shaman Winter*, 227

While Anaya's point of reference stems largely from his experience in New Mexico (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3), it is also a product of cultural interactions. These intersections include not only the marriage of Spanish colonists and

Indians, and the mythical creation of Aztlán, but also his and New Mexico's confrontations with the outside world; products of the shifting patterns of spatial relations. Rather than see the West as part of the Frontier, the ultimate goal of Manifest Destiny, and "the cutting edge for happy American progress" (Fussell 1965) as recent academic work in several disciplines has suggested, it can be considered as a conquered space, home to multiple cultural interactions (Rothman 1998, Robinson 1998, Teague 1997, Limerick 1987). Post-colonial geographers studying time-space relations have also advocated a similar approach to such contested spaces, where places are written and over-written (Gregory 1998, Duncan 1990, Duncan and Ley 1992, Carter 1987). This intertextual process produces numerous versions, some that conflict and intersect; and no single one is superior to the rest.

In his last four novels - *Albuquerque*, *Zia Summer*, *Rio Grande Fall*, and *Shaman Winter* - Anaya constructs a narrative that exhibits the multiple interactions between his New Mexico and the outside world. Within the books there is a genesis of New Mexico culture, a continual flood of migrants into and out of the state, and a detailed version of the most important dates in history. Bandits, tourists, and migrant workers, along with high stakes real estate development and high technology become part of New Mexico, fostering a new identity for the state.

Anaya uses a trope and an apparatus of colonization - history - to imagine a past, present, and future. It is in



literature, as well as other arts and cultural acts, that post-colonial subjects release themselves from a history written by others, and, instead, become the subject of their own narratives (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995, 357-88). The point of departure for his story is the Chicano/a movement and Aztlán. The naming process was both a geographic and a historical move, for it created both a space for a voice and a self-constructed past. Like Carter's (1987) idea of spatial history " - history that discovers and explores the lacuna left by imperial history," Aztlán confronted, and altered, the grand narrative of western historicism.

#### **The Dream**

Anaya creates two parallel worlds in his last three books: real, contemporary New Mexico; and the other Nuevo Mexico, a land of the old ways, values, and wisdom of the ancestors. In *Shaman Winter*, historical Nuevo Mexico takes the form of a utopian dream, created by a process of the unification of people and the landscape. It is an exploratory journey threatened by outside forces, evil, and chaos, all of which try to wipe it out. In the dream, Sonny Baca, modern-day Albuquerque's Chicano/a detective, and the protagonist in *Zia Summer* and *Rio Grande Fall*, travels back through time, visiting New Mexico during times of historical significance. Sonny's dream becomes "a way to enter history. If you want to return to a place and a time in which your ancestors lived, you must dream about that place" (SW, 22). Sonny also comes to terms with his dreams, supporting them with research at the state

archives in Santa Fé and at UNM. He also knows the story's truth is within him: "the history of the people flowed in his blood and was cradled in his memory. He didn't invent meaning for the symbols and signposts in the dreams, he knew them intimately" (SW, 36). Sonny is in constant battle with the antagonist of the three books, Raven, who brings to New Mexico numerous forms of evil. He is also in battle with Raven in his dreams. Thus, Raven is a threat to the real world and to the past: "that is the great power a man can have on earth. By entering your dreams [he can] travel to your past and destroy it" (SW, 37). Those who threaten Sonny in his dreams also threaten to steer the utopian ideal off of its path, "history [would] unravel from the past to the present" (SW, 42).

### **Genesis**

The first few pages of *Shaman Winter* set the stage for the ethnogenesis of a people Anaya calls Nuevo Mexicanos. The first scene of the novel is Sonny's initial dream sequence. He is a soldier, Andres Vaca, in Oñate's colonization expedition in 1598, noted a few chapters later as "the date of origins" for Nuevo Mexicano culture (Figure 5). The fantastic Vaca travels near present-day El Paso, and "to the north lay the unknown province, that huge expanse of land the earlier Spanish explorers referred to as La Nueva Mexico" (SW, 5). Vaca and the other colonists are driven by destiny and are told to "Go north into the new land, put away [their swords],

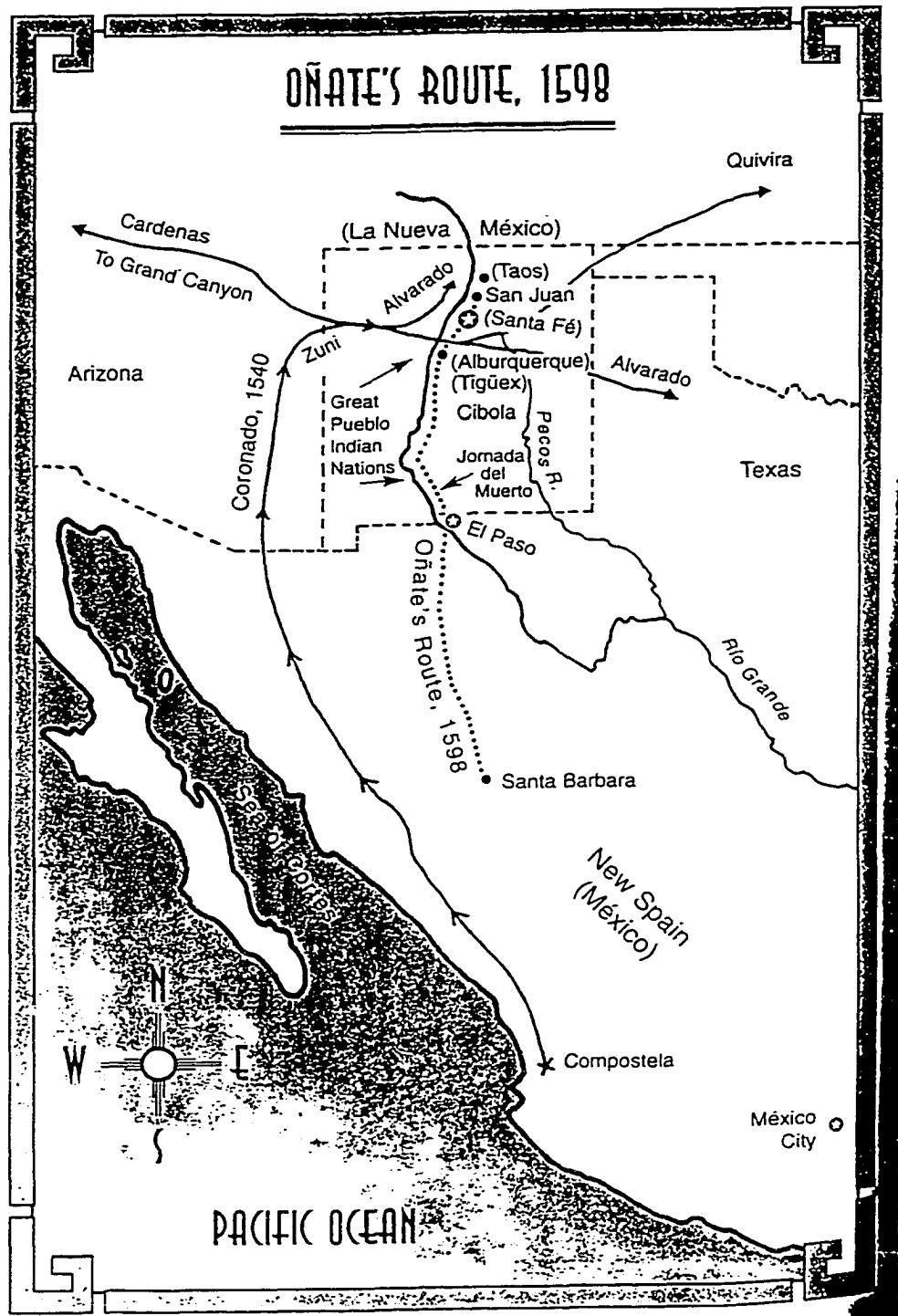


Figure 5. Map of Anaya's La Nueva Mexico at the time of Oñate's colonization. Inset from *Shaman Winter* (reproduced with permission of Warner Books).

and turn to the earth for your sustenance" (SW, 5). Oñate leads the group in the dream sequence: "Following the Great River of the north, this Rio Bravo, we will find a mountain range called the Sangre de Cristo. There in those valleys we will settle" (SW, 7). They are given a vision of New Mexico: "In the northern Mountains lay meadows where cattle and sheep would thrive. Fields of corn and vineyards would fill the valleys." Vaca agrees, "I will follow this path. It is meant to be " (SW, 5). This trip back into the past is destiny, and as Anaya writes two paragraphs later, there is divine intervention in these historical events (SW, 7).

Not only does the colonization of the New Mexico become part of destiny, but so does the eventual marriage of Vaca to an Indian woman, Owl Woman. He is told by Oñate: "You are the first of many who will marry the Indian women" (SW, 8). Thus, in the first chapter of *Shaman Winter*, the marriage between the Spanish and the American Indian is shaped. Yet, unlike the genesis story of Chicano/a nationalism, Vaca marries a woman who is "not an Aztec princess...she was a native of the new region" (SW, 8). The sanctification of the origin of the mestizo population of New Mexico (Nuevo Mexicanos) occurs when Owl woman baptizes Vaca the Rio Grande before the marriage. This spot in the Rio Grande becomes Biblical: "Yes, this was truly Eden. This great river that flowed from el norte was the holy river through the garden" (SW, 10). After the consecration of their marriage, Vaca and Owl woman would

produce the New Mexico mestizaje: "among the descendants of the Anasazi, a new dream was to flourish. There she would give birth to a new people" (SW, 10).

Later, Sonny reflects on his dreams, confirming them with research he has done at the library: "The Espanoles and Mexicanos had come up the Rio Grande, settled beside the Indian pueblos, intermarried and created the la raza cosmica de Nuevo Mexico, the mestizos of the Rio Grande del Norte. (SW,36). He affirms his own identity: "I'm just part of everyone who ever came up the Rio Grande. Pure mestizo" (48).

The creation of the Nuevo Mexicano, the la raza of Anaya's world, can be seen as analog to the Aztlán creation myth of the union of the Meso-American female and the Spanish conquistador and the emergence and rise of the mestizo population of North and South America. But, Anaya's conception is overly idyllic. Other stories make clear that the Spanish colonization of both Mexico and New Mexico was stained in bloodshed, rape, and pillage. There was destiny in the eyes of the colonists, devastation in the eyes of the conquered.

#### **Merging the Spanish, the Pueblos, and the land**

Sonny Baca's dream of the cultural genesis glosses over the atrocities of the Spanish contact with the New World. Yet, Anaya does not entirely overlook the barbarity of the Iberians. According to Anaya, "evil" had followed Vaca and the Spaniards across the Atlantic. He writes:

There had been too much violence and death in the conquest of Mexico. If that could be averted in la Nueva Mexico, then the colonization of the region would not be written in blood, and the future would be one of peace and harmony (SW, 19).

But Anaya's story, and the history books, acknowledge that within the ranks of the Spanish were those who sought only to secure their own dreams. They wiped out many of those in their path, and New Mexico wasn't spared.

The annals of New Mexico point to a drastically different depiction of the Spanish settlement and their Imperial relationship with the landscape and its indigenous peoples. Anaya allows for the exoneration of the Spanish. In the dream the birth of Vaca and Owl Woman's first mestizo son occurs "so the great violence you have done to [the New World] can be forgiven" (SW, 19).

The destined union between the Spaniard and the Indian, consecrated in the Eden of New Mexico, produces the chosen people, the Nuevo Mexicanos who are custodians of peace, harmony, and stability. However, some of the Spanish continue in their Imperial ways:

And on it went. Taking possession of everything. The arrogance! Oñate had pounded the ground with a staff and taken the land, mountains, desert, rivers. Everything! ...Took the whole present-day damn Southwest, all of northern Mexico. Took the whole enchilada (SW, 51).

Anaya brings the Pueblo Indians into the dream. These "guardians of the Rio Grande" respond to the Spanish arrogance:

The Indians, too, must have been in awe, for if they understood the translator, they must have wondered at the gall and greed of this man, saying he could possess the earth by merely pounding on it! (SW, 52-3).

Sonny reflects: "No, the earth did not belong to one person or tribe. The earth was the mother for all to have and use" (SW, 52). Here, Sonny realizes, and Anaya' inscribes into the utopian ideal, the essentialized land ethic of the Pueblos. Despite Sonny's epiphany, and the shock of the Indians, the Spanish continue their romp through the southwest. This includes the missionization of the Indians:

From 1610 to 1680 a great missionary spirit would fill the Franciscan friars of New Mexico. They wanted souls for Jesuscristo, but in the process they would also teach the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico a great deal of Hispanic culture. Language; use of iron, horse, sheep, and cattle; and the arts of the church, music and the making of santos and retablos. The Pueblos would accept much, even accepting some of the saints of the church into their kachina pantheon. The saints would become guardian ancestral spirits who joined the old kachinas to do good and bring rain to the earth of the pueblos (SW, 59).

The Indians and Spanish settlers thus exchange material culture and ideology, providing the artifacts and the beliefs for the new localized mestizaje. But local relations are not completely harmonious. Several of the Spaniards remain full of "greed and pride," and a rift between civil authorities and the church has devastating consequences for the Pueblos, who, "caught in the middle, suffered" (SW, 59). The friars, driven by "missionary zeal...destroy the ceremonial kivas and...burn masks, fetishes, and other paraphernalia. Dances and the handling of snakes were prohibited" (SW, 59) The friars

"beat" and "hung those medicine men who resisted conversion from their old ways" (SW, 59).

The political leadership also required "the head of each [Pueblo] household to pay tribute in corn and blankets" and "the Indians were forced to work the Spaniard's fields (SW, 59). The Spanish nobility, who "didn't like to soil their hands in the earth," placed many pueblos in "slavery" (SW, 59).

Anaya here makes a clear distinction between those in power - the friars and the politicians - and the other colonists. They are depicted having complete disregard for the ways of the Pueblo people. They also seek to obliterate the religious system, and they refuse to farm. Their evil ways are exhibited in their treatment of the pueblos, but also their unwillingness to succumb to, let alone respect, the land.

#### **Pueblo Revolt and the Return of the Dream**

Anaya's narrative switches from a Spanish colonial account to that of the response of the Pueblos. They welcome the Spanish and parts of the Catholic religion:

We welcomed them and accepted their kachinas, those they call santos, into our ceremonies, into our kivas. We have accepted the man who dies on the cross, their Cristo, we treated the la Virgen as our own mother (SW, 114).

The Spanish church and civil authorities are not as tolerant. The Indians continue:

But they call our own kachinas devils. They have come into our kivas and desecrated everything we hold sacred (SW, 114).



Despite the zealousness of the Spanish elite, not all of the colonists are depicted as enemies of the Pueblos:

the men had many vecinos in the Spanish pueblo, farmers like them, many who respected their dances and ceremonies. But the rule of the civil authorities and the padres was harsh (SW, 114).

Anaya continues:

We have farmed for them, raised their crops, taught them how to use our acequias to take the water from the streams to the fields. We have paid tribute in corn and blankets. They take our women and children to use as slaves (SW, 114).

The congenial relationship between some of the settlers and the Pueblos does not mollify the actions of many of the Spanish authorities. Their actions cause social and environmental unrest:

Terror filled the land. The god of the Espanoles had brought only war, pestilence, hunger, and drought...Now was the time to join together and drive out the Spaniards (SW, 115).

The Pueblos revolt and "throw off the yoke" of the Spaniards. As history dictates, the Indians slaughtered colonists, stole children and women, and reversed the injustices that had been heaped upon them by the Spanish authority. They allow a few to live, only on the grounds that the remaining leave and "take their Cristo and their mother with them to their own place, the land across the sea" (SW, 120). Sonny's dream caricature, Vaca, watches as

the long line of Espanoles, Mexicanos, and some natives, Indians who sided with the Spaniards, straggled down the Rio Grande, carrying with them the same yellow silk banner Juan de Oñate had brought with him when he entered New Mexico (SW, 120).

The expulsion of the Spanish from New Mexico represents Anaya's removal from the dream the evils of Spanish greed and lust. They return to Central Mexico, and some go on to Europe, the rootstock of the colonial enterprise. He does allow for the return of some of these people, as does history. As the story goes:

The Spaniards will return....They had found no gold, no rich mines of silver, only the hard life in the valleys of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. But they would return (SW, 121).

Some of the colonists had become tied to the northern Rio Grande valley. They had raised families there, and had developed intimate relationships with the Pueblos. Over time, their attachment to the place had matured:

The land will call them. Already they had raised their sons and daughters on the land, even on the third generation...The Espanoles and Mexicanos had buried their parents and grandparents in the earth of la Nueva Mexico, and so the blood of the land would call them, the spirit of the land would call their return (SW, 121).

With the return of many of the colonists, Anaya re-establishes the mestizo attachment to the New Mexico landscape, exhibiting the embodiment of the land to the newly formed culture. Even those driven by the most imperial impulse lay down their swords, let go of their dreams of wealth, and learn to exist in the desert. But the connection

of the colonists extends into the cultural realm:

The people who farmed had learned the ways of the pueblos, had also learned the language, the food, and they shared in the dances and ceremonies. Many moved easily from Spanish village to Indian pueblo, some intermarried. A fusion of blood, of memory, of dream (SW, 121).

Anaya's dream of a utopian New Mexico crystallizes, going beyond the marriage of the Indian and Spaniard and the attachment to the landscape. The dream now comprises an essential element of cultural traditions and lifestyle. Anaya creates of the pious, hybrid New Mexican paisano,<sup>17</sup> who partakes in indigenous cultural acts - farming, foods - and is attached to the land. The imagined past has an ideological structure, myths and symbols - kachinas, santos, the Corn Gods, the land- and rituals - praise and homage to the earth, dances. The senses of their bones being buried in the soil, and the element of time, or many generations, are potent elements and signify the sacred union of Anaya's people with the land.

Still, Anaya's story can be seen as anchored in a past time, the Eden of the mestizo genesis where things were simpler, or a Golden Age. This romanticizing does skew some realities. Certainly the growth of the mestizo population was not a harmonious happenstance. The exchange between the Pueblos and the colonists was not without contest or discomfort on either part. But, by this time, Anaya's version

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<sup>17</sup> Paisano is New Mexico Spanish for rural dweller or peasant (Cobos 1983).

calcifies, as the evil of the Spaniards have been expelled, the pious and rooted have returned, and the merging of the colonists with the indigenous eventually lead to a stable New Mexico. Through his dreams, Sonny has learned that some of the original colonists acquired a less destructive outlook on the lands they settled and shared with the Indians cultural and religious practices. The Europeans and the Indians merge, becoming part of the greater mestizaje that Owl Woman and Vaca will produce. Together they learn to live with one another and with the land, and the Rio Grande Valley, Eden, is the center of their world:

and from here in four sacred directions live the people. We have made peace with the earth and the universe. We have vowed to respect all life, for we are the children of the dream (SW, 19).

### **Gringos**

The harmony attained by the people after the expulsion of the "evils" of the Spanish does not last forever. The transfer of New Mexico to an independent Mexican government assured some stability, yet it lay in contrast to the experience of many who would follow. During this time traders along the Santa Fé Trail and trappers from the north and east had been infiltrating New Mexico (Figure 6). They had brought with them "...farm implements, better rifles, iron pots for the kitchen, steel axes, all useful instruments in the daily life of the paisanos" (SW, 178). The contact between Nuevo Mexico and the United States would soon become more than a matter of

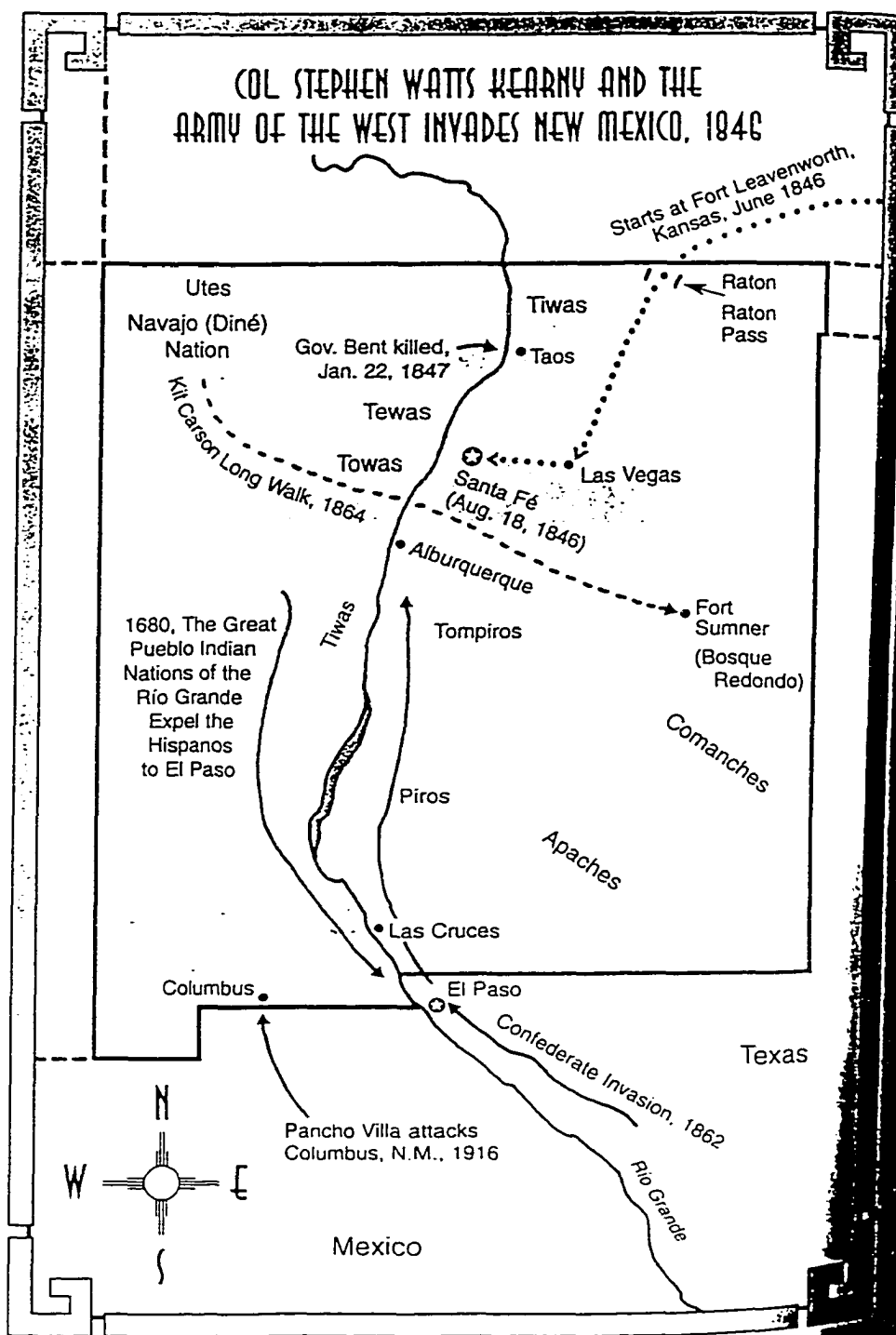


Figure 6. Map of Anaya's New Mexico circa American Annexation (1848). Inset from *Shaman Winter* (reproduced with permission of Warner Books).

convenience (Figure 6). In 1846 the United States declared war on Mexico, and Anaya's characters run through the streets of Nuevo Mexico villages like Paul Revere did on the eastern seaboard 70 years prior:

The gringos are coming! The gringos are coming!...They come to ruin our way of life! Why can't they stay where they belong! (SW, 177-78).

The conquest of the southwest by the United States is foreboding for the people, their way of life, and their history. They will now be at the will of the intruder:

The land of the Nuevos Mexicanos had seen many changes sweep across it, but none was to be as momentuous as the coming of the Americanos. Military occupation, a new Code of Laws, a different language, and loss of their original land grants were to follow. The bones of history rattled and ached at the thought (SW, 180).

General Kearny's men march into the plaza of Las Vegas:

Their faces were covered with dust, their lips cracked from the sun, and their blond hair matted from days on the trail. They were young men far away from home, and they were hungry and thirsty (SW, 183).

The American army arrives from their trip across the plain wearing suits of outsiders. The dry land and heat place masks on them, but their uniforms and blond hair are conspicuous. They are depicted as ravenous intruders, who came to take New Mexico, and drink the little water it had to offer. They are the foot soldiers of the American Empire, and the first militant wave of an alternative manifestation of New Mexico's destiny. Battles ensue at Las Vegas and Embudo:

The taking of the northern Mexican territories by the U.S. Army in 1846 was a violent affair. Manifest Destiny at its worst (SW, 174).

But the Americans weren't the only sealers of New Mexico's fate. New Mexico Governor Armijo had "sold out" to the Santa Fé traders, allowed annexation, and betrayed the people of Anaya's dream (SW, 177). He was murdered, and the American Army marches into Santa Fé, and thwarts any resistance by the peaceful people, "the farmers and sheepmen [who] were no match for an army trained for war" (SW, 175). In the end, the fate of New Mexico, and the tenuous relationship many of its people still have with the United States, was signed and sealed at Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848:

...enmity was strewn in the path of future relations. The split would be we versus them; we the Mexicanos and our way of life threatened by *them* the Americanos (SW, 175, his italics).

Anaya later rolls off the terms used for American intruders:

...the Anglos, the gringos salados, gabachos, gueros, los Americanos de los Estados Unidos, speaking a strange tongue, praying to the Christ in the Bible, not the Bloody Cristo on the Penitente Cross (SW, 227).<sup>18</sup>

Here Anaya's story takes on the narrative of Chicano/a nationalism and of the colonial subject. The results of the conquest are logged in history. And as Sonny slips into a subsequent dream, he remembers:

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<sup>18</sup> "white man," "salty white man," "blonde," foreigner," "Yankee," or speaker of unintelligible Spanish (Cobos 1983).

Owl Woman's people had called this place Aztlán. The original homeland, the place of birth...The Spaniards came to map it. Called it la Nueva Mexico. Landscapes renamed, maps overlaid previous maps, sometimes peacefully, most often violently(SW, 212).

Anaya fortifies his position in the next chapter, as Mexican bandito Pancho Villa storms into Sonny's dreams, targeting a southern New Mexican town for a raid. When confronted with his illegal acts, he replies:

What is illegal? That border is illegal, because it was bought and sold by thieves! Politicians made that border, not la gente!...I do not respect the border of scoundrels (SW, 307).

Villa's character can not escape self-irony, but here Anaya makes a quick jab at American annexation and the resulting political geography of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. It is a lapse in the general theme of good versus evil, but even the shady Villa is momentarily excused for his actions. If the people (la gente) had been involved in the matter, the border would be further north and east.

#### **Texans**

American cultural and political control of Nuevo Mexico becomes a fact of life for the people in Sonny's dream. Their new subordinate position is only aggravated by continued intrusion by outsiders. The dream sequence jumps to the Civil War Reconstruction, when the most vehement outside force comes directly from the east. Anaya writes: "The territory changed after the war. All those southern soldiers and Tejanos



returning home found nothing but ruin" (SW, 220). As history dictates, southerners, many of which had flooded into southern New Mexico and Arizona during the war, moved into eastern New Mexico and threatened the dream. Anaya's Eden "[became] the new battlefield "(SW, 220-221).

Defeated southerners, a different type of American than Kearny's Army, move west in pursuit of their own dreams. They follow the path blazed by the initial push of Manifest Destiny:

...the war-weary soldiers of the South returned home to find devastation. Many moved west into Texas, across Texas and into New Mexico. New Mexico, they said in their southern drawl, a slang flavored with the Cajun tongue of Louisiana (SW, 215).

They initially arrive in eastern New Mexico:

Cattle barons appeared on the stage, men eager to run the Mexicans and Indians out of the plains, men who claimed the land and mapped it with barbed wire and a new language (SW, 225).

A battle is waged between a New Mexico already overcome by an ominous outside force and a self-righteous group wanting to take away a fundamental part of the utopian equation: land. The Texans impose their worldview upon eastern New Mexico. The only retaliation is the blame for the demise of the nomadic tribes of the plains. In Anaya's story, Anglos, not New Mexicans, confront the Comanches in eastern New Mexico, "In the end the Comanches lost, not to the presence of Nuevos Mexicanos, but to the presence of the Tejanos. The Texans wiped them out" (SW, 226). There are conflicting versions of

New Mexico's history here, as the Comanches and mestizos also had strained relations, resulting in skirmishes over buffalo raiding grounds and grazing lands. Anaya recognizes this, but the Texans, and by extension all southerners, are indicted. In Sonny's dream sequence, Billy the Kid is used as a scapegoat for Texan pillaging of Lincoln County. This depiction crystallizes their essence; they are a loathsome other, a caricature that continues through Anaya's tale.

#### **Comanches, Navajos, and Okies**

In contrast, the Comanches, the "Vikings of the Plains" who fought with the Osage and went south of the Border to "just plain kick ass with the Mexicanos" (SW, 225), are merged with Anaya's mestizaje a few pages later. The once proud tribe who "swooped" across the plains, stole women, and got drunk on Mexican tequila, settle with the people on the Rio Grande. Sonny reflects on the plight of a people defeated by the Texans:

They became farmers and began to pray to the dream of corn, give thanks to the Corn Mothers. They began to pray to the kachinas for rain for their dusty fields (SW, 226).

The Comanche are one of three disheveled people brought into Anaya's mestizaje. The Navajo are defeated by Kit Carson and a "U.S. Army [that] wanted to bring them to their knees" (SW, 215). They are forced on the Long March to Fort Sumner, a "concentration camp long before the world uses such terms to describe the atrocity," where "the land was so poor it

couldn't be farmed. There was no rain. The smallpox nearly finished them. They learned to drink whiskey" (SW, 216).

Sonny's girlfriend, Rita, starts to have similar dreams. She visits the Long March in dream space and realizes that her ancestors, the Dine, had also come to the Rio Grande, delivered by "Nuevo Mexicanos who went west to trade and brought back hundreds of slaves" (SW, 301). The Navajos were captured, and the havoc the New Mexicans caused is thinly glossed over. The dispossessed and devastated Indians of the Four Corners eventually become part of the mestizaje.

Sonny's dream sequence ends before the turn of the Twentieth Century. However, his reflections on the historical geography of New Mexico are just as clear in *Zia Summer* and *Rio Grande Fall*. We pick up Anaya's narrative in *Zia Summer*, two decades later, near modern-day Albuquerque. Another host of distressed people has arrived in New Mexico:

Then in the twenties and thirties the Okies fleeing the dust storms of Oklahoma homesteaded in the valley and tried to raise beans. The harsh earth of the Estancia Valley lent itself to epic drama, the stories of the people who came to conquer the land and were either beaten by it or adapted and learned to live in harmony (ZS, 206).

While the land has played a fundamental role in Anaya's utopian dream, it is here that the physical environment becomes an essential element. The dream is validated by ecological fact, and the newcomers must abandon their old conception of the land or leave. They must also learn something about the people:

...the Okies had moved west...the people here felt sorry for the dislocated...they often fed them, gave them food before they moved on to the dream of California. A few stayed. Cars broke down and some were forced to plant their dreams in the Rio Grande valley. Lean men and women with bony bodies and faces...those who had no strength to continue on to the land of milk and honey laid down their load and learned to eat beans, chile, tortillas (ZS, 188).

He continues:

As they became learned in the cultural ways, some moved into the barrios, lost their prejudices against the Mexicans, started businesses in the booming downtown area, and now their grandkids were third generation Alburquerqueans, as proud of the city as any Nuevo Mexicano (ZS, 189).

The Okies of Steinbeck lore are welcomed and partially assimilated into Anaya's utopian New Mexico. They become part of the land and the mestizaje, the cultural ecology of the people of the dream. The socially marginalized Okies have been brought into a mestizaje that now includes the indigenous -- Pueblos, Apaches, Comanches, and Navajos --or the ultimately marginalized. This places the mestizaje in a potent position, for the people who had been marginalized by the dominant society are now the core. They can now take on in unity the new forces of assimilation that the outside, or the hegemonic cultural system, may send their way. In time, this becomes important, because the Okies have moved into a drastically different New Mexico, an urban one that pose more problems and dilemmas for the mestizaje and many others who journeyed to New Mexico between the Mexican-American War and the middle of the Twentieth Century.

**The Womb: New Mexico as a Cultural Crossing and the roots of the dream**

By the end of *Shaman Winter*, the past has come full circle, and Sonny is able to bring his understanding into the present. One thing is clear, Sonny has realized that the story of New Mexico has been a struggle between many peoples, an epic of the contest between good and evil. He has also learned of his roots, and the creation of the mestizaje: the merging of the Spanish and Indian blood. He confirms:

No, he wasn't Spanish, he was Nuevo Mexicano, a mestizo from the earth and blood of the Hispano homeland, which was also the Pueblo Indian homeland (SW, 128).

Sonny's revelation is that he is one of the strategic mestizaje<sup>19</sup> - Spanish and Indian - but the cultural barriers around membership in this family slowly fall. Sonny reflects on his own family heritage: "The New Mexico families were connected. You dug deep into one family tree and found the roots spreading" (SW, 125).

Sonny realizes how many groups are a part of New Mexico. In *Shaman Winter* the mestizaje grows from the children of Andres Vaca and Owl Woman to include Comanches and Navajo. And in *Zia Summer* he realizes that the Okies had become part of la gente. But as one thumbs through Anaya's last three novels, Sonny realizes that New Mexico is a melting pot of

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<sup>19</sup> I have adopted Perez-Torres (1998) term 'strategic mestizaje' which he uses as a label for the broad-sweeping construction of the 'essential Chicano/a.' I use it for Anaya's construction of the chosen people of New Mexico.

other sorts. The people include Mexican Tlaxcalan Indians, Jews, Moors, German merchants, French-Canadian Trappers, and Mexicanos. Sonny comprehends how he is connected to all of these people, and that "All bloods ran as one in the coyotes of Nuevo Mexico" (ZS, 5).

The people of the dream become of many colors, but of common impulse. The distinctions once made between Spanish and Indian, Comanche and Pueblo lose much of their validity as they are accommodated and transculturated into the local culture. Sonny's revelations about his own past signify Anaya's attempt to merge the people of New Mexico. The grand mestizaje is formed.

The landscape also takes on a more significant role in Anaya's utopian dream. Sonny's revelation that the "roots" of the New Mexico people "spread" into the land is essential. His heritage connects to those of many different people with many backgrounds, but they are all anchored in the earth:

The history of the northern Rio Grande valley had been washed by many currents, and each flood deposited its sediment in the earth of la Nueva Mexico. The earth held the memory no one could deny. All expeditions to the northern Rio Grande had left their imprint (SW, 128).

The land becomes the bearer of New Mexico's past. The land also becomes the fulcrum, the womb, the critical bond between the people. As Sonny has realized through his dream, the New Mexico landscape has requirements of the people. They must be good stewards of the land and they must get to know it; otherwise, the land will expel them. It incubates the

potential of the dream.

But the potential is held at bay by the never-ending drama of good versus evil. The grand mestizaje is kept from harmony by a constant wave of people who have other dreams of New Mexico. The result is war and pestilence, and a contested and unsettled story. Anaya also implies cultural and ecological exceptionalism. The story heralds New Mexico's hybridity, but rejects those elements that could steer it off a chosen path. He also has created his own set of sweeping representations of New Mexico's people -- Comanches, Pueblos, Americans, and Texans. At times, his process of othering replicates standardized depictions of cultural identity. Despite the fact that many of these groups eventually merge with the local culture, these representations are dangerous, for it ignores the varied experience of people in New Mexico and entrenches stereotypes. Anaya also reinforces a binary relationship between New Mexico and the outside world. The mestizaje holds onto traditions and to the land despite the overwhelming odds of outside colonization.

**The Experienced Dream of *Bless Me, Ultima* and *Heart of Aztlán***

To better understand the roots of Anaya's point of reference, and the revelations Sonny has in his dream requires a return to *Bless Me, Ultima* and *Heart of Aztlán*. Anaya's most acclaimed novels are also stories of his own youth. In the Pecos Valley, and its two mestizo communities El Puerto and Pasturas, a young Antonio learns how the world works and what the world means. Part of his move from youth to

adolescence was learning the intricacies of these two communities. The dichotomy of the families and the towns ultimately was determined by geography: the people of the plains were nomadic ranchers, the people of the valley were rooted farmers. The landscape dictated their means of livelihood but also the way they operated within the world.

Antonio is also socialized into the communities, learning the Catholic religion, but also given spiritual guidance from a curandera, Ultima. The land, the syncretic Catholic-American Indian religion, and the basic tenets of strong community structure and social responsibility are brought together. In its simplest form the novel is a story of a young boy coming of age, and learning what is good and evil in the world. Antonio confronts evils, in the form of witchcraft and alcoholism, racism and poverty. Simply, *Bless Me, Ultima* is an analog to Anaya's youth, where he learned what New Mexico was. The basic formula for Anaya's dream is established here.

In *Heart of Aztlán* the world of *Bless Me, Ultima* confronts the realities of the urban Southwest. The dislocated family suffers from the most oppressive alternative. The family is under the thumb of cultural, political, geographic, and economic forces controlled by others. They are also forced to adapt to a new place and a new way of life. This other force is that of Anglo-America, and as Clemente maintains: "it's the way we're learning to live, like the americano, there is a fee for everything" (HA, 35). The fee is the loss of the romanticized way of life in



the eastern New Mexico village. A sense of a looming social revolt underlies the novel, and Clemente exclaims: "Tyranny sucks our dreams and turns them into nightmares, it dries the hope we have for our children and their future! We have endured enough" (HA, 206).

The residents of the barrio do not physically revolt, but the suffering of the present is made bearable by holding onto the ideas of a harmonious past and an emancipatory future. Again Clemente confirms:

Yes, we have lived under the shadow of injustice for a long time, but we have not allowed injustice and poverty to make our existence drab and meaningless. We must remember that in these hard times (HA, 204).

Anaya's experience of a utopian New Mexico in *Bless Me, Ultima* is solidified by his own existence as a teenager in Albuquerque and by the experience of Clemente's family in the barrio. Dislocation anchors a sense that the dream can be held onto even in the most oppressive of circumstances. In *Heart of Aztlán* and *Bless Me, Ultima*, characters encounter numerous hurdles that only foreshadow future obstacles facing the dream. The past will confront reality. The imagined will intersect with the present and be transformed into a vision.

#### **Legacy of Conquest: From Utopia to Dystopia**

I know it isn't always the 'land of enchantment.' Men with evil in their hearts also migrate to the center  
-- *Shaman Winter*, 112

Now, New Mexico has been discovered again. The Californians are coming in. People with money from Los Angeles  
-- *Zia Summer*, 270

In many ways *Heart of Aztlán* is a pivotal piece in Anaya's repertoire. It signals the emergence of Albuquerque as the center of his experience (Chapter 2) but it is also a place where his idea of utopian New Mexico starts to feed off the alternative, that of dystopia and the threat of the annihilation of the dream. We return to the world of Sonny Baca, late Twentieth Century Albuquerque, where the city becomes an analog to today's Duke City of the new West. Unlike the dream sequence of New Mexico's history, Sonny is confronted with the more recent past and today's Albuquerque. In this real world New Mexico, Sonny, confronts new particulars, ones that are a menace to a way of life and a conception of New Mexico he has discovered in his dreams.

Anaya deploys an important character in his last three novels, Sonny's next door neighbor, Don Eliseo. He is a Chicano/a from the north valley of Albuquerque who embodies the essence of the mestizaje. He knows the history of the state and the legacy of its people. Sonny reflects:

Most people knew little of Don Eliseo's kind of love of the earth, of the memory that ran through the roots of the plants and trees and the water of the river (ZS, 162).

Don Eliseo still farms his small plot, and maintains his connections to his family, the church, and his brothers in the nearby Pueblos. He becomes Sonny's guide into New Mexico's past, but in doing so becomes the standard by which contemporary New Mexico, and contemporary New Mexicans, are

measured.

### **Piecing Together Today's New Mexico and Albu"r"querque**

Sonny also becomes a good historical geographer of New Mexico. Through his research at the UNM's Zimmerman Library and through ample experience in the field, he pieces together the processes and patterns that have shaped the state. When researching the role of the railroad in the growth of the Albuquerque, Sonny stumbles upon the complications of the city's name, something Anaya clarifies in an earlier novel:

In April of 1880 the railroad reached la Villa de Alburquerque in New Mexico. Legend says the Anglo stationmaster couldn't pronounce the first 'r' in "Albur" so he dropped it as he painted the station sign for the city. This novel restores the original spelling, Alburquerque (ABQ, ii).

The naming, and subsequent renaming, of the rail station revises the city's past. But the railroad, and later Route 66, which brought the Okies and numerous others to New Mexico and Albuquerque, are vehicles for mass migration to the city and the state. They enhance the cultural mosaic, but, as history dictates, cause real problems including ethnic tension, urban sprawl, and eventually place stress on natural resources. These people, and the changes they bring about, also become obstacles to Anaya's vision and to the mestizaje. Sonny reflects on the movement of people into the city:

Blacks who worked on the railroad, the cooks and waiters of the Super Chief, had brought their families and settled along Broadway, and their community thrived. Indians from the Pueblos and Navajos from the Dine Nation moved in and out of the city, creating a cultural cloth of many colors. New Immigrants arrived, Japanese and Southeast Asians, more Mexicans, and those who fled the wars in Central America, each lending a new color and texture of fabric to the cloth, the woof and warp took on the earth tones of a Chimayo blanket (ZS, 188).

Culturally diverse Albuquerque is given life, a true depiction of the city today. But the metaphor of these people being woven into the local tapestry suggests that they must become part of the dream, something Anaya clarifies in the following paragraph:

The city was an intricately patterned blanket, each color representing different heritages, traditions, languages, folkways, and each struggling to remain distinct, full of pride, history, honor, and family roots. They were clannish, protective, often prejudiced and bigoted. Yes, the city was full of growing pains, bound to old political oaths and allegiances, lustful, violent, murderous when the moon was wild, drunk on lost loves. At the center they were all struggling for identity (ZS, 189).

Like the Okies, these more recent arrivals are displaced nomads, struggling to find their place within New Mexico. Their lack of attachment is the fundamental part of their struggle. They are depicted as still holding onto their pasts, pasts tied to other peoples, other places, and alternative versions of the dream. Because they have not completely woven themselves into New Mexico, they will remain detached from one another and from themselves. Until then, the city will be home to the numerous ills that plague other American cities, in particular ethnic tension. Sonny reflects:

The city he knew as a kid had changed. Change was inevitable. But something else had seeped in with the change, or maybe it had always been there and he had been too young to see it. The rift between the cultural groups seemed to grow (ZS, 190).

Anaya implies that these people can be released from their agony, from their lack of cohesion, only if they become steeped in the place and its people. He has changed the focus of cultural identity from race and ethnicity to that of place. The task becomes more and more difficult through the more recent history of New Mexico. Dramatic change swept over the land after the 1940s, ones well documented in his novels. The era of nuclear technology and the atomic bomb resulted in the development of Los Alamos, Sandia Labs on the outskirts of Albuquerque, and the missile range at White Sands. The latter is home to the Trinity site, and a paramount place in time: "the day the sun shone at night" (SW, 108). Anaya also documents the growth of the arts and the tourism industry in Taos and Santa Fé: "Later the Americanos came, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Dorothy Brett, D.H. Lawrence and the Taos art colony" (SW, 68). He tracks the subsequent movement of celebrities and the establishment of communes: "Later in the sixties, a new migration, hippies and Hollywood celebrities who moved to Taos seeking communion with the earth and the cosmos" (SW, 168). All of these people were drawn to New Mexico because of its landscape, its ethnic diversity, and its sense of marginality. But all brought with them alternative visions of what New Mexico was. The alterations they made to the social

and physical landscapes during the middle of the Twentieth Century were a forecast of what was to come.

### **The Re-colonization of New Mexico**

As Sonny becomes more immersed in his dreams -- his heritage -- he realizes how threatening contemporary events have become to the place and his people. By the late 1980s New Mexico is witnessing the most rapid demographic, economic, and cultural transformation brought about since the Spanish and American colonizations. Widespread development schemes, from real estate to high technology, are reconfiguring the physical and cultural landscapes, bringing with them new people, new ideas, new ways of life, and ultimately threatening the New Mexico of the utopian past. These processes eventually spread throughout New Mexico, but they are first witnessed in the state's capital city.

### **Santa Fé**

Artists, writers, and tourists discovered Santa Fé during the first decades of the Twentieth Century. But by the time Anaya writes *Albuquerque* and the Sonny Baca novels in the late 1980s and 1990s, the "City Different" has been completely transformed:

Something had happened in Santa Fé. People with money came to live the Santa Fé style, they bought the downtown barrios and built hotels, shops, condos. The old residents were swept aside, the people gone (ABQ, 80).

The city functions as the state's political nerve center,

but it was also the heart of its cultural heritage. The local mestizo population was displaced from the center of Santa Fé by the process of gentrification. Santa Fé becomes the heart of a new Southwest, the home to people who have transformed it into their own vision of what New Mexico is and what it should be. For Anaya, the new guard is the antithesis of the dream, a materialistic order with a shallow sense of attachment to one another and the place. The direct assault on the core of historical New Mexico foretells doom:

The old southwest was dead, or dying, taken over by Californicators living the Santa Fé style and staying in touch through fax machines. The once reclusive Villa de la Santa Fé had been "discovered" in the eighties. For those with money it became a place to escape to, a place for a second home for the LA crowd, a place to build new fantasies (ZS, 198).

For the newcomers, the city has become an exotic backdrop for them to play out their own vision of the Southwest. Here Anaya indicts Californians as the key to the destruction of Santa Fé, reinforcing a new stereotype that has become quite common in the West (Meinig 1972, 180; Rudzitis 1988). He expresses his disdain for the commodification of the town and its people. The cultural landscape and its people have been encapsulated both in a painting and by a pretentious adaptation of local costume:

The paintings reflected the Mexicanos as outcasts in their own land. People in one painting were walking away from the shining city, glancing back at La Villa de la Santa Fé. In a dark alley, shadowed men drank and brawled. Expensive cars, Hollywood faces, and women in the ostentatious Santa Fé style lined the streets (ABQ, 154).

### **The New Albuquerque**

To a large degree the state's largest city had been spared the eventual fate of Santa Fé. Yet, by the 1990s even Albuquerque was witnessing a similar transformation. Real estate development and high technology began to transform the city, almost overnight. Albuquerque experiences major growing pains, and an influx of new migrants, similar to those who had moved to Santa Fé:

Now new immigrants were filling the valley, Californians fleeing urban living, New Yorkers with their city accents, from everywhere they came seeking the sun and a slower pace of life (SW, 128).

Metropolitan America makes a direct assault on Sonny's, and Anaya's, Albuquerque. It was already a large, diverse city, but its population of 500,000 is small by the standards of those seeking a rural idyll. Moreover, the movement of Californians, New Yorkers, and Texans threatens what remains of regional autonomy, and posits a huge dilemma for the New Mexico of Sonny's dream.<sup>20</sup> Extensive real estate developments are in the works in *Zia Summer*. One developer, Frank Dominic, envisions transforming Albuquerque into a Southwestern Venice. Sonny reflects:

He wants to use the water of the Rio Grande for his outrageous development, create a Disneyland for tourists, but he doesn't understand the balance, how the river and the underground water play in the scheme of things in the Rio Grande basin. He wants to build an oasis out of Albuquerque. Canals, green beltways, flower gardens, the flow of fountains, canal boats carrying passengers from one casino to the next (ZS, 209).

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<sup>20</sup> See Meinig (1972) and Lewis (1992).



In the same novel, a Japanese technology tycoon plans to establish an industrial and scientific center in Albuquerque. The factories and the new imported employees will produce computer chips and state-of-the-art television screens for consumers around the world. The entrepreneur envisions "a high-tech corridor between Los Alamos and the Sandia labs" (ZS, 337). In turn, "The new southwest was dancing to the high tech tune" (ZS, 198).

Anaya's use of the technology sub-plot foreshadows the reality of the establishment of technological industry in the Rio Grande Valley. By the time Anaya publishes *Shaman Winter* in 1999, the tycoon's dream has come to fruition. The northwestern part of Albuquerque is dominated by a factory that produces half of the world's computer chips. The facility is foreign and perilous: "The Intel building rose like a giant behemoth, a dangerous whale beached on the sands of the West Mesa" (SW, 289).

The development schemes required a work force, most of them transplants from numerous places around the country. Again, Californians are convicted of threatening New Mexico:

L.A. is no place to raise a family. But most of the newcomers only see the surface of things. They build multi-million dollar adobe homes, but they don't know anything about the people (ABQ, 152).

As the real New Mexico landscape indicates, many recent migrants have chosen to isolate themselves from one another and from other New Mexicans. Something easily detected in the visible landscape:

Those with money built walls around their subdivisions, like Tanoan in the Heights; others built expensive adobe homes with wide lawns and a view of the mountains in the valley (ABQ, 65).

Anaya compares these newer adobes to those of the people of the dream:

The first settlers had built homes from adobe brick, from the clay and sand of the river valley. Some of those old homes were still around. Adobe had the permanence of earth. It was earth. Perhaps that's why the newcomers liked to build their fashionable million-dollar homes from adobe. It gave them a sense of permanence (ZS, 338).

Mimicking the vernacular landscape - the rooted one of the people of the dream - is not enough. Anaya contests this outside adaptation, and characterizes the newcomers as wandering nomads: "Foolish dreams! They longed for permanence. They longed for roots" (ZS, 338).

Even the far perimeters of Albuquerque experience growth. Developers east of Albuquerque divvy up the remnants of old land grants. They are sold to people who want to escape the community and have a piece of land to call their own. However, as Anaya relays, their attachment to the place is a matter of transient convenience:

In the eastern foothills. The land was all they knew, all they had, but the big ranches ate away at the small land grants, and the land developers for the past twenty years had been buying and dividing the land into one acre plots and selling them to people from the city who came looking for country living. A cheap piece of land to call one's own was the dream of the new homesteaders, those who set up trailers on the barren land (ZS, 207).

The newcomers are a threat to the state's natural and

cultural resources. They have been depicted as being fueled by an enterprise that not only does not understand the southwest, but also disregards the entire region. The transformation of the cultural landscape has social implications as well. In *Zia Summer*, developers slowly eat up Albuquerque's north valley, home to Sonny and Don Eliseo. It is settled by the same transparent stock of people who have over-ridden Santa Fé. Sonny maintains:

We live in the age of la gente dorada, the people covered with a sheen of gold, Sonny thought. The beautiful people of Hollywood, television, movies, caricatures surrounding themselves with luxury, coated with a gold sheen but empty inside. Even here in the north valley we have those who cover themselves with the sheen of gold, all over the city we have the hombres dorados, men of empty promises (ZS, 326).

The recent demographic change has compounded the effects of Anglo-American culture upon local residents. This is best illustrated in Sonny's discussion of the bearer of the dream, Don Eliseo. His sons have lost touch with their father and with their traditions. Cultural and economic forces largely controlled by others have had devastating effects on the traditions of the New Mexican people, and threaten the legacy of the mestizaje:

They don't speak Spanish, they live up in the Heights, their gringa wives just don't cook our food. No chile verde, no frijoles, nada...The boys had gotten educated and left the valley, married Anglo women, joined the great American dream in a Northeast Heights homogenized culture. It was happening all over, the change to an Anglo lifestyle, attention to work and green lawns on the weekend, kids in soccer or music lessons. In the process they forgot their Spanish language, grew ashamed of the old traditions, and they sure as hell didn't farm anymore. When they looked at their father's field of corn and vegetables, they wondered why the old man bothered (ZS, 259).

### **Cracking The Golden Egg**

The new New Mexico and the new New Mexicans posit a real threat to Anaya's mestizaje and the utopian dream. Sonny reflects on the potential destruction of the real and imagined Albuquerque: "The peace and quiet were gone...the natural landscape that made the city and the river valley distinctive would be gone " (RGF, 258).

In his tale the recent changes are not permanent ones. Many of the new migrants will be driven away, a product of their own doing:

...the original ambience that once drew the moneyed folks to the North Valley was lost. A few realized they had cracked the golden egg that drew them to the area in the first place (RGF, 42).

The desert landscape, as well, has its own agency. The crucial connection between the mestizaje, the environment, will expel the latest arrivals:

They wouldn't last. The adults would get lonely, the children would grow up and leave, then the haunting, lonely sound of the wind and the emptiness would drive them all back to the city (ZS, 207).

The misunderstanding of the landscape will undo much of

the more recent development. The new arrivals will learn a tough lesson from the land:

they were building new cities on soft sand, and when the summer rains came, the arroyos flooded, homes and streets would buckle. Water could destroy anything. As builders disturbed the old arroyos, the rains would cut new channels, the worm will turn (ZS 327).

Throughout the story it seems as if the outsiders are given an opportunity to know the place and its people. They could have learned to appreciate both without destroying them. But, as Sonny reflects, many urban New Mexicans will eventually leave:

Perhaps that was best. The cities of the Southwest were still watering holes in the desert, tents put up on the sand hills on the banks of the river. That's what characterized the cities of the Southwest, the whimsy homes built on sand. As if nothing was permanent; as if deep down the people knew they were only passing through and the time would come for them to move on (ZS, 338).

Anaya is describing, and Sonny is experiencing, the actual transformation of the Rio Grande Valley. Both of them hold on to the dream as they witness Albuquerque sprawl north and south along the Rio Grande, and climb up the Sandias and over the west Mesa. Another ominous, outside force has imposed itself upon the people and the place. The homogenizing forces of global culture and economics threaten to wipe out the last vestiges of un-colonized space. The test is whether or not the people of the dream, and the land, can withstand the pressures of inevitable change. The dream also signifies Anaya's own withdrawal to a place and a time where his New Mexico has not forgotten itself.

## Apocalypse

While there are numerous forces that threatened to steer New Mexico from it's destiny, there are other stronger ones that loom as potential harbingers of destruction for all of New Mexico and American society. These catastrophic forces all enter Sonny's Baca's New Mexico. They take many shapes and forms from social disintegration to ecological and technological devastation.

In *Rio Grande Fall*, Sonny's nemesis, Raven, is linked to a drug ring. The smuggling plot connects New Mexico to the border crossing at El Paso and eventually to the Colombian Medellin cartel. The problems of drug abuse also slide into *Heart of Aztlán*, where they are a corrosive element in the social landscape of the streets of the fictionalized Barelás barrio. He realizes that the drug problem is not a cornerstone of the underside of Latin America and the barrios. It is directly linked to the United States government:

...to create a chemical dependency in this country. Give the colored people enough crack to keep them poor and in misery. Fill the jails with them and convince whites that all people of color are their enemies. Their object is to divide and conquer. Keep the colored people separated from the white world. Yeah, that's what they're doing...as long as they keep the country divided, they stay in power...Of course they don't want to get rid of the so-called drug problem.! They created it! It creates power for those who want to stay in power! (RGF, 305).

Anaya's fictitious characters enunciate an unnerving possibility. The CIA, DEA, and the drug rings are all linked together in a coercive plot to ensure racial unrest and

fortify power. This conspiracy theory runs in and out of the Sonny Baca novels. By *Shaman Winter*, the drug ring and members of the government are part of an ominous apocalyptic force that overtly uses any possible mechanism to control society and threaten any possibility for Anaya's utopian dream. The plot involves white-supremacists and militia groups: "the America-first crowd of the love-it-or-leave mentality" (SW, 81).

In turn, drugs, militia groups, and coercive parts of the government purposefully create schisms between all social groups. In *Shaman Winter*, they have gone two steps further. They have harnessed nuclear technology and biological warfare:

Whites are afraid of dark-skinned people, and the Blacks don't trust whites. Now it's a population war, fed by a mass migration from Latin America. In twenty years the majority population of this country is going to be colored, not white...[they] tried using drugs to destroy this country, turning people into addicts. That fed into the class war they created. Now it's the bomb, viruses (SW, 260-61).

The perilous "they" threaten the people, the environment, and also human creativity and consciousness, including the one that has brought forth the utopian dream:

They would allow no dissention. They would close the borders, not just the physical borders, but the forums where ideas were debated. There would be deportations of those who didn't agree to the party line. The radical white supremacists would create a race war. There would be a bloodbath, the Armageddon they had been preaching all along (SW, 81).

Anaya's uneasiness about the presence of technological industry in Albuquerque is recurrent in the Sonny Baca novels.

In *Shaman Winter* a high school student tells Sonny exactly why:

The teachers keep telling use we're in a new age. The cyber age. Techo-knowledge. Plug in, be in touch, know everything. What they forget to tell us is that sooner or later the body snatchers get you....They erase your file (SW, 269).

The technocrats at Albuquerque's Intel plant are eventually linked to drugs, the CIA, and the white-supremacist groups. The overwhelming sense of paranoia is heightened by the presence of the nuclear bomb. Sonny Baca is confronted with the realities of the nuclear age in both *Zia Summer* and *Shaman Winter*. In both books, his nemesis Raven has harnessed radioactive materials. In the latter novel, the same group of white supremacists who Sonny claims created the drug problems and the race wars have imported nuclear technology and materials from the politically and socially disintegrated Ukraine. The scheme could spell doom for the entire state of New Mexico, as Sonny unravels their plot to detonate it at the Sandia Labs on the outskirts of Albuquerque. The blast will ignite numerous other warheads near the Manzano Mountains and annihilate the state and reign havoc on the entire world. Sonny proclaims "They wanted to blast the dream apart!" (SW, 82).

This is not Anaya's only reference to the nuclear age. His first novel, *Bless Me, Ultima*, ends with the first nuclear test at the Trinity Site south and west of the Pecos Valley. The apocalyptic threat, which New Mexicans and Anaya have



lived with for over 50 years, seeps into most of his novels. It is a grim reminder of precarious situation the nuclear age has put New Mexicans, and all humans, in. Sonny reflects: "Man using the fire inherent in the elements had turned it against man, woman, and child...to control nuclear power was to control the earth" (SW 85).

The role of apocalypse in Anaya's writing goes beyond New Mexico's struggle with external cultural forces and values. Nuclear technology, militia groups, biological warfare, and the drug problem represent real, or at least feared, elements of society. Sonny is the superhero for he effectively thwarts these ominous forces in all the novels. Still, they all are a threat to any dream of what New Mexico can be, and they disturb any sense of previous balance that had been attained. These potent forces, which overpower the numerous other process that have shaped the landscape of today's New Mexico, are the apex of "the evil that came inherent in human nature, the impulse toward destruction" (SW, 314).

#### Summary

Why did the newcomers always have to rename, remap? The old people had kept the promise of the dream in their hearts, and waited.

--*Shaman Winter*, 212

our dreams affect our destiny

--*Shaman Winter*, 308

By the end of *Shaman Winter*, Sonny realizes he is an actor in his dream; he can control both his history and his

future. He has merged his acute sensitivity to the landscape with and understanding of his heritage, which he realizes: "as long as the memory was kept alive the way of the ancestors, los antepasados, would be known, and the lessons learned would serve as guideposts for the future" (SW, 175). Despite the overpowering manipulation of the social and economic realms of New Mexico, he has, in simplest terms, realized his own sense of place. He has grounded himself in a physical location and in historic time. He resolves the Chicano/a struggle of being alienated and uprooted.

But Sonny's dreams and experiences, and Anaya's story of New Mexico, also exhibit many other tenuous relationships that define Chicano/a culture. Part of Sonny's indoctrination in the history allows him to come to terms with his mestizo (hybrid) background. Moreover, Anaya's account exists within a theoretical third space. It does not fall in line with an Indian, Spanish, or an Anglo-American narrative, but is composed from all of them. It is a Chicano/a story - mestizo - that uses as a basis Spanish and American archival documentation but takes the form of a myth or folktale. It leans on the plausible, and thus can not be completely thrown out as pure fiction.<sup>21</sup>

Anaya's point of reference switches during the story. First, it is told from the viewpoint of Spanish colonist

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<sup>21</sup> According to Tuan (1990) this is particularly important in regard to the reading public. Minh-Ha (1991) has made a similar argument for other products of culture, in particular film.

Andres Vaca. Later, it is told from the Pueblo Indian perspective. It then takes the form of a response to American colonization, and then as a retort to more recent economic and demographic change. Yet, Anaya does not completely reject modernism and the weight of American annexation. His New Mexico adapts to inevitable historical change. As the Japanese technology tycoon explains to Sonny: "Those who remember their past history dream of it as utopia, but this is not so. As much as I identify with your view, with your history, I also sense the inevitable movement of history. So I see the influx of migrations into this river valley as its strength" (ZS, 270). He continues: "So one may say, to not understand the stranger is suicide. There are beautiful traditions here, Mr. Baca, but if the people don't embrace the fruits of the new technology, they will disappear" (ZS, 271).

Anaya engages in trickery in his narrative, for he disavows accepted literary and academic protocol. It is not a complete story, for there are numerous gaps and pauses. Nor is it a nativist tale or a linear modernist cadence. He interweaves dreams with the archival and the empirical. It is a post-colonial story that, in the words of Chakrabarty "deliberately makes visible its own repressive strategies and practices" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995, 357). Anaya glorifies those who embody his ideas of the Nuevo Mexicano mestizaje (e.g. Don Eliseo), and those who have produced it, the Spanish and the Indians. He blurs accepted ideas about ethnic identity and historical facts to suit his own ideas of

what New Mexico was, and what it can become. He blatantly  
others those he feels threaten his dream of New Mexico (e.g.  
Texans, Californians, and white supremacists). The story also  
neglects many of the atrocities of Spanish colonial control  
that are part of the Chicano/a role as colonizer. Many of the  
past cruelties have become ironically reversible. He also  
makes very clear the devastating effects of the impress of  
American colonization and modern science, and the broader  
effects of the neo-colonial condition.

Cultural politics aside, at the heart of the story is  
Anaya's own relationship with, and concern for, the place. He  
partakes in an ongoing process of interpreting and mediating  
the contradictions in the everyday historical experience of  
New Mexico. This points to a kind of geography where  
settlement, colonization, and cultural creation are  
continually beginning and continually ending. The explanatory  
course moves through time seeking a sense of stability and  
balance. The core of the dream space, and of the story, is  
defined by basic human values of good and virtue, and their  
continued battle with evil and corruption. These are manifest  
on different levels - individual, communal, cultural, and  
national - as forces we contend with in our daily lives. He is  
laying down a new map on New Mexico -- a utopian one -- that  
projects it into a future of great potential.

## Chapter 5

### Magical New Mexico and the Spirit(s) of Place

This chapter examines Anaya's use of magical realism in his writing about New Mexico. The first section is dedicated to his creation of magical New Mexico and the deployment of shaman-like characters in his first three novels. The second section explores his use of magical realism in the Sonny Baca detective novels, and their relationship to contemporary New Mexico. Finally, I discuss his use of the Aztlán idea (Chapter 3), his utopic dream (Chapter 4), and his spiritual New Mexico. When fused together, they present a holistic theology that is intimately bound to cultural identity and place.

#### The Creation of Magical New Mexico

He looked at the mountains. The humidity lent a bluish cast to the outline of the Sandias. That's all he could see, the blue outline of the mountains, as if they were cut out of the sky and one could step through their outline into another dimension.

-- *Zia Summer*, 324

Anaya's deep sense of place, as I have illustrated already, in Chapters 3 and 4, is only matched by his reliance on legend and myth. In his first and most influential work, *Bless Me, Ultima*, the landscape acquires spiritual dimensions, a recurring theme that later provides a fundamental part of

his Sonny Baca trilogy. In "Writer's Landscape/Epiphany in Landscape," the New Mexico landscape becomes a muse, an inspiration for artistic revelation and epiphany. His characters are also driven by a spiritual quest to link themselves to place, whether it is the Pecos River Valley, the Llano, or the Rio Grande Valley. Anaya describes the psychological impulse behind the landscape, what Wright (1966) called geopiety. The lay of the land, and the connections of the individual and community to it, provide inspiration and transformation:

The power of the earth is reflected in its landscape. And each one of us defines our relationship to the energy of place according to our particular world view. Energy flows from the earth, and as one learns how to receive that energy one also learns how to live off one's energy to dissolve the polarity of metaphor and create the unity of epiphany (1977, 99-100).

The mythical dimensions of land and people are the discursive tool of magical realism - the paradoxical literary mode that incorporates both sacred and profane. It is a subversive device in that it challenges the western assumption that the 'real' world and the 'fantasy' world are separate. As a literary tradition it is most closely associated with Latin American writers including Marquez and Fuentes, and post-colonial writers from Africa and the Caribbean.<sup>22</sup> Folklore and storytelling surface in these types of

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<sup>22</sup> Magical realism or magic realism is one of post-colonial literature's most powerful tools. As a literary tool, it has appeared in one form or another in American romantic literature, in particular that of Faulkner, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Poe (Gish 1996, 110).

literatures, and include tropes and metaphors not tailored to the ideological structure of the West.

For many, New Mexico holds magical, enchanting qualities. Many early American writers -- including Lawrence and Austin -- sought after this essence, but they were part of a broader movement that saw the West as a primal territory, a land that was imagined and created by their own hands. In response, Anaya's mythical, spiritual, and magical landscapes are monuments to the survival of his people, their sense of self and cultural identity. He incorporates a fantastic perspective, one that integrates myth, spirituality, and the physical landscape. For him, the combination is "a communal response to spiritual crisis" (1989, 236). Anaya has lead Chicano/a writers in incorporating the spiritual dimension of the southwestern landscape, using myth and legend as a partial answer to the dilemmas posed by the Chicano/a situation. He himself has acknowledged that the reintegration of myth "was to have a tremendous impact on the healing of the social fabric" of the community (1989,237). He is also a spokesperson for his culture, and answers part of the Twentieth Century dilemma of the individual being alienated from community by technology and materialism. For Anaya, understanding self, community, and place must "take both the sacred and the profane into account. To understand our culture only through a materialistic account will not provide a true picture of the nature of our community" (1989, 239).

Anaya's raw materials for creating his own New Mexico

myths and legends are Hispanic folklore, Pueblo spirituality, and Mesoamerican legend. It is within the mythical, magical New Mexico that he synthesizes his own conception of Aztlán and brings into his dream of a Utopic New Mexico a fully place-centered theological structure. He appropriates the myths of American Indian tribes, particularly Pueblos, and merges them with other legends to create symbols and archetypes that can serve as spiritual guides for his people. He explains why:

The Chicano/a, the new raza of the Americas, is heir to the same earth and a legacy of spiritual thought which can help center the individual (1990, 240).

If we use Anaya's books as an analog to his own experience of the New Mexico landscape, it is possible to see how he, himself, has created the mythical intuitions to deal with life as a New Mexico Chicano/a and a citizen of the world. He also recreates stories about the magical qualities of the landscape, but readers are being told stories that are not simple replications of the common "Land of Enchantment" aesthetic. They are ones that help the characters, and Anaya, restore an ethereal relationship with the land, and a symbolic means to deal with the cultural and social forces that threaten to divorce them from it and from one another.

#### **Mediators between spiritual and tangible New Mexico**

Anaya creates important characters that serve the function as shamans, or spiritual guides. They lead the characters into the spiritual and mythic dimensions of place.



They also aid in the resolution of internal and external conflicts that arise from cultural confrontation, social oppression, and the basic contradictions of good and evil in the human heart.

***Bless Me, Ultima***

*Bless Me, Ultima* was the first best-selling novel of Chicano/a literature. It was published just after the initial Chicano/a movement came together, and amidst the combative social and racial climates of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The book, and in particular its spiritual guide, Ultima, are serene and soft-spoken, a departure from the social atmosphere of the time, and stand in stark contrast to many of the writings coming out of the newly formed Chicano/a genre. The novel has received more critical attention than any other of his works, and most of the commentary has alluded to the rich mythic and magical dimensions that underlie it (Lamadrid 1989, 246). The story of the young boy, Antonio, coming of age in the Pecos Valley of eastern New Mexico during the 1940s has numerous critical dimensions, but the visit of the curandera, or folk healer, Ultima provides the magical strength of the novel. She helps the boy develop his own consciousness about the world he lives in, which includes coming to terms with the landscape. But it is also possible to frame the creation of this mythical landscape in terms of a cultural response. Anaya's own experience in the Pecos Valley, and the novel's association with the Chicano/a movement, instill upon its characters a social consciousness. Not only is the protagonist

amidst a transition in his development from youth to adolescence, but the characters are amidst drastic social and economic change.

Ultima is a repository for the wisdom and knowledge of mestizo culture. Ultima is in touch with the "spirit that moves the land," (Lamadrid 1989, 247) and she relays this knowledge to Antonio as fundamental to the development of his consciousness. In the tradition of the healer, Ultima commands knowledge of the landscape, from its topography to its animals and the herbs she uses to cast spells and to bring safety and fortune to Antonio and his family. The boy learns of her wisdom early in the novel:

We walked together in the llano and along the river banks to gather herbs and roots for her medicines. She taught me the names of plans and flowers, of trees and bushes, of birds and animals; but most important, I learned from her that there was a beauty in the time of day and in the time of night, and that there was peace in the river and in the hills. She taught me to listen to the mystery of the groaning earth and to feel complete in the fulfillment of its time. My soul grew under her careful guidance (BMU, 15).

She also appeases the young boy's fear of certain parts of the valley landscape by instilling in him an ability to transcend the divisions between the physical world and the human condition. Antonio learns the power of the Pecos River, a place that becomes the spiritual and geographic axis of the novel: "I had been afraid of the awful presence of the river, which was the soul of the river, but through her I learned that my spirit shared in the spirit of all things " (BMU, 15).

Ultima also instructs Antonio as to what is good and evil

in the world. Evil, she taught him, was in the human heart, in particular that of her nemesis, the brujo (black witch) Tenorio and his family. But evil also rides across the land in the form of dust devils and lurks in the river valley: "Across the river in the grove of trees the witches danced. In the form of balls of fire they danced with the devil" (BMU, 43).

Ultima also aids in the resolution of the internal family conflict between Antonio's mother's farming family of El Puerto de la Luna and his fathers ranching family, the vaqueros of Pasturas. They collide over the destiny of the young boy, which means instilling upon him their connection to the land and a spiritual worldview defined by their relationship with it:

It is the blood of the Lunas to be quiet, for only a quiet man can learn the secrets of the earth that are necessary for planting - They are quiet like the moon - And it is the blood of the Marez to be wild, like the ocean from which they take their name, and the spaces of the llano that have become their home (BMU, 41).

Through Ultima, Antonio serves as a mediator between these opposing clans. He revisits his birth in a dream, an event that is momentous for both families whose blood is in the young boy's veins. Both want their traditions to be instilled in the child, a desire exhibited in the conflict over the disposal of the baby's umbilical cord and placenta. The Lunas wanted it buried in the land to add to its fertility and the Marez wanted it burned and scattered in the winds of the plain. Ultima intervenes and settles the feud,

illustrating her role as mediator and the important mechanism of myth in settling the opposing forces and directing them towards resolution (Lamadrid 1989).

But there is a greater threat beyond the family conflict that solidifies the grounding of Antonio in the place. The cultural systems of Antonio's world were being threatened. Invading social, economic, and cultural forces were slowly eating away at the life of the people within the novel and within the actual experience of many villages in eastern New Mexico during the 1940s. Texas ranchers had been encroaching from the east, and the transformation of the economy and the beginning of World War II had started to siphon villagers to the city. The ideology of the people within the novel starts to fill with an acute sensitivity to the landscape, as they were slowly losing a fundamental part of their identity, the place.

When Ultima dies, Antonio becomes the bearer of her knowledge, and himself becomes an archetype that will aid in mediating the new conflicts that arise within his family and extended community. He is to continue the legacy of Ultima, and his knowledge of the Pecos Valley becomes a guidebook for dealing with the conflicts in culture and the loss of a way of life. Antonio also holds the spirituality of a people, many of whom have lost, or will lose, touch with their historical roots which means their relationships with the land and its mythical dimensions. Towards the end of the novel, Antonio comes to terms with the power of the place and its ability to

center the individual and the community, brought about by a discussion between himself, Ultima, his mother and father:

There is power here, a power that can fill a man with satisfaction.  
There is faith here, a faith in the reason for nature being, evolving, growing.  
And there is also the dark, mystical past...the past of a people who lived here and left their traces in the magic that crops out today (BMU, 229).

### ***Heart of Aztlán***

In the subsequent novel *Heart of Aztlán*, Anaya uses myth as a way of attempting to change the world that he, and his characters, live in (Lamadrid 1989, Padilla 1989). The family of Clemente Chavez are dislocated from the llano and have relocated in the urban barrio. They are steeped in the traditions and spirituality established in *Bless Me, Ultima* of the small fictionalized village of Guadalupe and face the overwhelming realities of urban Albuquerque. Another shamanistic guide reconciles their sense of displacement. Anaya deploys Crispin, a muse who strums the melodies of the earth to the family members on his magical blue guitar. He brings peace to the barrio dominated by low-riders, chollos, and a dehumanized urban landscape. Crispin serves as a guide for characters who are driven by a quest to stake claim to the land that underlies them, much as they had connected to the mythic dimensions of their previous home. But it does not come until Clemente comes to terms with the devastating loss of his ties to the village on the llano.

He realizes simply bringing part of the land with him to

the barrio cannot mollify the sense of detachment, because it is the spirit of the place that he yearns for:

He wished he could carry [the earth and] the spiritual connection he felt for the llano and the river valley. But just as he was sure the love for the land could not be transferred on a piece of paper, he knew he could not carry his attachment in the canful of simple, good earth. He was afraid of being separated from the rhythm and the heartbeat of the land (HA, 7).

Clemente will reestablish a mythic connection to the landscape, and eventually becomes the hero of the novel. He goes into the mountains outside of Albuquerque. He ascends the mountain, and through help from Crispin, descends into the human subconscious:

I thought I understood my earth...After all, I am a man whose flesh and bones were molded by the earth of the llano, its weathers and moods are part of my spirit, but when I walked on that mountain I felt a power I have never felt before...and it was only when I reached out and grabbed hold of the people in the river that I could feel the heart of the land (HA, 188).

Clemente's journey into the mountains restores his connection to the mystical New Mexico landscape. But his association with the people in the river is equally important. Clemente realizes this combination - the land and the heart of humanity - is truly the spirit of New Mexico. It leads him to proclaim: "I AM AZTLÁN!" Here, Anaya diverges from the orthodox use of the Aztlán metaphor, where the compelling imagery of the physical landscape, the river of humanity, and the spiritual pulse of the land become Clemente's (and Anaya's redefinition of) Aztlán.

At the close of the novel, the cosmological world, like Crispin, serves as a guide, watching over the people in their quest to reconfirm their place within the barrio and within the world. The moon becomes the bearer of the family's former understanding of their lost home, and an escort along their path towards reintegrating themselves with the heart of Aztlán:

The Sandia Mountains wore a thin band of snow along the crest, and in the pine forests the deer moved restlessly to lower elevations, seeking the protection of the deep canyons. The new moon moved gently over the mountain and looked down on the people of Barelás. And because it was the new moon of the new year it wore two faces, one looking into the past from whence it had risen, and the new face looking forward into the future and the cycles it would complete as the people struggled toward their destiny (HA, 201).

### ***Tortuga***

Anaya diverges from his theme of social and economic oppression and their threat to the spiritual health of his characters and his community in the novel *Tortuga*. The lead character, nicknamed 'Tortuga', is an analog to Anaya. Both the character and Anaya suffered life-altering accidents as a child. The fictional boy is transferred to the Children's Hospital outside Truth or Consequences, where he is also guided into the mythical dimensions by a scout, Salomon, who teaches him the way of hope and the "path of the sun" (T,160). Salomon mediates between the boy's physical and social reality - trapped in the cast and in the hospital - and the physical landscape. The muse becomes a metaphor for the actual

physical landscape, the Turtle Mountain outside the hospital's windows: "Salomon knows the magic of the mountain...he is the mountain" (T,22). The mountain also begins to have its own life:

Through the window I could see the top of the mountain, glowing magenta as the winter clouds lifted long enough to let the setting sun shine on its back. The gigantic mass of boulders seemed to breathe with life as the color grew a soft watermelon pink then salmon orange. The light glowed from within the mountain as Tortuga seemed to lift his head into the setting sun...he turned to look at me, another crippled turtle come to live at his feet (T,21).

The mountain becomes animated, beckoning the young boy to it. It also offers a sense of calmness, serenity, and peace. The mountain's warmth stands in contrast to the cold, impersonal hospital and the isolation of the shell:

The rheumy eyes draped with wrinkled flaps of skin bore into my soul and touched me with their kindness. For a moment the mountain was alive. It called to me, and I lay quiet in my dark room, hypnotized by the sight (T,21).

The mountain holds a mystery, and its role in healing the boy's crippled body and soul is foreshadowed early in the novel:

There was a secret in the mountain, and it was calling me, unfolding with movement and power as the dying rays of the sun infused the earth with light (T,21).

Salomon leads the boy to the healing springs of the mountain, and with each visit the boy comes closer to full rehabilitation. Salomon also guides him through the dregs of the hospital, where the young boy comes into contact with



crying children, quadriplegics, and a room full of infants kept alive by iron lungs. Salomon and the mountain heal the boy's body and soul. When the young boy is finally freed from his cast, the mountain is also freed from its bond with the earth:

The flaring light of the golden eye grew intense, sparkling. It seemed to dissolve away all shadows and horizons. My shell and the hump of the mountain disappeared, and for a brief instant the sun and the mountain and I danced and revolved around each other (T,112).

Salomon, like Ultima and Crispin, serves a unifying function, pointing to the wholeness and the sacredness of the universe and the meaning of human life, the power of the human heart, and the power of the landscape. These guides come at important times in the lives of the characters, when they are threatened by external forces, transplanted from their homes, and torn from place. These three novels are also stories of about Anaya's life, and he has culled from his memory the events and the emotions tied to them. In the end, it is the New Mexico landscape that provides grounding and direction.

#### **'Excavating' a new spiritual New Mexico**

At that moment, when an old era was dying, the people had to decide which way to turn"

--*Rio Grande Fall*, 317

In his last three novels - *Zia Summer*, *Rio Grande Fall*, and *Shaman Winter* - Anaya uses similar symbolism, archetypes,

and sometimes romanticized poetic imagery. The Sonny Baca mystery novel sequence is played out in a backdrop of awe-inspiring literary beauty and wonder, where spirits lurk on mountaintops, in canyons, and through the streets and alleyways of Albuquerque. Anaya uses the "land of enchantment" idea to its fullest in these three works. His combination of the magical landscape with a detective thriller plot is shared with the likes of other New Mexico writers like Ron Querry and Tony Hillerman. Even so, Anaya uses the successful combination -- land, sky, and people -- to appeal to a broader audience. He targets a readership hungry for detective fiction, mystery, and myth and uses the genre to fully comment on social relations.

Anaya continues his role as a mythmaker. He creates several characters, like Don Eliseo and Lorenza, who take the form of folk-healers. They use the old mysticism of Pueblo, Aztec, Toltec, and Hispanic folklore. The characters also represent Anaya's full use of his unconscious and imagination. This tool, common to post-colonial literature, plays off of the use of 'fossil identities', where the subject enters a "fruitful dialogue with the past." This conversation allows the author and the characters to "retrieve the fossils that are buried within oneself and are part of one's ancestors" (Peterson and Rutherford 1976). Anaya acknowledges this process:

To go back and get in touch, and to become more harmonious, we go back to the unconscious and we bring out all of the symbols and archetypals that are available to all people (1981, 6).

Anaya's retrieval of ancient spirituality allows an insight into a new dimension of possibilities, an 'explosive room' or space to imagine and create another New Mexico. The novels infuse the landscape with suspicion, mystery, and eclectic mysticism.

His creation of the spiritual space is also a cultural reaction to contemporary New Mexico. Like Sonny's dream sequences, his eventual immersion into the spiritual world has a dialectical relationship with very real, or perceived problems. These symptoms are evident in Anaya's portrayal of the disintegration of social relations and environmental destruction. These apocalyptic forces, from global capitalism and culture to nuclear bombs, threaten to turn the people of New Mexico, regardless of ethnicity, into a "despotic and totalitarian mass" (Bhabha 1985). The mass becomes a faceless and changeless society, whose inner rhythms can only be broken by violence and self-destruction (Peterson and Rutherford 1976). Anaya partakes in this notion, and describes the inner grumbling of a society that has lost its direction in *Rio Grande Fall*:

Everywhere nation rose against nation, people against people. The abuse of drugs and violence were symptoms of a far deeper phenomenon...Evil was loose in the world, and the morality that described humanity had been sapped(RGF, 347).

Anaya offers a creative response. He draws upon 'fossilized' values, the deep-seated antecedents humans carry within them regarding the land and human relationships. He articulates what Bhabha and other cultural critics consider the "archaic" ambivalence that underscores, and informs, modernity. He questions the progressive metaphors of science, technology, and social cohesion by bringing front and center the problems they have caused and by offering an alternative means of solving them (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1995, 177).

#### **End of an Era**

In *Shaman Winter*, detective Sonny Baca's dreams have provided the basis for his understanding of the history of New Mexico (Chapter 4). They also place him in the state's spiritual world where he goes to battle with his arch-nemesis Raven in the name of goodness and virtue. Sonny and Raven duel over the safety of kidnapped teenage girls and women, and over apocalyptic forces including nuclear warheads and radioactive waste. But Sonny's dreams, and the entire mystery novel sequence, are not simply replications of the drama of heroes and villains pulled together as popular fiction with a magical landscape and an ethnic flair. Rather, the novels reflect many issues facing real-world Albuquerque, and Anaya's insistence on reintegrating myth and symbolism into his work make them available to the reader and to his culture. In these novels, Anaya merges New Mexico with his own conception of Aztlán and his utopic dream. The means for this synthesis is

the spiritual dimension of place, one that allows Sonny to transcend the physical, cultural, and social realities of Albuquerque and realize that there is another way of imagining New Mexico.

Anaya returns to the ancient myths of the Americas to describe the grave situation of the moral and spiritual dimensions of contemporary New Mexico. Sonny has been told repeatedly by Lorenza and Don Eliseo that "this era of time is ending" (RGF, 315). In *Rio Grande Fall*, Lorenza clarifies the idea for Sonny, comparing the situation of New Mexico to that of other places:

Every age and every country has had its prophets describing the end of time. Time comes in cycles, and each era ends. It's at that ending of an era that we can choose to move on...or return to chaos. Like all ages of transformation, this is the time when we are most vulnerable (RGF, 216).

She continues:

Time itself was born and moved to completion, collapsed, and from it was born a new era. It was during the collapse, or end, of an era that the negative forces of the universe worked to create the new cycle of time in their image. That negative power - a germ present at every creation - did not die. Its sign was violence (RGF, 316).

Lorenza goes on to explain that her ideas are grounded in Aztec legend, and that New Mexico is at the close of the era of the Fifth Sun. She speaks of the possible consequences at the end of this time:

...our sun, is called Movement sun. And the legend holds that people must pray each morning that the Fifth Sun follow its journey, or it will fall and earthquakes and famine will destroy the people (RGF, 317).

In *Shaman Winter*, New Mexico is held at bay by the evil forces of the atomic bomb, and its social and physical landscapes suffer disintegration. Don Eliseo explains the magnitude of the moment to Sonny:

The day about to be born is not only the beginning of a new season, it is the beginning of a new age on earth. We have come to the edge of a great cycle of time enveloping the earth, like a river comes to a waterfall. There ahead of us is the abyss where (evil) lies waiting, ready to destroy the mother. We, the old warriors, must do battle with the forces of evil (SW, 339).

If the guardians of New Mexico - Sonny, Don Eliseo, and Lorenza -- do not defeat the force of evil it could spell doom:

The solstice sun would not return, or return so weakened that catastrophic weather would create havoc on earth (SW, 353).

Anaya is playing off of the end-of-the-millennium mentality of the end of the Twentieth Century. And his characters, especially Lorenza and Don Eliseo, are keenly aware of the overwhelming threats to the old legends, the soul of New Mexico's people, and the land they call home. These apocalyptic threats are over dramatized. However, at one level or another, they do reflect Anaya's uneasiness about contemporary New Mexico. He then frames these forces as parts of a greater evil that threatens to bring chaos, famine, and violence to the world. In response, Don Eliseo enlists Sonny

to combat the dubious forces with a spiritual alternative.

### **New Mexico as Spiritual Center**

Part of Sonny's indoctrination into the new level of awareness is the realization that New Mexico has a strong spiritual heritage. In fact, all of Anaya's characters come to this epiphany at some point or another. Sonny's sensitivity to the spiritual dimension of New Mexico comes through Don Eliseo. But he was also aware of several holy places because of his familiarity with the state. This includes the Pueblos "...where the people remembered their prayers and ceremonies..." and through festivals such as the Matachines Dances "...still survived in the essence of their original dream" (SW 107). In *Shaman Winter* he visits the community celebrations of the reenactment of the birth of Christ - Los Pastores in Chimayo and Las Posadas in Santa Fé. He had also been north of Albuquerque during the spring and the time of the Penitente pilgrimage to Chimayo, and one of New Mexico's most sacred sites, the Santuario. Here the santos of New Mexico Catholicism guard the holy dirt, where thousands flock in search of spiritual and physical cure. The chapel is in the heart of a valley that, in its entirety, is also spiritual:

The deities of the Indians who had lived in the hills before the Spaniards settled the valley also imbued the land. Yes, in these sacred places the kachinas and santos walked the earth...In the valley of Chimayo the kachinas offered protection, bringing rain for the crops in the summer...Here one could feel harmonious with the land, restore one's energy, heal oneself. Beneath the surface of the Catholic faith ran the abiding belief in the spirits of the place (SW, 161).

Sonny slowly realizes that the entire northern Rio Grande Valley has a spiritual impulse, one that has endured for centuries, and one of few that remain:

This was one of the remaining spiritual centers in the country. The Pueblo Indians knew that. Here where the covenant with the ancestral kachinas had been made lay a great power for the good of mankind (SW, 82).

Sonny reevaluates his newly found knowledge of the settlement of New Mexico. He comes to the realization that many of the migrants - from the first Indians to the Spanish and later the Americans - were drawn to the supernatural quality of the landscape:

Each region is a sacred place on earth for the ancestors. For the Pueblo Indians, our ancestors, it's here. Their myths and dream world is connected to this place... And people still come for that. They come for the beauty of the landscape, desert, mountains, sunsets, sky, summer thunderstorms. The painters come, the poets. It attracts those who seek a spiritual way (SW, 151).

Sonny also realizes the importance of the New Mexico sun, and how its rays were a beacon for many a migrant seeking the redeeming qualities of the place:



The light blessed the sacred places, like the light shining across the sage of the Taos llano and its mountains. It was the light of New Mexico that drew the original inhabitants, drew prayers, drew artists, brought holy people and hippies alike searching for the center (SW, 58).

Many have come to the Southwest in search of the sacred. The detective also understands that many do not fully engage in its spiritual dimension. Unlike Sonny, they do not explore its heart: "People come here and feel this place is spiritual, but they don't go deeper. They stop at the gate" (RGF, 124).

#### **People of the Sun, Children of the Earth**

The Zia Sun, which has brought many people in search of the spiritual to the upper Rio Grande, is perhaps one of the most recognized symbols of New Mexico. It dominates the state's flag, but it is also "the most-used symbol in the state. Electricians, plumbers, medical groups, dozens of small businesses used it on their stationery, on their fleets of cars and trucks" (ZS, 99). In Sonny Baca's New Mexico the Zia Sun represents spiritual prowess and enlightenment. It is used by New Age cultists and in armed camps of environmentalists. Baca is the bearer of the coveted Zia Medallion, a metallic orb on a chain that is the holy grail of the "Land of Enchantment." It holds the spiritual dominion and knowledge of New Mexico, and is the prize possession of the winner of the constant battle between Sonny and Raven, good and evil. Sonny realizes:

The Zia sun is sacred, a deity of the Rio Grande Pueblos, the Tata Sol [grandfather sun] of the Chicanos. A sacred symbol, a living reality worth fighting for (ZS, 107).

Don Eliseo, like Salomon in *Tortuga*, teaches Sonny the path of the Sun. It gives life to the New Mexico landscape, providing the warmth and energy for things to grow. The Sun is also God, the creator, and the harbinger of spiritual enlightenment and clarity. It is "the deity of life" (ZS, 29).

From the onset of the first mystery novel, *Zia Summer*, Sonny watches Don Eliseo pay homage to the sun. The old mestizo rises before sunrise each day to watch the sun come into the Rio Grande Valley over the Sandias. Don Eliseo eventually tells Sonny that the first light of the morning is the dance of the "lords and the ladies of the light." They are the shafts of light that bring life, clarity and illumination, as they waltz across the New Mexico landscape:

The warm sunlight filled the valley with a dazzling dance. The million rays of light were the Lords and the Ladies of the Light, as Don Eliseo taught. They came steaming from the sun, the source of light, representatives of the Universal Spirit, the transcendent (SW, 370).

Anaya instills wonder, beauty, and regard for the New Mexico sun. As Sonny becomes more learned in Don Eliseo's ways, and confronts the evils of his nemesis raven - chaos, violence, and, destruction -- he allows himself to become

infused with its light. After saving New Mexico from Raven's plot to douse the state with radioactive waste, he realizes the spiritual power of the sun. At the end of *Zia Summer* he sits on the front porch in the Albuquerque summer morning as:

The Senores y Senoras de la Luz came flooding over the valley, the bright light turning every dew drop into a scintillating crystal, and igniting in Sonny a radiant emotion that overwhelmed him with beauty (ZS, 323).

The Lords and Ladies of the Light and the Grandfather Sun (Tata Sol) become the spiritual compass, with New Mexico at the center:

the round emblem of the Zia sun with its four radiating lines. Lines pointing north, west, south, east. The four sacred directions of the earth. The four quadrants of the universe (SW, 347).

Don Eliseo has also taught Sonny that the earth has a spirit. He works his cornfields and garden, nurturing the land, and in return it nurtures him. But the land is also infused with the same light that brings life and clarity. On a trip to Santa Fé along I-25, Sonny witnesses the sun touch the inner soul of the earth, reflecting it back to its inhabitants:

Light at the center of the universe, even here on the road to Santa Fé, the light of the approaching winter solstice glowed and brought the winter earth to life. Beneath the frozen earth lay the spirit touched by light, and the spirit responded by absorbing the light and giving it back to the viewer (SW, 58).

Atop the mountain peaks that frame the Rio Grande Valley in the east and the west, Sonny also sees the spirits of the

ancestors, this time taking the form of clouds:

He looked out at the barren landscape, the rolling hills tawny in winter, dotted with juniper trees, the Sangre de Cristo Mountains rising blue over Santa Fé, the high peaks covered with blue clouds that presaged a storm. To the west the clouds also gathered around the Jemez Peaks. The kachina spirits of rain and snow gathering on the mountains (SW, 58).

The sun, the earth, and the spirits combine along the road to Santa Fé. Here in New Mexico, when the three fused together, they had the power of complete salvation:

The place was sacred, divine with the light of the sun that made the hills glow with a biblical light of redemption (SW, 58).

The core of Sonny's and Anaya's New Mexico is Albuquerque. On an autumn afternoon in Rio Grande Fall, detective Baca sits in Old Town. The compass of the Zia Sun hangs directly above the center of his world, one demarcated by the four mountains that encompass the heart of Anaya's New Mexico. The ancient spirits imbue the land, beaming with light:

He prayed to the brilliant sun that even now stood poised over the earth at its zenith point, sending its rays in the four sacred directions. The four sacred mountains were the homes of the spirits, the ancestors. Mount Taylor to the west, Sandia Mountains to the east, the Sangre de Cristos to the north, and the Manzano Mountains to the south. These mountains encompassed Sonny's world, the world of his ancestors (RGF, 308).

### **Creation Myth**

Sonny slowly comes to terms with the spiritual dimension of the New Mexico landscape, all of which bring him to a new

level of awareness and bring a sense of balance, clarity, and tranquility to his life. But he is still haunted by his dreams. There are numerous signs and symbols, beyond his quest into New Mexico's past, that also hold keys to true understanding of his relationship with New Mexico. By *Rio Grande Fall* he has learned that he has an animal spirit, a "nagual." Anaya adopts American Indian myth to illustrate Sonny's connection to the natural world. Sonny draws upon the power of his nagual - his natural intuition - to do battle with evil in his dreams. It is not until the latter part of the most recent novel - *Shaman Winter* - that Don Eliseo clarifies the true meaning of his coyote spirit. Here Anaya's spiritual New Mexico acquires its creation myth. Don Eliseo explains the fundamentals of this theology, which interweave human-environment relationships and human nature:

It goes back to when the earth was a turtle swimming in the blue sky around the sun. Man and Woman lived in the womb of the turtle. It was very dark. There was no light, little air to breath. In the dark they heard the frightening sounds of evil sorcerers who also lived with them in the womb of the turtle (SW, 236).

Don Eliseo, and Anaya, continues the story. The teachers reach back into the 'fossilized' unconscious and reappropriate a version of Mesoamerican legend:

They sent scouts through an opening to the surface. The scouts came back and said there were green forests, mountains with deer, streams with fish on the turtle shell. But Man and Woman didn't know how to break through the shell. They remained in the dark underworld. Coyote stuck his shiny tail down the hole and soon he felt Man and Woman grab his tail. He pulled, and Man and Woman came through the hole to the surface of the earth (SW, 236-237).

After they emerge upon the virgin earth, the natural spirits teach the humans how to live with it. They are taught how to survive, but also regard for all living things:

Coyote and Raven continued to help Man and Woman. They taught them to hunt and fish and gather grains and nuts. They taught them to respect life, from the smallest to the greatest (SW, 238).

While Sonny digests the creation myth, and its earth ethic, he remains confused as to why his nagual - Coyote - has constantly battled with the evil forces of Raven. Don Eliseo clarifies the story, telling Sonny that humans also brought into the natural world good and evil, and these things could not be divorced. Coyote and Raven represent human nature, and are "two sides of the coin" (SW, 239).

Anaya's creation myth is based loosely on those of Mesoamerican and Southwest American Indians, where humans emerge from the dark underworld to the surface of the earth. Anaya also instills upon the reader, and his characters, a new awareness. He combines memory and a creative imagination to restore a human connection to the physical world and explains the dialectic of human nature. The story solves basic dilemmas for Sonny, in particular the realization that his nagual, Coyote, and its nemesis, the Raven, are a part of human nature that has turned his dreams into a battleground. But, perhaps more importantly, Anaya's deployment of the creation myth speaks to his ideas about human-environment interaction. The

animals teach the human beings about the physical world, and how to be guardians of it. This is the ecological foundations of Anaya's dream of a utopic New Mexico. The earth holds together the people of New Mexico, but, in turn, the people must be responsible stewards of it. This is also a foundation of his new spiritual New Mexico and a direct reaction to the spiritual and environmental crises plaguing both the Chicano/a and other communities.

#### **The Bowl of Dreams/Living in the Dream**

Anaya has excavated an ancient creation myth to guide his characters in the natural world. His characters, in turn, have unearthed another important 'fossil' in the northern Rio Grande Valley. In *Shaman Winter* Sonny stumbles upon a piece of obsidian pottery while on a detective run to Los Alamos Laboratories north and west of Santa Fé. Etched on the bowl are glyphs from pre-historic people from around the world: Incan, Ethiopian, Druid from Stonehenge, Tibetan Buddhist, Egyptian, Anasazi, Maori, and Amazonian. The bowl also has carved upon it the New Mexico Zia Sun (SW, 346).

Sonny goes into a hallucinogenic trance after the discovery, and from the bowl emanates a ring of smoke and a melody that "passed through Sonny's heart, a humming sound like the sound of the earth turning. He could see the words of the song, shining like filaments of a spider web, spreading over the earth. He recognized the song. It was his own" (SW, 346).

In the north valley of Albuquerque, Sonny realizes that

New Mexico is a spiritual center linked to the spirits of all humanity, of the ancestors, and like him, they all had the dream of peace: communal, individual, and with the earth (SW, 347).

The bowl, or New Mexico, also represents an incandescent portal through which characters connect to the spirit of the land: "The Bowl of Dreams was the door, chalice of love, vessel of the blood of the living earth" (SW, 348).

The bowl also compounds Sonny's earlier revelations about the connections between the sun, the land, and the people of New Mexico: "We are connected, Sonny murmured, not only in body, but in spirit" (SW, 107). The bowl represents the Universal Unconscious, the mystery of life itself, and the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit. The Magic of New Mexico, instilled in the ancient vessel, comes to represent: "the great minds of men and women communicating across space and time. Space and time became their thoughts, ideas" (SW, 105-106).

New Mexico is connected to the spiritual world by the light of the sun, "the Universal Spirit," which flows from the bowl, penetrates the soul of the landscape, and the hearts of the people. According to Don Eliseo, the earth, humans, and the sun are inseparable; they comprise the holy trinity.

Despite his theological salvation, Sonny remains torn between the real world of New Mexico, the numinous, and his dreams. But, through help from Don Eliseo, he realizes these spaces are also interconnected:



The world of the spirits is bound to the world of the flesh... there are not two worlds. Dream and waking, it's all the same (SW, 229).

Sonny also realizes that he participates in all three, and that he has the power within himself to maintain the connections between the ethereal and the lived:

But one could learn to be the actor in one's dream, and once that was learned, the harmony of the soul could not be destroyed (SW, 361).

### Epiphany

Toward the close of *Shaman Winter*, Don Eliseo has died. An enlightened Sonny stands in the cornfield outside of his house in the north valley of Albuquerque where the old vecino<sup>23</sup> was buried and gazes upward. The Bowl of Dreams - the bringer of peace, clarity, and harmony -- comes to represent the real place - New Mexico: "Above him the clear, blue New Mexican sky was a bowl holding the promise of clarity" (SW, 369). Like the cadence of a funeral procession, the rays of the Zia Sun bear down upon Sonny in the costumes of the spiritual ancestors of New Mexico:

Lords and Ladies dressed as brightly feathered Aztec dancers, kachina warriors, souls of the departed, brilliant spears of light that returned promise to the earth, infusing everything with life (SW, 370).

Anaya's free-wheeling Chicano/a detective is reborn. He understands his history, that of the state, and his connections, both in culture and spirit, to the people of New

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<sup>23</sup> New Mexico Spanish for neighbor, friend, citizen (Cobos 1983, 133).

Mexico and the landscape. He has been completely immersed into the dream world and the fantastic. In the middle of the cornfield Sonny simultaneously becomes one with place and diffuses through space:

Everything participated in the light, became light.  
Moments passed, there was no count, for time itself  
became an element of the light, a commingling of matter  
with spirit, earth and sky animated (SW, 370).

Sonny realizes that the heart of Aztlán is within him, and he experiences one of Anaya's 'epiphanies' in the landscape. He has merged dream space with real place; one has collapsed into the other. In the Rio Grande Valley, he has united with the universe - the landscape has become the cosmos, the individual has become part of collective humanity, and the instant has turned into infinity. At this moment, New Mexico becomes Aztlán and, in turn, fuses with the utopian dream.

Sonny has also, at least for the moment, released himself from the shackles of the structures of the real world. He realizes that he is part of a much larger space, the Universe. He also becomes the heir to the spiritual heritage of New Mexico and the dream of peace. He will lead the charge against the evils that threaten New Mexico so: "a new cycle of time could wrap itself around the earth. A new beginning" (SW, 360).

The world of Sonny Baca, much like that of *Bless Me, Ultima* and *Tortuga* - all of Anaya's spiritual New Mexico -- is

outlandish and bizarre. But, it is also optimistic. Anaya attempts to restore a mythic intuition, trying to reestablish stability in his people, himself, and the reader. At times, the holistic spirituality smacks of the New Age religions that have drawn many to the Southwest. But, Anaya makes a clear distinction in the Sonny Baca trilogy between the "traditional" religion of his New Mexico and the "free love" spirituality of psychic healers and the "new people" and their "new age" (ZS 41; SW, 60). In fact, Sonny's nemesis and the embodiment of evil, Raven, uses this black magic as a means of reigning chaos on the Land of Enchantment. It is one of the numerous threats to his New Mexico. When combined with the apocalyptic forces, the new spirituality appears so great that Anaya has reached into the 'fossils' of his unconscious and his imagination to create a spiritual dialogue at such a level in mystery novels. The ultimate goal is the survival of New Mexico as a spiritual place. Its creation feeds off the opposite force, the threat of its dissolution.

Perhaps the real magic of New Mexico lies beneath his creative texts. These tales represent his own journey towards personal enlightenment. The result is his own epiphany, a fusion of self with the specific locale - New Mexico - but also with the world. He transcends his identity and becomes a citizen and companion to those who seek something new, yet so ancient.

## Summary

Once upon a time, in the world of Mesoamerica, in the world that stretched north along the Rio Grande, in the primal world that came to be known as the Americas, men and women had conversed with the world of the spirits...and what was that world but a deep kinship to nature? A deep kinship to one's inner self. - *Rio Grande Fall*, 325

To be out of their homeland was to be separated from their guardian spirits. - *Shaman Winter*, 304

Anaya's use of myth, and his creation of myth, illustrate one of his most powerful skills as a writer. Many critics have revered his ability to create a magical landscape with the "magic of his words" (Gish 1996, Gonzales-T. 1995, Vassalo 1992). In one dimension, he can be seen as a curandero, or a healer, for his community and for the reader. He transcends the basic physical descriptions of the land, where New Mexico becomes a place that holds the spirit of people. It is also a landscape that has the power to heal and nourish. He has created a new form of curanderismo. It incorporates the physical landscape, spiritual awareness, and a necessary link to the past. He spreads the legends and traditions of his ancestors, and creates new ones, helping the people regain a vital connection with place. Anaya becomes the healer, aiding those who might be lost and confused in a technology-driven and materialistic world. He presents an alternative where people are able to communicate freely with one another. The mysterious powers of the curanderos - Ultima, Crispin, Don Eliseo, and Salomon -- are believed by the other characters, and they are essential. They allow for a connection with place

that can result in a deeper understanding of one's culture, one's self, and the worlds they operate within. All characters are driven to attain these connections, for without the spiritual an important part of them dies. Anaya reaches back through time, and across space, and brings versions of ancient myths, archetypes, and symbols to the present. We "can still use the old myths of this hemisphere to shed light on our contemporary problems" (1988, 198).

#### **A Place-Centered theology**

Doughty's (1981) captivating piece on the role of theology and the environment sheds light on the relationship between spirituality and geography. He draws from numerous theological frameworks, including process theology and deep ecology, ones that are very compatible with the spirituality of Anaya's New Mexico. Anaya's conception of the "Universal Unconscious"<sup>24</sup> or Universal Spirit and clarity confront dualism and mechanical materialism, and the characters are involved in a world where objects are energy, rather than matter (Doughty 1981, 45). He recognizes the creativity existing in living things, that the sun (or God) inspires the creativity, and that life becomes important in the goodness, virtue, truth, and clarity that result (Griffin 1989).

Anaya's magical New Mexico offers a hybridized, place-centered theology. It includes a pantheon of spiritual

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<sup>24</sup> Critics have suggested, and Anaya has acknowledged, that his "Universal Unconscious" is closely associated with Jungian "collective unconscious" (Dick and Sirias 1998).

symbols and archetypes from numerous New Mexican religious traditions: the kachinas, the Catholic saints, La Llorona, La Malinche, and the Virgin of Guadalupe. It also includes numerous practitioners - folk healers and curanderos - and numerous religious celebrations - the Matachines Dance, Las Posadas, and the Penitente pilgrimage. His theology is also pantheistic. He conceives of a God or higher power that embodies "the wholeness of the world correlative to the wholeness of every sound individual dealing with the world" (Hartshorne 1971, 105).

Anaya's spiritual New Mexico is also similar to process theology, a theory of nature that incorporates both religious faith and environmental ethics (Doughty 1981). Process theology and Anaya speak to the liberation of all life, human and non-human. Anaya proposes a shift from manipulation and objectification of nature to a 'respect for life in its fullest' (Birch and Cobb 1981, 2). His theology is also geared towards the wisdom of the people and the place, and the promotion of the richness and diversity of life. And, like Deep Ecology, he returns to biological and psychological roots where humans are an element within nature (Naess 1984). Self-realization is also a key to Deep Ecology and to his New Mexico. Both promote personal growth and understanding through open, creative dialogue with the past, with people, and with the landscape (Doughty 1981).

Anaya's notion of interconnectedness, the oneness of place, people, and the spirit, challenges the traditional

dualisms of the world and a distant deity, between body and mind, and humans and nature. He has told an encompassing story that includes the creation of the world, the emergence of humans within nature, and the synergism of the unfolding of life in New Mexico (Barbour 1990, 269-70). In sum, spiritual New Mexico presents: "humans as beings who are an expression of a nature deeper, more mysterious, and creative than any of our abstract theories appreciate" (Drengson 1988, 83).

Anaya's use of magical realism in a post-colonial framework also fractures the hegemony of modern science and Western theology, and the insistence on the dominion of humans over nature. Anaya is renegotiating the 'tyrannical weight' of being culturally marginalized by using the established "Land of Enchantment" aesthetic as a form of irony. His use of allegories, archetypes, and symbols also attest to the fact that he is mimicking accepted parts of the discourse, but he contests them at the same time. He has used the mystery genre, infused it with spirituality, and used this successful combination to fully comment on social relations. He reifies the established stereotypes of many of New Mexico's people, but reappropriates them to fulfill his own goal. Anaya's use of magical realism, in simplest terms, is what Hutcheon and other post-colonial scholars call "a resistance to the massive imperial center and its totalizing discourse" (Hutcheon 1989, Slemon 1988).

Anaya's prose also can transcend the limitations of the New Mexico setting and his ethnic background. His link to what

he considers to be the "Universal Unconscious," and the connection of all humans, helps resolve some of the dilemmas posed by his most orthodox use of Aztlán (Chapter 3). In *Shaman Winter*, Aztlán extends far beyond the parameters of Chicano/a nationalism and Mesoamerica and reaches to spiritual traditions of a global scale. It becomes one of many place-centered spiritual traditions, one that has impulses in common with the legends of the Aztecs, the Egyptians, Tibetans, and New Mexico. Aztlán also becomes the geographical and spiritual core of a Utopic New Mexico, where the dream of peace becomes the ultimate goal. In turn, he is no longer completely locked into his Chicano/a identity, but he also envisions himself as a citizen of the world.



## Chapter 6

### Conclusions: New Mexico and the New West

This chapter brings together Anaya's construction of New Mexico and the New West in their totality. I re-evaluate Anaya's voice, and illustrate how colonialism defines and informs it. In the first section I consider the concept of place as the central feature of his voice and identity. Secondly, I discuss Anaya's role in producing a new West and the relationships it has with the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism. I then discuss the role of place, community, and land and their imperative function in defining Anaya's view of culture. Finally, I conclude with ideas about humanistic geography, literature, and post-colonial theory.

#### **The Place of Identity/ The Identity of Place**

I prefer the term 'Nuevo Mexicano' to describe my cultural heritage. -- *The New World Man*, 356

This statement made by Anaya in 1990 perhaps embodies the complete flowering of his relationship with New Mexico. This place has dictated his sense of a past, his sense of present, and his sense of the future. It is also where he, and his characters, have touched their innermost pulse, the heart of the land, and the heart of humanity -- Aztlán. It is where he

has found the necessary symbols and archetypes to ground his spirit. It is also a place where he constructs his own identity, his ideas of his people's culture, and the relationships they have with place - the natural world, the physical landscape, community, and the spiritual world. His novels also illustrate a New Mexico that has undergone drastic change - cultural, social, political, economic, and environmental - inevitable processes that serve integrative functions for the formation of his identity, voice, and sense of place.

In his novels, Anaya plays upon numerous literary dichotomies. His voice and identity, like his New Mexico, hang between discursive poles: indigenous - European; fantastic-real; Spanish - English; and, Latin America - Anglo-America. But this does not mean that the voice, culture, and identity Anaya produces are ambivalent.<sup>25</sup> They have power because he tests the limits of accepted social structures. The voice is not doomed to survive because of the coercive conception of identity placed upon it by the dominant discourse. Rather, it is created and molded by the speaking subject. It is political in that it seeks alternative avenues -- in particular the use of the Utopian metaphor and also the use of spirit and myth -- to allow for a reconstitution of a "true" ethnicity. He also seeks emancipation from outside colonial discursive forces.

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<sup>25</sup> For a complete discussion of Chicano/a identity politics, in particular those related to Derrida's post-structuralism, see Perez-Torres (1998, 168-73) and Alarcon (1994).

The voice also articulates the development of a place, and a culture, in transition (Perez-Torres 1998). The formation reflects a process; the voice is subject to the tide of history, but retains its form, in the words of Hall, by being "ethnically located" in discursive and physical space (1989). His characters become bound to themselves and New Mexico by uncovering their history and through coming to terms with their relationships with one another and the landscape.

Anaya's novels coincide with the advancing years of his life, and what he calls the "evolution" of his ideas as a citizen of New Mexico. The foundations of the identity were laid during his youth, and come out in his first novels that reflect that time. He takes the reader to his boyhood home in the Pecos Valley in *Bless Me, Ultima* to his time as a teenager in Albuquerque in *Heart of Aztlán*. These two novels produce the basis for the rest of his work, but also illustrate the formative years of his own recognition of what New Mexico is. In "Writer's Landscape/Epiphany in Landscape" he reflects on the role of the eastern New Mexico landscape to the development of his identity and the color of his novels:

[my characters] were composed of river mud and water. I peered closely into their souls and discovered they not only reflected their landscape but that they were my sense of place! The raw sensual beauty of my encounters with the presence of the river and the llano and the wind and rain and sun had become a part of me! (1977, 102).

The characters are embedded in the physical landscape and his creative voice is fixed in a spatial location. It is also formed by proximate culture. In his novels, there is a

morphogenesis of New Mexicans that celebrates biological, spiritual, and cultural hybridity. The identity gains its form by pulling all of the cultural elements within spatial proximity towards it. His use of Southwest Indian lore and of Hispano cultural traditions does not mean that he occupies many cultural positions, or that he is merely appropriating. In fact, he contests these constructions and switches from appropriation to self-appropriation, by exemplifying the indigenous characteristics of New Mexico. He explains: "It's not Indian. It's indigenous. All people at one time or another are indigenous" (Dick and Sirias 1998, 36). Anaya uses the legacy of New Mexico's people, their spiritual traditions, and consults the land he lives upon. His New Mexico mestizo is buried in history, culture, and the landscape. The magnet for this identity is place. He has grounded his identity in New Mexico. He is, to borrow the words of Jackson, "becoming native" (1994). Thus, his identity has changed from one of race to that of ethnicity, and from cultural politics to that of place:

...I find that which is honest to me and therefore my writing comes from my deepest felt experiences, so I choose to stay at the center of the place which is providing me energy, and whose energy is healing me because the exploration into my world is a process through which I come to know myself and my earth better. For the moment, I am content to continue this exploration, and to convey to my reader the center of my universe (1977, 102).

The diverse physical and human landscape, from the plains

of the llano and the Pecos and Rio Grande Valleys to the Sangre de Cristos is the point of reference. The development of New Mexico as Aztlán and the people of the utopic dream, speak from a particular culture, a particular history, out of a particular experience, but ultimately out of a particular place. He proposes, and speaks from, a New Mexico that draws its strength from the land and from the legacy of the people there. There is evidence of and the potential for a place-based culture that, as art critic Lippard has argued for, has 'roots and reach' (Lippard 1997). The characters adapt to inevitable changes, including technology, but do not lose their fundamental component, a connection to place

All of Anaya's characters are driven by this quest. *Bless Me, Ultima's* Antonio is lead by Ultima into the natural landscape and into the human community. In *Heart of Aztlán*, Clemente's sense of displacement is eased by his reconnection to the land and people of Albuquerque. Sonny Baca becomes versed in his heritage and learns his state's geography intimately. All characters are located in New Mexico, but they are pulled towards a psychological, communal, spiritual, and ecological center. This process comes almost naturally, despite overwhelming outside odds. His characters are not just mestizos, they are not just Chicano/as, but are beings in place. They are on the earth (of course), but also part of the landscape and a community and partake in its customs, stories, and traditions.

### **Anaya and the 'New' West**

...we have turned away from our inner nature and from our connection to the earth and the old historical relationships. We have allowed a political and economic world order to impose itself on us and take control of our lives. How we engage this moment in history not only describes us but also will inform future generations of our values. Our writings will say where we stood when this drama of opposing forces came to be played out on our land

-Mythical Dimensions/Political Realities, 352

A textual analysis of Anaya's writing illustrates the role of literature in creating New Mexico and Chicano/a culture. Anaya's efforts also run parallel to several recent efforts in Geography, American Studies, and History, all of which have started to open new avenues for examining the American West (Rothman 1998, Robinson 1998, Wrobel and Steiner 1998, Francaviglia and Narrett 1994, Limerick 1987). Part of this redefinition has made clear something many of us already knew: that the story of the United States is not based exclusively on Westward expansion. Rather, as Anaya confirms, it also includes a north-south vector connecting Latin America to Anglo America. It also includes recognition of American Indian cultures and the influence of Spain before Plymouth Rock. Anaya also attests that another important part of this new West is cultural. He makes it quite clear that ethnic boundaries no longer rest upon the three-culture hypothesis. He purposefully blurs them heralding multiple hybridities.

Above all, Anaya's New Mexico and the new West are very

contested spaces. Over-riding the revision of history and the redrawing of ethnic identities is a consistent, prevailing political reality: colonialism. It defined much of the old West and as Anaya makes clear it still effectively defines the contemporary.

### **Revisiting Aztlán and the "Land of Enchantment"**

More than a century ago, New Mexico and the West figured prominently in the Anglo-American imagination. It was perceived as exotic, unblemished country that was a magnet for colonization. New Mexico played an important role in the construction of this mentality. The idea that it is a "Land of Enchantment" and the roots of the Aztlán idea, equally ironic, come from a piece written in 1885 by William G. Ritch, Secretary of the Territory of New Mexico and President of the New Mexico Bureau of Immigration. He published a promotional book *Aztlán: the History, Resources and Attractions of New Mexico*. It was meant to attract Anglo immigrants to the territory so that they would outnumber Indians and mestizos. Ritch used all of the political and economic clout he had to present a New Mexico that "would appeal to capitalists and landless farmers, and to enlist the memories, hallucinations, and dreams of those spiritual refugees from industrial America who wanted to return to nature" (Gutierrez 1989, 187). Ritch's piece was a sounding board for the creation of the "Land of Enchantment" image, drawing on the natural romanticism movement within Anglo-American social climate. His efforts were

compounded by the subsequent marketing ploys of the Santa Fé Railway and the Fred Harvey Company (McLuhan 1985, Weigle and Babcock 1996). This idea about New Mexico was solidified by artist and writer colonies during the turn of the century (Weigle and Flore 1994). Many combined the mystical formula of ethnicity, myth, and landscape into their imaginations of New Mexico.<sup>26</sup> But as Sylvia Rodriguez has put forth, these representations, grounded in the earlier efforts, only reflect a desire to essentialize native New Mexicans; these representations preserved a romantic notion of their identity. It kept them, and New Mexico, underdeveloped and "firmly under American rule" (Gutierrez 1990, 186).

Ritch's powerful book is only one of dozens, if not hundreds, of accounts of the West produced during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries. Literature, art, surveys, and creative journals produced by the 'outside' created a sense of mystery and awe about the great frontier. This project worked hand-in-hand with the actual physical manipulation of the landscape. These almost hallucinogenic accounts blazed the path for the successful colonization of the region by eastern, predominantly European, North Americans. In turn, the West became vacation spot, a place of resource

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<sup>26</sup> D.H. Lawrence and Mary Austin are the most notable authors who propelled this image. Lawrence's passionate attachment to the southwest was based on the relationships between myth, cultural diversity, and topography. Austin's desire for union with the environment and with myth as a means for self-realization, health, and artistic inspiration and truth comes out in an enchanting tone in her writing.



extraction, and was eventually engulfed, becoming central to America's economic prowess and its mental geography. It also fueled misunderstanding and caused immense social disparity in native communities, and disconnected people from one another and from the land.

### **Neo-colonialism**

Anaya's novels are intimately bound with an old, yet somehow 'new' American West, because he is a citizen of it. He makes the issue of reclaiming the region from the distanced, industrialized, modern culture paramount to his later writing. *Bless Me*, *Ultima* and *Heart of Aztlán* paint pictures of people threatened by ominous outside cultural forces. In *Albuquerque*, *Zia Summer*, *Rio Grande Fall*, and *Shaman Winter* neo-colonialism becomes the driving force behind much of the plot. More recent economic and demographic changes are cast as the most powerful discursive pole. This illustrates Anaya's recognition of the inescapable bonds that trap the people he seeks to empower. All of his characters struggle with this phenomenon, and it takes many forms. Many of these threats loom as apocalyptic. The threats are to New Mexico as a physical, spiritual, and cultural space.

In the essay, "Mythical Dimensions/Political Realities," Anaya directly addresses the colonial nature of New Mexico and the larger West. The rise of the technology industry in the West, and the subsequent growth of its cities have transformed the physical and social landscapes. But, for Anaya and many

others, they only reflect the impress of the neo-colonial order:

Growth and change are inevitable, but that which is guided only by a material goal is a corrosive element that has insidiously spread its influence over the land and the people (1995a, 348).

The plot of all his novels revolves around the never-ending tension of characters being de-centered. They have lost balance within themselves, have lost touch with their communities, and have been removed from the rhythms of the land. This theme begins in *Bless Me, Ultima*, but hits its apex in the world of Sonny Baca, where the threat is no longer the incursion of Anglo ranchers, but rather the overlay of an entirely foreign economic, political, and cultural system. The sense of paranoia and the subliminal fears of apocalypse in his latest novels come out with intensity as he surveys the current condition of the West:

We no longer live in the basic harmony that can exist between humanity and the earth. A new and materialistic order has become paramount in the land, and we have little control over this intrusion. The land that nurtured us is by and large now in the hands of world markets and politics (1995a, 346).

The end result is the loss of a sense of place, in particular the spiritual dimensions of life and of land that burrow through his novels. The intent is clear. He is harboring old traditions and creating new ones because those with little political and economic strength (the mestizo and

American Indian communities) may have little choice in the matter:

The old communities, the tribes of the region, have been scattered, and they have lost much of their power. If we do not take action now, that creative force of the people which has nourished us for centuries may be swept aside (1995a, 346).

In between the urban pockets, and within them, many of the region's original inhabitants still exist. They reflect, to a large degree, the plight of the environment: still standing, but suffering from the social costs of gaming, tourism, and migration caused by metropolitan adventurers (Rothman 1998, Quintana 1990). Anaya asks a very common question in modern society, and he wonders what it means for him and his home:

Who has taken charge of our lives? We are now informed by television, the daily dose of news, the homogenous school system and other communication media that are in the hands of the power manipulators. Many ancient ceremonies and dances are still intact along the Rio Grande, but even the people who sustain these ceremonies are affected by the bingo parlors and quick cash. My city is hostage to those who control the flow of the river, and the quality of that water will continue to be affected by the chemical and nuclear waste it washes away (1995a, 349).

There also is an undeniable amount of ethnic tension, a product of the continual clash of native inhabitants, locals, and migrants. But all New Mexicans are faced with, and mediated by, the economic and political reality of this 'new' West:

The Chicanos, Indians, and old Anglos who worked the land are now a labor force to serve the industries that the world economic and political system imposes on us. The time is disharmonious; no wonder we gather together to discuss the changing landscape, and the changing humanscape. We know we have been manipulated, and in the resulting change we feel we have lost something important (1995a, 349).

For Anaya, contemporary developments have completely reconfigured the sense of time and the sense of place. So powerful is it that it has the potential to wipe away New Mexico's rich cultural heritage and the people who carry it:

The old patterns of daily life are forgotten. The cyclical sense of time that once provided historical continuity and spiritual harmony is replaced by atomic beeps. The clock on the wall now marks the ceremonies we attend, ceremonies that have to do with the order of world politics. It is no wonder we feel we are being watched, our responses recorded. We are being used, and eventually we will be discarded (1995a, 349).

The growth of the West's urban centers has changed the character of its population. Those who live in Phoenix, Las Vegas, Albuquerque, and Denver, cities which slowly spread across the desert floor, now dominate the demographic. In between these urban places, the physical landscape still survives. Its vast resources have been put under stress and the landscape is now scarred by extractive industry - mines, reservoir dams, and lumber operation - and overrun by tourist development (Rothman 1998, Marston 1989). Anaya's themes of human values, good and evil, which pervade all of his writing -

- the inherent human condition and the flip sides of the coin of every one of his characters, in particular detective Sonny Baca -- is easily detected in the landscape. Today's New Mexico, and all of the West, reflect this metaphor. The environment and the native communities display a reality that read like his novels:

The environment seems to reflect this struggle between evil and good; it cries out to us. We see it scarred and polluted. The people of the old tribes cry out; we see them displaced and suffering. Even the elements of nature reflect the change: acid and toxic chemicals pollute the water, nuclear waste is buried in the bowels of the earth (1995a, 347).

He also looks back in time at the New Mexico that he grew up in and came to know intimately. It is a place that is slowly dissolving:

The people, the earth, the water of the river and of the acequias, and the spiritual views of the tribal communities that once nurtured me are almost gone (1995a, 348).

Urban sprawl has removed many of the native people of New Mexico from their communities - reservations and villages. It has also pauperized them, disallowing them full participation in society because of the economic structure. Moreover, the diaspora of many of these people from their communities and the economic displacement also means the extinction of their sense of place:

Politicizing the Southwest has meant corralling people in the city. Reckless developers take the land for the false promise of the easy life where homogenized goods and services can be delivered. Work in one's cornfield has become work for wages, wages that can never keep up with ever-spiraling taxation. The pueblo plaza or village post office, where community once gathered to conduct business and ceremony, is being engulfed by chaotic urban sprawl. The center is being lost (1995a, 348).

While Anaya's most recent novels revolve around this prevailing reality, this essay speaks directly to the power elite. He could not be more straightforward, and little can be said about subversion and cultural politics other than that it is prose of despair. It brings front and center the most recent version of the legacy of conquest. Simply, those who control the region operate under the same impulse as the first settler colonies, both Spanish and American. In essence, they ignore the people and the land. Much of an old colonial history is repeated in neo-colonialism.

#### **Myth and Mimicry**

This new West also remains mythical, and the much of the mystique still hovers near its southern border. The land and the people still captivate the tourist and the migrant. In literature, New Mexico continues to be seen as an 'enchanted' place with striking landscapes and great ethnic diversity. This aesthetic continues to be turned out, and thus Americans continue to perceive of the region much like others did over a century ago. Anaya has been a key player in the production of this image. The mythological and spiritual overtones of his writing, his descriptions of the landscape, and the ethnic

flair of his novels feed off of and perpetuate it. But he, in fact, turns it on its head. As he writes: "The old relationships of the mythic West need not be reduced to a formula " (1995a, 350) .

He understands the power of the standard forms, for they lure the reader. But he also opposes them and recognizes the role of the narrative in producing the new West:

Because I write and understand the power of literature, I have to ask what this means to writers from the Southwest. For some it means a retreat into formula: the cowboy-and-Indian story is still being churned out. Some writers armed with computers simply make that formula longer and more ponderous to read...The Indian and Chicano way of life is idealized as the refusal to deal with the new, engulfing economic and political reality grows (1995a, 347) .

Anaya has duplicated the established tropes and metaphors to fully comment on social relations. As I have illustrated in Chapters 3 and 4, underneath the mystery and beauty of the literary landscape lies a strong critique of the contemporary cultural system. He has revised history, drawn attention to the plight of the native inhabitants, and how external forces have mediated them for over 400 years.

Anaya draws upon the old myths of New Mexico's communities, creates new ones and applies them to the world he narrates. Like many other Chicano/a and American Indian writers, Anaya claims that this new Western landscape has its descriptive roots in oral and written traditions with inherent spiritual and cultural connections to place (Norwood and Monk 1986, Teague 1997). Anaya's voice, like others, illustrates this

unique conception of the West as text, where place constituted as myth, dream, and vision is bound the experience of the life of the individual, and aimed at the survival of tradition.

But he also uses the standardized "Land of Enchantment" to illustrate that he is reflexive and responsive. While he carries within him a metaphysical relationship with place, he changes its meaning and mutates his narrative style. Land and people are always at the center of his talk, but he eludes any monolithic caricature of identity and voice by constantly renegotiating the weight of being marginalized. Spirit and myth apply to all dimensions of his New Mexico experience, and intervene to resolve the contradictions in all realms of life. His conversations are about a community and a land that requires a changing of forms, which the dominant society is not capable of understanding.

In his novels, characters become part of New Mexico's human and natural communities, but also realize the moral and metaphysical dimensions. This process serves an integrative function by which his characters, and he himself, connect with place. Anaya's 'epiphanies' are a transcendence of metaphor between people and the land, between the past and the future. Characters do not escape the physical environment, but become locked to it. Simultaneously their spirits merge with collective humanity and with the cosmos. In this event, cultural boundaries blur, but so do the Cartesian dualisms between humans and nature, people and place. He also fractures



the historical progression of time, as characters travel through cyclical sequences of seasons and move through time in their dreams. This 'enchanted' narrative undoubtedly wreaks havoc on any authoritative view of what the West as a place means and who the people living within it are.

#### **Place, Community, and the Land**

Woven into centuries of tradition was the unspoken rule, the land cannot be sold. It is part of the heritage of the land grants, part of the heritage gained from the Indian view of the earth. To sell the land was to cut your roots, and a man without roots lacked identity. Families without a village lost their allegiance to place. Allegiance to the land is as important as allegiance to the family and to God.

--At A Crossroads, 339

Although Anaya's literature, and all of Chicano/a literature, is nationalistic in impulse, and inherently bound to the legacy of colonialism in the West, it is more than just politics and propaganda. While Anaya's writing gains its power from political struggle, it also strives to retain a firm commitment to place, community and with the land. His New Mexico does not just lie at the crossroads of the western North American continent. It has always been in transition: at the whim of shifting relationships between the East and West coasts. It is also more than the ambiguous zone (the third space) between two larger cultural hearths: Latin American and Anglo-America. Indeed, it also is where numerous cultures clash. But ultimately, Anaya's New Mexico is a place that gains its essence from the land and the customs, beliefs, and attitudes of the people who have lived, and still live, there.

This vision of 'place' is shared with proponents of bio-regionalism, Deep Ecology, and others in art and literature who have recently re-discovered the idea of place. These visions include, in some form or another, individual, communal, spiritual, and ecological guidelines for the re-creation and maintenance of place-based relationships. (Gottlieb 1997, Lippard 1997, Vitek and Jackson 1996, Frenkel 1994, Lopez 1990, Devall and Sessions 1985, Parsons 1985, Snyder 1977). Anaya argues that these things are somewhat intact in some of New Mexico's contemporary communities.<sup>27</sup>

Beyond social criticism, Anaya has used literature in as an optimistic response to present-day problems. He uses his writing as a vehicle for the empowerment of Chicano/as. But, he also uses his novels as a means for instilling in all readers that there remains a moral dimension to the land and its people. In "Mythical Dimensions/Political Realities" he confirms:

But there is hope. The sensitive writer can still create meaningful forms that can be shared with the reader who is hungry for a mythic sensibility. We still have the materials and beliefs of our grandparents to work into poetry and fiction...We the writers can still salvage elements of beauty for the future. We can help preserve the legends and the myths of our land to rekindle the spirit of the old relationships. We can encourage the power of creativity that takes its strength from the elemental and mythic landscapes (1995a, 350).

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<sup>27</sup> In New Mexico many Chicano/a communities attained some sort of balance before American colonization (see Pena 1998, Pulido 1996). It can be argued that these communities and American Indian communities have been resilient in accommodating change without losing these relationships.

Anaya could be overestimating the power of literature. Readers may immerse themselves in New Mexico's history, its traditions, and its spirit. But Anaya's fear - and that of many others - that these vestiges of culture may be completely wiped out is justified. Contemporary cultural systems suggest that his New Mexico will only become a snap-shot, a photo, a commodity, one that is bought, sold, and appropriated via other people's visions of what New Mexico is and what it can be (Rodriguez 1994, Gutierrez 1989). Readers may only glean from his texts the standardized "Land of Enchantment" and dig no further. In that light, his efforts will have completely failed.

However, he is not a ghost of Empire and is not creating a New Mexico that is not there. He uses many literary forms -- from short stories to mystery novels -- to appeal to a broad reading public. Indeed, there are numerous messages, in particular one message that serves a function in defining culture and aimed at Chicano/a readers who live in a region dominated by another culture. The other, obvious in his use of English and the Southwest aesthetic, geared towards readers from a Euro-american background (Taylor 1997). He uses the foundations of his understanding of New Mexico to instill in all readers the idea that old traditions, what he calls "mythic sensibilities," of New Mexico still survive:

the links of the chain are still there. If it is broken you lose important traditions of groups that perceive the world and interact with it in unique ways (1997).

For him, being in place, or at home, means reaching far back in history, and to the relationships that evolved between people and the land. Time becomes an essential element in the process of integration. The Rio Grande Valley has rooted traditions, beginning with the first indigenous peoples that have been passed on to contemporary communities. The 'ancestors', unlike later migrants,

had the time to sit down, i.e. evolve their communal life and really think through their relationships, what it is they value and what it is they want to keep alive in ceremonies and rituals and religion. Whereas if we deal with the surface, we're talking about this constant imposition of movement and change (Dick and Sirias 1998, 77).

He continues:

We not only have the land which speaks to us, but we have a tremendous kind of vision of the world which the indigenous people have right here and have cultivated for centuries and centuries (Dick and Sirias 1998, 76).

The element of time allowed for the development of place centered cultural concepts, in particular the most fundamental, a philosophical system that at its root is spiritual:

I would say that place might be more important than anything else if you consider the fact that mythology can arise from place: that there are places on the earth where the gods are more active and the mountains, or the bluff or the palisades of rocks, actually becomes the voice that speaks to us and that we interpret...man internalizes the [physical features of the landscape] and uses them as his religious and communal and spiritual sensibilities and rituals (Dick and Sirias 1998, 76).

This connection to place is the basis for the production of the culture Anaya envisions in his novels. Community and theological relationships evolve through a rich interactive

relationship with the land. This conception of culture counters the experience of most Americans who are transient, uprooted, and who, by-and-large, have misunderstood the New Mexico landscape (Tuan 1980, 5). This element of society also has effectively divorced many New Mexicans from it. It should be no surprise that Anaya has enlisted the land as an ally in his fight for cultural and environmental justice. While this view of nature-society relationships does not fall in line with that of the dominant culture, his concern for New Mexico's human and natural communities does transcend his allegiance to the Chicano/a cause.

#### **The Vision Becomes Complete**

the dream of the Americas etched on volcanic rocks of the New Mexican desert....Carved thousands of years ago, by ancient wanderers on the land, those who carried the dream on their migrations. This was the covenant of the Americas

--*Shaman Winter*, 347

The dream of peace

--*Shaman Winter*, 357

These excerpts from Anaya's last novel, *Shaman Winter*, exemplify his outermost reach into the story of New Mexico. It goes back to a time when people first settled the American continents. This first contact of humans with the New World signals the initial treaty, compact, and promise between people, and with the land. The root metaphor for Anaya's writing shifts from New Mexico and the mestizo, to people and the American landscape. In this novel he linearly pulls through time the experiences of people living there and how they have

fit, or not fit, with others and with the environment. (Dare I venture that the latter may be the key *determinant*?) Legend and myth creep into the story as the foundation for human understanding of the world. Lines and circles of thought slowly connect him and all New Mexicans, and all Americans, to genealogical histories, bloodlines, and to all social conditions. The parallel worlds that exist in his novels -- the magical, the dream, and the real -- cross over the space and run through time. They all intersect in a location, New Mexico, where they collapse into one. Connecting to place becomes the central goal of all of his characters, but also defines the core of his utopian dream of New Mexico, or his fusion of a real New Mexico with the mythical Aztlán. Place is also the necessary component of feeling close to people and to the earth.

Anaya's voice gained its momentum from the Chicano/a movement and the early literature that was spawned by the quest for social justice and land rights in the 1960s and 1970s. While at the heart his writings call for the same thing, they have expanded. He calls for harmony with *la tierra sagrada*, the sacred homeland, and with people, *la gente*; neither of which is exclusive to location nor cultural identity. Even in his most militant Chicano/a novel, *Heart of Aztlán*, the character Clemente elucidates this humanistic vision:

He wanted to tell them that the people he had met in his journey were the same everywhere, that they cried and laughed the same, that they felt joy and sorrow as acutely as anyone, and that they shared in the same life-stream which was their destiny to carry to a completion (HA, 208).

Anaya challenges many of the assumptions held by the most powerful ideologies that continue to mold the American landscape. He subverts dominant presumptions about racial and ethnic identity, and leads readers to question the very notion that Chicano/a, or any other ethnic identity, represents a holistic culture and community. He also makes a direct assault on the ethos of contemporary American culture. According to Zelinsky, American society is defined by an anarchistic individualism, a high value placed on mobility, and a mechanistic, scientific, and nationalistic view of the world (1992, 40). Nor is Anaya's vision compatible with the views of other critics including Tocqueville (1947) and Beaudrillard (1988), who have characterized American culture as utilitarian, hyper-real, and simulated. Beaudrillard, in fact, calls the United States a "country without hope" (1988, 123).

Anaya attests that the United States is, above all, heterogeneous and that its over-riding cultural characteristics may influence all cultures, but not necessarily in a positive way. He also confronts these other evaluations with a geographically-centered, ecological, multi-cultural, humanistic, and ultimately optimistic alternative. It is a perspective that has emerged from a multidimensional, *different*

experience than that of most Americans. He reflects upon the encounters of a people that occupy a third space. They are both colonized and the colonizer; partly indigenous and partly Imperial. They are neither Latin Americans nor Anglo-Americans; and, are partially rooted and partially uprooted. These tensions reflect the larger Chicano/a (mestizo) struggle to find a place within American culture.

In his writing about New Mexico, Anaya illustrates what few others have attempted to actually do: understand the coming together of many different worlds. His New Mexico is a place where the Indian intersects with both the Latin and Anglo. The end result is the emergence of a hybrid place that is not Anglo-, Latin-, nor Indian-America. The center of his world lies somewhere within, and between, these three spaces. At the same time, his conversations are consistently about the land and people's relationships with the land. He persistently speaks to the balance that can exist in a place that is under the stress of constant change. And the question remains whether or not New Mexicans, or Westerners, will ever admit to the need for this balance or not.

### **Re-imagining New Mexico**

A geographic approach to Anaya's literature about New Mexico illustrates the power of place and the reciprocal relationship between place and the individual, something not fully explored by Chicano/a and literary scholars. Post-colonialism, when used as a tool, also opens up new ways of



understanding both Chicano/a culture and the American West. When applied to specific cultures and places, post-colonial theory and related ideas such as hybridity, third space, and mimicry emerge as more than an academic glass-bead game (Slemon 1994). They fit, almost naturally, to the Chicano/a condition, and thus are pertinent to particular realms of social practice and political action. By making academic texts receptive to marginalized literature, geographers and others can begin to rethink the American landscape. In particular, it allows academic writing to go beyond the description of place personality and cultural relations. We can envision our own texts as scripts for change. It also is possible to frame colonialism as both a material and discursive mediating force that is constantly addressed by the subject as expressions, dreams, and visions created in response to the threat of their dissolution. Given the recent growth of Chicano/a and American Indian literature, it also is clear that there is an expanding imagined terrain available for post-colonial and humanistic exploration by those interested in New Mexico and the West.

New Mexico, Anaya's or not, has an unequivocal personality, and it can be seen as fictitious because it has been created by artistic imagination. In an American society that savors writing like Anaya's, the tangible real world is generally not seen as having any relationship with the fantastic (Tuan 1991, 690-91). But his writing surely indicates that the two are inseparable. He writes of a New

Mexico we know is there on the map, yet it is personalized by remembrance, artistic revelation, and vision. He points readers to a potential New Mexico, and to New Mexican readers he gives them a place they may not see. Alas, in the public arena the real strength of his writing is that it includes signs that must be interpreted by the reader. The political function of his work also resides in readers' ability to empower themselves through realizing they are also actors in time and space and, at least for a moment, can consider the possible. As Anaya writes:

When the writer has incorporated his sense of place into his art and the entire sense of the landscape - characters, emotion, experience, detail, and story - permeates his craft, the reader will respond, and that response is the beginning of a new epiphany (1977, 102).

## Epilogue

### De-colonizing

Now, belatedly, those in power are waking up and seeing the devastation their universalist, colonialist approach has caused...  
-*The Censorship of Neglect*, 401

Anaya shares a creative vision with many others living in the American West. For three decades he has been a steadfast emissary in the push for multiculturalism and ecological responsibility in his native land. He also exemplifies a long struggle for ethnic writers to gain acceptance by mainstream publishers and public readership. Still his writing and others from the Chicano/a and American Indian genres will remain divorced from one another and those from Anglo-America until we have completely de-colonized the literary fabric of the region. This exercise has lead me to agree with Mikesell: "The world we must try to understand is marked for the most part by postcolonial rather than postmodern cultural indicators" (1994, 443). There are many voices coming from New Mexico, but academia still insists on codified cultural distinctions. Thus, the scales of equality, much like those of the broader West, remain unbalanced. Despite his efforts Anaya, like many Americans, is still a colonial subject. He writes with endearing conviction about a

place that continues to be manipulated by a range of imperial devices just as effectively as it was previously coerced under the more overt Spanish policies. Now it reels from the residual effects of the rigorous cultural and economic institutions of the United States and global neocolonialism.

A significant part of this dissertation has been to create a conversation between academic geography and marginalized literature. Since the 1960s, the majority of geographers studying the United States have ignored three decades of the "natives talking back." I find this ironic for a discipline that has, in part, been based on documenting human ideas and behavior. Part of the problem lies in the continued reference to the structures of culture, but the other part is more of a concern. It is amoral for academic geography to control and order a group of people by laying down upon them taxonomic systems and values without ever once lending an ear. What I am pointing to here is a necessary de-colonizing of geography done in, and about, the American West. A de-colonized, post-colonial knowledge remains a topic of considerable inquiry within anthropology, literary criticism, sociology, and development studies (Smith 1996; Brewster 1996; Eagleton, Jameson, and Said 1990; Rosaldo 1989; Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986). Within geography, post-colonial discourse has been engaged in the study of Africa, Asia, and even into the realms of gender (Myers 1998, Duncan 1990, Crush 1994, Daniels 1998). Yet we

find it nowhere in the geographical literature on the American 'frontier'. Part of this, I imagine, is the strong resistance to cultural studies, and the very idea that we de-colonize geographic studies on the West is likely to be treated with derision and skepticism (Crush 1994). Another reason, which is not wholly divorced from the former, is the neglect of American Imperialism in geographic studies. Academic geography also has largely denied its role in the imperial project itself (Lawson and Tiffin 1994, 232; Crush 1994). But the inertia was there for an alternative path. Meinig and historian Limerick produced widely read and accepted pieces of literature that exhibited the process of acquisition and manipulation of the West by the "American Empire" (Meinig 1972, Limerick 1987). It seems a logical progression, I think, to attempt to decolonize our academic texts by splintering the dominant discourse and allowing 'others' an avenue in.

A possible solution to the problem is to allow for a space for these voices (Clifford and Marcus 1986, Duncan 1990). I have begun a project of bringing into geography an alternative voice, showing how Anaya's version of New Mexico subverts and contests other visions and stories. But in doing so I have made a great leap into the theories of discourse and rhetoric. Because, as Spivak and hooks have warned, this counter-narrative risks being nothing but that, rhetorical (Spivak 1988, hooks 1989). The argument goes that the conventions of academic writing may disallow such voices from

ever speaking, and it questions whether the "marginal can speak and be spoken, even spoken for" (Spivak 1988). The recognition of the voice only produces a space without one. Moreover, the use of the marginalized voice is also a means for academic neocolonialism and institutional control of the voice as a new object of investigation (Spivak 1988).<sup>28</sup>

Those things taken into account, I by no means assume that I have represented Anaya and his New Mexico in its purest form. I hope not to have been speaking for him, but with him. What I have attempted to do is to illustrate his geographic ideas as a means to close the distance between geography and the experience of life in the margin. I have also tried to show that other academic disciplines -- in particular Chicano/a studies, post-colonial studies, and cultural studies -- can help human geographers answer commonly asked questions. But a full project requires we pinpoint all sources that have kept the many people of the West from full citizenship. Some geographers have pointed to the many arenas in which Chicano/as and American Indians have been disenfranchised by

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<sup>28</sup> I take quite seriously this problem, and bell hooks articulates exactly what it is:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the center of my talk (1989).

the contemporary cultural system (Wright 1997, Pulido 1996, Lewis 1992, Nostrand 1992). It takes more than just documenting these processes as part of the geographical story.

Some of the problems lie within academia, in particular intellectual discourse. The entire West, and perhaps the American continents, will remain post-colonial until the standards of merit in the evaluation of cultural acts, including literature and art, are no longer dominated by Europe. Chicano/a and post-colonial literary scholars have initiated the de-colonization of the social sciences and humanities by questioning the American academy's tendency to trace all intellectual developments to Europe (Davalos 1998, Crush 1994). In geography, those of all sorts share this tendency. While it is impossible to sever the West, and the American continents, from European influence, it might serve us well to at least question its ubiquity.

It also means that we reevaluate our roles in the classroom. I am drawn to Willinsky's work (1998) on the role of the American educational system in the production of Empire. Academic curriculums work hand in hand with the manufacture of the divisions between, and the misrepresentations of, cultures. Anaya, too, has made this point quite clear, speaking out against the indoctrination of Euroamerican academic standards in the classroom and in particular the omission of native literatures (1995). In the essay "The Censorship of Neglect" he makes his point clear:

We can not applaud the liberation eastern European countries have recently achieved and still espouse a colonial mentality when it comes to teaching in this country (1995a,412-13)

He continues the critique hammering away at the hasty inclusion of marginalized languages (e.g. Spanish) into the classroom:

Now they awaken and produce token changes in education not because they are interested in freedom for the individual, but because they understand that an undereducated populace is not good for the business of the country (1995a, 411)

There is a way out of this process, one intricately detailed by Willinsky. He suggests that we realize that the differences created between so-called cultures are actually divisions within ourselves(1998). We can make the classroom a forum for exhibiting the actual colonizing process, and, in turn, make great strides:

By studying the cultivation and manufacture, the cataloging and display of all categories that have done so much for nation and Empire(Willinsky 1998, 264).

Unfortunately, all of these efforts will run against the tide of a society that continues to reinforce historical structures and social practices. Until a radical change occurs, the experience of many New Mexicans -- and many other Americans -- will remain a colonial one. The expansive spaces of the West will continue to fill in as its urban centers spread. The tide of new pioneers, or new colonists, will continue creating a new West that is drastically different



than the remaining villages and reservation towns. When the newcomers confront long-time residents, those who struggle to keep touch with their own history and identity, there will always be a detectable difference in culture. Many New Mexicans will have to continue to deal with political and economic systems controlled by others, and will be at the will of the exploitation of their land and water. Their children will be faced with curricula in their educational systems that deny the truth about the state and the nation as a whole. They will be educated by a system that sets into motion the sets of values to which Anaya and others are a threat.

### **Conversing**

Unity and human potential should guide us, not market values and the gross national product. This, after all, is the challenge of our generation, to create a consciousness that fosters the flowering of the human spirit, not its exploitation. -- Aztlán, 383

If geography is to achieve the goal of de-colonizing, it requires changing the intellectual landscape of the American West. One way, as I have tried to illustrate, is to engage in a dialogue with the people and the scholarship of those living here. This is not that radical of an idea. But, in the case of ethnicity, academic monologue -- the one-way descriptions of difference and diversity -- should be turned into a conversation. Only then can we really see that the social landscape is not timeless, bounded, and homogenous. If we look further into individual writing this approach also

illustrates how obscure, and contested, cultural identities actually are. Chicano/a and American Indian scholarship, in particular, recognize undeniable hybridity and diversity. They also place the 'self' within the text (Teague 1997, Norwood and Monk 1987). And, like Anaya, the first person narrative is more than a simple matter of articulating individual positions. For they branch out, investigating the complex sets of relationships they have with the larger human community and with the natural world. The bias always emerges as a commitment to people -- regardless of cultural distinction -- and the place under investigation.

A critical dialogic approach also illustrates that within each creative text there are realities that have effected the writing subject. It also is possible to use literature (and other products of culture from art to cartography) as tools for defining the vernacular while at the same time never forgetting to remind ourselves, and others, of the ongoing processes that connect the local to the global. Such an alternative aids those occupying the margins in defining themselves against the identity given to them by the colonial past and present. Moreover, a critical dialogue brings to the surface prevailing political realities (in Anaya's New Mexico it is Imperialism) that are continuously undermined by a regenerative seed. In the case of Anaya, it has been planted in the soil of New Mexico and stands in the way of absorption by a society that aspires to homogeneity.

In the same light, perhaps it is time to think of these writers, and the people they are trying to empower, more sympathetically and contrapuntally rather than withering away their expressions, and by association their existence, down to mere abstractions. To think nothing of the politics of difference, to write into existence that what separates us, actually keeps us from a more important goal, that which links us together.<sup>29</sup> This steers me off of the path of social speculation and criticism to the heart of humanistic geography as expounded by Bunkse: "It is the imagination that provides the foundation for humanist confidence in the human ability to control our own destiny" (Bunkse 1996, 361). And perhaps this is where I have found post-colonialism, at least in New Mexico, to be an allied enterprise. There is an underlying desire in both encampments to affect human agency, and they challenge any hegemonic enterprise with the notion that there is an "ethical universal" and "a concern for human suffering, and the victims of the post-colonial state" (Appiah 1992, 123). Anaya also gives me hope that in the mechanistic, technological, and materialistic world we live in that there is still a promise of this humanism and that we can still be makers of our selves and our habitat (Bunkse 1996, 374).

On the other hand, it should not surprise us that Anaya speaks out when he sees the dignity of his land in jeopardy. Writers like Anaya -- and I think in the Americas we can point

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<sup>29</sup> Said (1993, 336) makes a similar point.

to Lopez, Stegner, Abbey, Ortiz, Silko, Anzaldua, and a host of other activists, visionaries, and responsible citizens -- realize that when the land is threatened, so are we as citizens of it. The deeply felt attachment Anaya has for the land extends into his nurturing of cultural traditions: myth, folklore, and storytelling. No, Anaya does not represent, nor does he speak for, all mestizo New Mexicans or all Chicano/as. Many do bask in their heritage and their connection to the land, yet in the same pen-stroke are partial members of a rootless society who discard their traditions and even their land. But he is an ally for those who seek to restore those important contacts. He also believes there is something greater for all of us, a sense of fulfillment and belonging to community and earth. These things are beyond theoretical abstraction. They are emotional, spirited commitments to an organic part of his own existence. This directs me to the heart of cultural geography, and to Carl Sauer, who steadfastly criticized a society where the idea of "freeing the people from the land" has become standard (Sauer 1963, 41). Anaya reminds all of us that we should know the places in which we live; or, in the words of Lopez, we too will be at the will of the hands that threaten his New Mexico:

If a society forgets or no longer cares where it lives, then anyone with political power and the will to do so can manipulate the landscape to conform to certain social ideals or nostalgic visions (Lopez 1998, 137).

## **Chicano/a Literature and New World Studies**

The New World view is syncretic and encompassing. It is one of the most humanistic views in the world, and yet it is a view not well known in the world. The pressure of political realities of the mestizo populations of the Americas have constrained the flowering of our nature.

--New World Man, 364

Anaya's concern for the land and for place, although generally not seen as such, also can be considered part of a long-standing American literary tradition. While it now falls under the heading of environmental or nature writing, this tradition of "writing the land" can be traced to Leopold and the "Land Ethic" and to more recent works by Abbey, Stegman, Jackson, and of course, Lopez (Gonzales 1990). These genres have influenced Anaya in one way or another. These precursors and traditions aside, he is part of an ethnic genre that has kept this tradition alive. It is within Chicano/a literature, and its close kin American Indian literature, that there lie the foundations of the future of American literature. For it empowers the indigenous, illustrating the fundamental connection to the land. It also is ecological as it speaks from a critical cultural and environmental intersection (Gish 1996, Teague 1997, Norwood and Monk 1987). Chicano/a literature is multicultural, for it draws from the historical experiences of Hispanos, Tejanos, and Mexicanos. It also pulls from, and reinforces, the literature of Latin America, Latinos, and American Indians. It also is an adaptable literature, echoing the forces of cultural, political, and economic shifts that transform all of society.

If Anaya is any indication, this evolving literature has the power to embrace the indigenous, the colonial, and the mestizo end product (Davis 1999a). Its ties to Spanish language extend the parameters far south of the Rio Grande. Its tie to the indigenous and the mestizo -- biological and cultural hybrids -- sweeps from the Arctic to Tierra del Fuego. The colonial and neo-colonial conditions intimately bind it the English language, the lingua franca of the United States and the new global culture and economy.

Davis (1999a, 1999b) argues that Chicano/a works such as Anaya's can, and should, be considered part of an emerging arena of scholarship, "New World Studies." Whereas, cultural studies that use the European or Euro-American cultural structures as the frame of criticism bow to a criticism that is the subject of North and South America (an indigenous perspective). At the heart of New World Studies are Anaya's ideas about culture. This perspective emphasizes community, which includes all members, and thus a feminist perspective (based on the success and shared concerns of both Chicana and Chicano writers). It is also a position that continues the initial Chicano/a cause of bringing to attention the plight of the socially disadvantaged. Like Anaya's response to the new West, the criticism concentrates on neo-colonial conditions and on consumer/materialist global culture. It is not Marxist, but left-leaning. While place is fundamental to the very idea of this arena of scholarship (e.g. New World), Davis

does not fully integrate space, place, and environment into the criticism. In the essay "New World Man" Anaya clearly begs this when he states "I am an indigenous man taking the essence and perspective from the earth and people of the New World" (1995a, 361).

From a cultural and historical standpoint the "New World" critical perspective does not erase conquest, but views the cultural, geographical, and historical American landscape as multicultural, rather than colonial. New World Studies, Chicano/a literature, and Anaya are laying down a new map upon the Americas. If New World Studies and Chicano/a literature have the predictive power Davis argues they do, we may very well see the growth of this criticism, and a long-deserved recognition of the people who spawned it, in the early years of the next century. One thing is certain: the future of the American literary and social landscape is likely to be forever altered by the rapidly growing mestizo population.

I believe Anaya goes beyond Davis' (1999a, 1999b) contention. If he is truly at the helm of Chicano/a literature and the root of the new critical perspective, both will transcend the limitations of ethnicity and race; and, beyond the very notion of the signifier Chicano/a. In the essays "Aztlán" and "The New World Man" it is clear that he is seeking something other than this cultural construction. The essentialized ideas of race and ethnicity, intimately bound to Euro-american constructions, emerge as false and coercive. The

notion of cultural hybridity (his mestizo) allows an escape from taxonyms and discursive appropriations of power by realizing the hybridity of all cultures (Bhabha 1994, Said 1993). This makes a direct assault on the most orthodox use of the term Chicano/a. While it subverts the term Mexican and the broadly generalized term of Hispanic, the term still largely fills that slot in the American taxonomy of race and ethnicity. Anaya realizes the limitations of ethnic identity, which he makes clear in the essay "Aztlán." He completely revises the conception of Chicano/a space and considers it a "homeland without boundaries." He altruistically calls for a release from the politics of identity, and a pull towards collective unity:

This is a most difficult proposal, the idea that we can move beyond our ethnocentric boundaries, that we can envision the limitations of our ethnicity even as we extol our self-pride.

He continues:

We must move beyond the limitations of ethnicity to create a world without borders. Each community rising to its new level of awareness creates respect for self and others, and we are in need of this awareness before we destroy the earth and each other (1995a, 382).

The only way out is to transcend these categories, and physically and discursively begin building cultures, identities, ethnicities, voices, and communities around places. This jump also carries with it a similar concern for the land we live upon. Anaya realizes: "An idealistic, utopian



though? Perhaps, but one we need to dare consider" (1989, 382-83).

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## APPENDIX

## CHRONOLOGY<sup>32</sup>

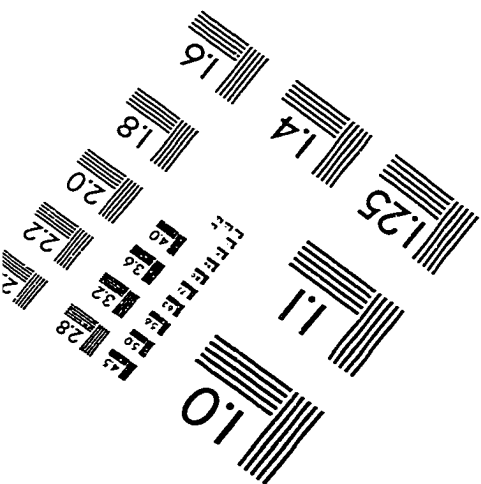
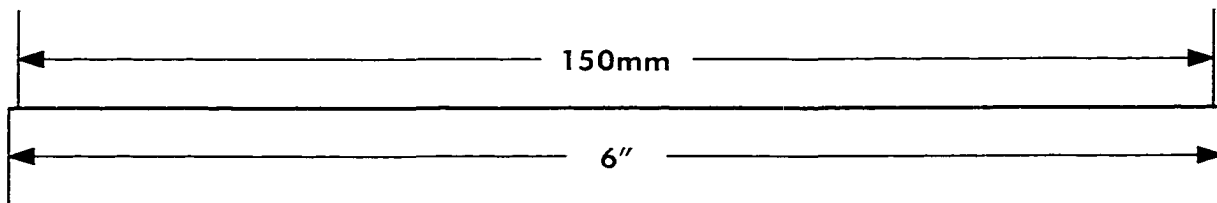
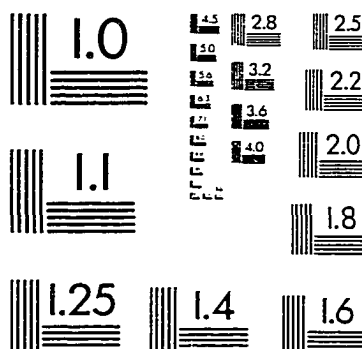
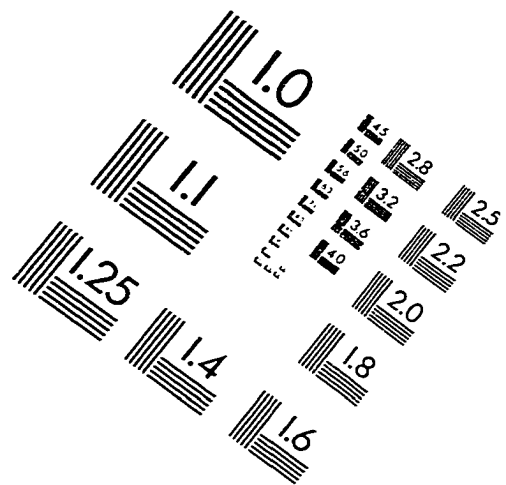
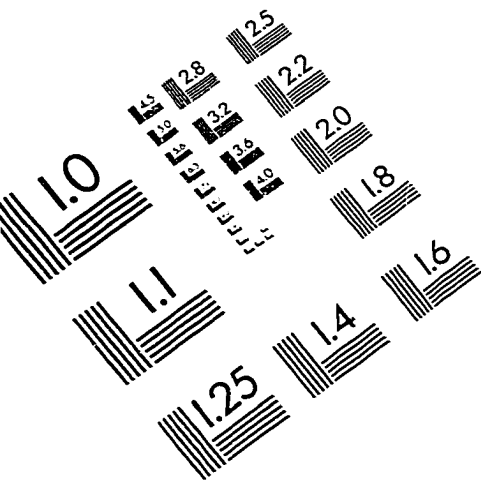
- 1937 30 October, born to Rafaelita and Martin Anaya in Pastura, New Mexico; family of four sons and six daughters later moves to Santa Rosa.
- 1952 Family moves to Albuquerque; Anaya enters ninth grade at Washington Junior High School.
- 1956 Graduates from Albuquerque High School.
- 1963 Receives Bachelor's degree in English from the University of New Mexico; teaches English in Albuquerque public schools.
- 1966 Marries Patricia Lawless.
- 1968 Receives Master's degree in English from UNM.
- 1972 *Bless Me, Ultima* is published; receives Premio Quinto Sol National Chicano Literature Award; Receives Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling from UNM.
- 1974 Begins teaching creative writing at UNM.
- 1975 *Heart of Aztlan* is published.
- 1979 *Tortuga* is published; *The Season of La Llorona*, a play, is performed; *Bilingualism*, a screenplay, appears.
- 1980 Reads at the White House; receives National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship; receives New Mexico Governor's Award; Receives Before Columbus Foundations' American Book Award for *Tortuga*.
- 1981 *Silence of the Llano* is published; receives Kellogg Foundation National Fellowship.
- 1984 *The Legend of La Llorona* is published.
- 1985 *The Adventures of Juan Chicaspatas* is published.
- 1986 *A Chicano in China*, a travel journal, is published; lectures in Israel and France.

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<sup>32</sup> Adapted from Dick and Sirias (1998, xv-xvii).

- 1987      *Lord of the Dawn: The Legend of Quetzalcoatl* is published; *Farolitos of Christmas* is published; *Who Killed Don Jose*, a play, is produced.
- 1990      *Aztlan: Essays on the Chicano Homeland* is published; receives PEN Center USA West Freedom to Write Award.
- 1992      *Albuquerque* is published; *Matachines*, a play, has a world premier.
- 1993      Receives PEN Center USA West Award for *Albuquerque*.
- 1994      *Bless Me, Ultima* is reissued by Warner Books; Erna S. Fergusson Award from UNM.
- 1995      *Zia Summer* is published; *The Anaya Reader* is published; *The Farolitos of Christmas* is published.
- 1996      *Rio Grande Fall* is published; *Jalamanta* is published.
- 1997      *Maya's Children* is published; *Descansos/Tres Voces* published with Arellano and Chavez.
- 1998      Receives "Spirit of the West" Literary Achievement Award from Mountain and Plains Booksellers Association.
- 1999      *Shaman Winter* is published.

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