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Permeating boundaries : the meaning of "nature" and "American".

Charlene Deaun Moulton
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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PERMEATING BOUNDARIES
THE MEANING OF "NATURE" AND "AMERICAN"

A Dissertation Presented

by

CHARLENE DEAUN MOULTON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2000

Political Science

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THE MEANING OF “NATURE” AND “AMERICAN”


A Dissertation Presented

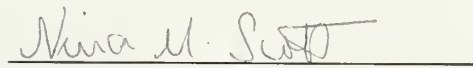
by


CHARLENE DEAUN MOULTON

Approved as to style and content by:


Jerome B. King, Chair


Dean Robinson, Member


Nina M. Scott, Member


Jerome M. Mileur, Department Head
Department of Political Science

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ABSTRACT

PERMEATING BOUNDARIES

THE MEANING OF “NATURE” AND “AMERICAN”

FEBRUARY 2000

CHARLENE DEAUN MOULTON, B.A., LORETTO HEIGHTS COLLEGE

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

PH.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Jerome B. King

American political thought is unusual in that the conception of “nature” is overtly important as well as silently embedded in the frame of reference of its practitioners. The conception of nature is evident in the national narrative around membership and property as well as in pastoral political resistance. It is my basic thesis that this attitude toward nature contributes not only to a specific kind of public policy decision concerning the allocation of natural resources, but also maintains a presupposition of the ideal American citizen as Anglo and male. I have ventured into the culture of the Southwestern Latinos, particularly but not exclusively the Hispanos of northern New Mexico and Chicano/Chicanas in order to find an alternative view of nature and an alternative perspective on the conception of nature in the United States. In the end I find the most problematic aspects of the conception of nature in traditional American political thought are (1) the reliance on ideological sameness in the that ignores real, material difference; (2) the commodification of nature and (3) the exclusion of human naturalness from the political debate.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Finding “Nature” in Political Theory

The human relationship to nature is one of the oldest and most difficult questions that we face. Humans are natural creatures, but we surround our lives with elaborate and largely invisible frames full of traditions, practices, rules, beliefs and institutions. This framework includes a conception of nature that embeds itself into the thoughts and practices of the political community. To analyze conceptions of “nature” in the political theory of any community is to take on a fundamental aspect of the frame surrounding of that social order.

Western intellectual history seems to have reflected one or the other of two broad approaches to the moral sense of the question of nature. Both are related to the Biblical Fall, but each starts from its own presumption. In the first view, since the Fall is the result of mankind’s own conscious and deliberate choice to disobey the will of God, only mankind’s situation is changed. Nature remains in its Edenic state. In the second view, the Fall brings all of nature, not just human nature, down with it.

The first view logically reaches the conclusion that a right relationship between mankind and nature, not even mankind’s own nature, can never be found or created. The epistemological problem is insoluble because of the moral squint that developed in disobeying God. Reason cannot alter the situation. We are left with power. However much our attempts at reason and power appear to alter local circumstances, they are meaningless in the broader scheme of things.

The second point of view believes the epistemological approach is still possible, if not wholly compete. Nature is, at best, our moral equal. We have a moral imperative to derive and

program right relationships. Hence, the use of reason, reflecting both historical experience and scientific observation, is quite appropriate.

In its basic structure and purpose, this dissertation presents a confrontation between these two viewpoints. On one hand I have analyzed what I call the “Anglo” or “Anglo-American” tradition which reflects the second view of nature. To illustrate the contrasting view of nature from voices within the United States, I have turned to Southwest Latinos, generally, with one exception, to *nuevo mexicanos*. I have lived in the Southwest U.S. for years and know well. Of course, I cannot claim to know it completely, but I aspire to bring an illustration of this alternative tradition to other Anglos. I shall be satisfied if the Anglo reader finishes this work with greater knowledge and appreciation of the “other” view of nature and deeply gratified if this reflection illuminates some of the limitations of the Anglo view.

The Beginning: The Two Forks Dam

The seeds of this project were sown when a consortium of water developers and the Denver Water Department decided to build the Two Forks dam on the South Platte River. The Denver Water Department (DWD) is chartered to meet the demand for domestic water within the City and County of Denver. (The City and County are contiguous and comprise the central but not the largest municipality within of the Denver Metropolitan Area.) DWD has garnered considerable water rights and is the largest owner and provider of water resources in the State of Colorado. Its excess supplies are contracted to suburban developers and water districts. These sales constitute a permanent claim on DWD’s resources. In 1980, DWD decided that it could not issue any further water-tap permits to suburban users and continue to meet its commitment to the City and County. If suburban developers were to grow and profit they had to find new water resources. They focused on a new water project that would be situated at the confluence of two tributary forks of the Platte River.

The headwaters of the Platte River flow out of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains west of Denver. Tributary streams in the mountains join into two rivers: the South Platte and the Platte. These forks come together in a deep gorge southwest of the city. The Denver Water Department owns a substantial amount of the water rights allocated to the Platte River but has been unable to capture and store all of it. DWD had considered the Two Forks site for a storage reservoir for some time but the technology to make the project feasible has not been available. By the 1980's the technology was available and the anticipated demand for water was high while supply was short.

In an unusual cooperative effort, the suburban water districts joined together and offered to finance a major water project on the South Platte that would collect and hold water controlled by DWD. This project was unique in many ways. The cooperation between water districts differed from the normal aggressive competition for water resources in the open market. The dam was to be the financial responsibility of the consortium even though the water in the reservoir would belong to DWD. Also, the Two Forks project would not be constructed or operated under the auspices of the Federal government. The Federal government was involved insofar as the dam and the ensuing reservoir would lie within a national forest. Certain Federal criteria had to be met including the production of an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and securing a permit from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The consortium of water providers commissioned the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) to conduct the EIS. The study contained a comparison of seven potential strategies. Six of the strategies anticipated actively developing new water resources and the seventh, titled "No Federal Action," essentially assumed no major structural change to the existing water systems. Some of the development projects involved improving existing facilities while other included the new Two Forks dam. During the public hearings and round tables that accompanied the process it became apparent that the preferred options were those that included the new dam. If the dam were built, the river would crash into a wall 550 feet high and ultimately surrender 1.1 million acre feet of

water to the new lake. One acre-foot is the amount of water necessary to cover one acre with one foot of water. The resulting reservoir would back up both forks of the river for 20 miles and would store enough water to triple the supply available to the DWD. This quantity of water would resolve demand problems for the foreseeable future.

The effects of the reservoir were forecast in the EIS. The reservoir would result in increases in retail sales (\$.5--2.27 million), personal income (\$1.1-2.3 million) and sales tax revenue (\$26-40,000 with minimal losses in property taxes. These increases would be accompanied by impacts on vegetation, wild game migration routes, wetlands and the habitats of some endangered species, including sand hill cranes that used the Platte River downstream during migration. Certain visual and cultural artifacts including "significant paleontological resources" would be destroyed and the dam would also affect water quality and stream flows downstream. The reservoir created by the dam would require the relocation of 55-100 households and 12-20 businesses (Army Corps of Engineers 1985 inter alia; Army Corps of Engineers and Committee 1985, inter alia).

The Environmental Protection Agency initially refused to issue the permit required by the Clean Water Act (Tolchin November 24, 1990; Weisskopf November 23, 1990). The EPA action produced a sigh of relief from the environmental concerns that opposed the project, including Sierra Club, Audubon Society, several local mountaineering clubs and individuals. Some of the water districts sued the Federal Government arguing that EPA administrator William Reilly overstepped his authority in refusing the permit. The suit was never considered a serious threat to the EPA action since the plaintiffs did not include Denver or any of its major suburbs (Scanlon November 23, 1991). The project was to be funded by water-district bonds that proved difficult to underwrite. The oil boom that had caused Denver's growth spurt had busted by the time the bonds were under consideration. Bond underwriters questioned the growth projections of the suburban developers and the ability of the consortium to repay the bonds. After the EPA action, most of the large suburbs began to look for other alternatives (Verrengia November 23, 1990).

The Denver Water Department has retained claims on the water and the bed rights to build the dam. However, when the Federal government suggested protecting the South Platte under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, DWD placed the rights to build Two Forks on the table in exchange for Federal non-action (Morrison February 6, 1998). The dam project now may be completely scuttled. The water search continues while the venue has changed.

The Question: The Traditional “American” Conception of “Nature”

As part of the resistance to the Two Forks project I became interested in the way the river in particular and nature in general were treated within the terms of the debate. Even though the debate over Two Forks was carried out in economic terms it reached to the heart of traditional “American” political values.¹ The frame of reference for the debate included a conception of the river as “water,” i.e. as a commodity that was available to the market. The water could be abstracted out of an ecological setting, packaged, sold and resold. In this way the river was defined in a way that traditional “American” political thought easily incorporated. The market -- the logic and dynamics of property and profit -- is embedded in the dominant social order of the United States. It is grounded in a vernacular of privacy, growth and individual achievement. Generally, impediments to profit-making are considered infringements upon the basic freedom that the nation promises.

The “American” frame of reference also incorporates the idea that human demand for water constitutes a right that should be met. Governments in the United States are intended to

¹ The term “American” is usually used to mean exclusively the citizens of the United States. It is extremely difficult to write on the topic of “American” political thought without making this assumption. Nonetheless, in some measure it is this assumption of exclusivity and a corresponding sense of racial superiority that I undertake to permeate by including voices of Hispanos, Chicanos and Chicanas in a work in the field of “American political thought.” In order to make the point, I have encased the term in quotes or referred to traditional “American political thought as “Anglo-American” thought when referring the dominant ideology within the United States.

provide the basic security so that private interests may pursue their own development. If helpful technology exists, the general assumption was that it should be used by governmental agencies to meet demand. Everyone involved in the Two Forks debate agreed that water had to be found because people wanted to live in the city and people needed water. The idea that the city should limit its growth because water was scarce simply did not enter into the conversation. Rather, when I suggested this to the ACE during a public meeting on the dam, the idea was dismissed out of hand. The ideas that (1) the availability of resources should determine where people will live or that (2) the government can enforce restrictions against the right of free people to choose their own domicile were not acceptable to a “nation inured to plenty and impatient of restrictions” (Stegner 1987, 25). As Wallace Stegner further points out, the traditional approach has been toward engineering the problem away rather than adapting to the ecology.

Any discussion of “nature” in “American” political thought is never merely a discussion about the public policy or political thinking around the use of natural resources. “Nature” is a critical aspect of traditional “American” political thought. The meaning of “nature” is treated as if it lay outside the political arena except insofar as conflicts arise between private and public claims of ownership of specific resources. The meaning of human nature, or the meaning of humans in nature, is also treated as a non-political issue. Those questions are left to the fields of philosophy or religion. The knowledge and condition of human health is also considered non-political except insofar as a governing authority sees the need to provide institutional support for medicine, psychology and germane scientific research. Traditional “American” political thought, largely derived from a contractarian social theory takes the fully formed “Self” is taken for granted. Since only such a self is though capable of assenting to or making contracts, a significant portion of the ideal “American” citizen’s character is based on an arrogant attitude of self-reference toward nature.

It is my basic thesis that this attitude toward nature contributes not only to a specific kind of public policy decision concerning the allocation of natural resources, but also maintains a

presupposition of the ideal “American” citizen as Anglo and male. That which is not Anglo and male is an alien “other.” It is not only the rivers which is at stake with our conceptions of nature, but, even more fundamentally, the practice of freedom and equality in a society whose members are engaged more in articulating their differences than their similarities.

The conception of nature constitutes a boundary in “American” political thought around the definition of the citizen. From the beginning Anglo settlers and nation-builders have drawn boundaries against “others,” including the wilderness. Inside the boundaries the process of defining who belonged to the community was combined with the process of defining the individual self. The communal structure inside the boundary was ideally democratic but inclusion in the community depended upon a definition of “American” and a generalized acceptance of a common national language and history as superior to any ethnic heritage.

The boundaries around “American” have always been defensive. James Oliver Robertson writes, “[w]hen we feel threatened we draw a line in the sand and dare others to cross it” (92). Questioning the “American” conception of “nature” is to cross the line. It is fundamentally critical to the image of “American-ness”. In the face of growing cultural efforts to theorize and realize difference, reactionary, rigid and increasingly singular definitions of “American” have been proliferated. A revision of “nature” in this image resists the contemporary attempt to homogenize “American.” Such resistance can result in fundamental shifts in the frame of reference itself. The problem for “American” political thought is not to find an adequate definition of “American” but to void the need to define it at all.

Non-white races and non-human nature are both easily placed outside the boundary. It is possible to see the habits that construe non-white races as “other” will also apply to conceptions of nature. However, race is a natural aspect of the human being and racial discrimination becomes, in some ways, an aspect of the “othering” of nature. Race and environmental issues in the United States have forced a self-reflexive examination of the conception of nature in “American” political thought. This work shares that examination by looking at nature in

traditional “American” political thought and in the culture of one of the major ethnic components of the American landscape -- the southwest Latino, particularly the Hispano and Chicano.²

Method: Alternative Structures

An attempt to understand the conception of nature within any cultural scheme requires a step outside the frame of reference insofar as that is possible. It is possible to see how differing conceptions of nature have operated in other cultures within the United States. From that perspective it is possible to understand the implications of the way that conceptions of nature are evident in politics and the implications for challenging those conceptions. In the dissertation I juxtapose traditional interpretations of “American” political thought against alternative interpretations of “nature” in order to illuminate some of these implications.

An “alternative structure” is a heuristic device that identifies a structure of attitude or reference that exists in opposition or in some aspects parallel to a dominant frame of reference. It

² The appropriate label for the culture in question is a matter of some contention. The old-fashioned label is Mexican-American. It is still used but the usage is subject to serious questions. This label suggests that the community is an immigrant one, and serves as a means of silencing the voice of the Hispano as a conquered people. Also, the term “Mexican” carries a pejorative connotation. Other possible identifiers include Chicano, Hispano, Spanish, Latino, or Hispanic. Each of these labels is laden with difficulty. “Chicano” may be the appellation of choice for many in California and Texas, but in New Mexico the term refers to a particular political group and is used colloquially to denote aggressive youths or gang members. “Hispano” is used more or less exclusively to denote the populations of rural northern New Mexico. “Latino” is becoming more popular within academic circles but it suffers from a lack of specificity. The same can be said of “Hispanic.”

I have decided that I will not attempt to determine which term is correct. However, I will follow a few rules. I will use the terms Hispano, *nuevo mexicano*, *tejano*, Chicano and Chicana with fairly specific meanings. “*Nuevo mexicano*” refers to all New Mexican Latinos while “Hispano” relates primarily to those who live in northern New Mexico. “*Tejano/a*” refers to Texan, usually borderland, Latinos. The term “Chicano” applies to the self-identified members of the political movement. “Chicana” is used to denote the feminist element of the movement. I use “Hispanic” and “Latino” interchangeably when discussing the broader range of Spanish heritage people in the U.S. The term “Mexican” refers to present citizens of Mexico and those living in the northern territories of Mexico whose citizenship status changed with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.

can be used to illuminate the margins or characteristics of the dominant frame. Edward Said defines a “structure of attitude and reference” as

[T]he way in which structures of location and geographical reference appear in the cultural languages of literature, history and ethnography, sometimes allusively and sometimes carefully plotted, across several individual works that are not otherwise connected to one another or to an official ideology.

In other words, it is possible to identify an operative cultural conception by finding a common presupposition linking significant cultural products. To accomplish this, “one must connect the structures of a narrative to the ideas, concepts and ideals from which it draws support” (Said 1994, 52).

I will use structures of attitude and reference found in the southwest borderlands Hispano and Chicano/a communities as an alternative source of information about cultural norms around nature. This journey into a culture that is not my own but that cohabits in a territory with me, leads me to an understanding of the boundaries of the traditional conception of nature in “American” political thought. It will also illuminate the political implication for the alternative culture.

Alternative structures are both a literary and an analytical device. One literary example can be found in Shakespeare’s Henry plays, particularly Henry IV-- Part II and Henry V. Henry IV-- Part II is the coming of age story for the young Prince Hal--soon to be Henry V. Henry IV has taken the throne under questionable circumstances and the prince is struggling with the nature and source of an authority that will eventually be embodied in him. Hal travels with a band of outlaws based in Eastcheap as a rebellion against his true father and his future. Falstaff, an alternative authority figure, rules in Eastcheap as the King rules England. Falstaff, a medieval fool figure, is drawn as a contrast against the King and the seriousness of governing. Eastcheap is an alternative structure drawn as a “realm” in opposition to the nominally legitimate kingdom

of Henry IV.³ Eastcheap and England are like two ellipses that share a focal point. Hal is the shared point while the opposing foci are King Henry IV and Falstaff, both authorities over the prince. The two realms mirror one another in that they offer authority figures for Hal. As an alternative structure to the problematic legitimacy of England, Falstaff and Eastcheap give Hal enough distance from the King to develop his own perspective. As the play progresses, Hal returns to the kingdom and to the good graces of the legitimate peerage. As his father dies, he returns to the ellipse of legitimate authority. In Henry V, Hal has become Henry V with his self-confidence and the legitimacy of the realm firmly established. In this play, the alternative structure isn't used. Henry IV is dead, Falstaff is denied and the ellipses are collapsed into a circle with Henry V at its pivot.

In the Henry plays, the alternative structure is a site where questions of legitimate authority can be dramatized and illustrated. The alternative structure is not a viable replacement for the legitimate or dominant paradigm but is constructed to provide a base outside, but not completely outside, the dominant and questioned structure. At the same time, the alternative structure offers a significant perspective. Hal discovers that he does not belong in Eastcheap but he knows more about himself and his authority from his time there.

As an analytical device, alternative structures can also be drawn from the material world. The material for alternative structures is in borderlands. Borderlands can be geographic, political or cultural. The border has a geographic specificity that makes "possible the construction of various kinds of knowledge, all of them in one way or another dependent upon the perceived character and destiny of a particular geography" (Said 1994, 77). They are places where the effect of the dialectical nature of society is apparent; "interstitial" spaces where dominant structures do not adequately explain historical or political reality (Bhabha 1994, 2). From the perspective of the

³ Bolingbroke killed Richard II and usurped the throne to become Henry IV. Hal's journey is as much a re-legitimation of the title "King" as it is the coming to age of a young noble.

center the border is ambiguous and uncertain. It represents the place of Janus: inside, outside and both at once. It provides definition and a sense of security to the inside but is itself replete with strangeness. The border is the place where the frame of reference for the interior is most obvious.

The desert southwest and New Mexico in particular are borders of the U.S. nation. The Mexico/United States national boundary is a border in the context of national politics. It is important because it defines the limits of national sovereignty and patriotic identity. For those who migrate across it the boundary is an inconvenience and operates on their thinking only insofar as they must negotiate or avoid contact with the rules it represents. Within the national border, nationalistic movements and identity politics reflect constant permeation by reference to both history and culture. Actually, Northern New Mexico is also a borderland. Though it has not been an international boundary since 1840, it is still a cultural homeland for the Hispano and so constitutes a cultural demarcation. Non-Anglos living in these areas have suffered colonization and marginalization. They tend to produce a literature of the interstices. In recent literature and scholarship Chicanos have reclaimed their voice and the trope of the borderland from traditional “American” historiography with its assumption of national boundaries..

Like the ellipses of Eastcheap and England the Anglo and Latino structures in the U.S. overlap, but in less defined ways and with less precise denouements. These overlaps are found in on-going institutions, practices and beliefs. The southwest Latino culture penetrates the Anglo culture but also holds itself apart. I have endeavored to straddle the cultures for a time through experience and research in an attempt to construct a perspective on nature in “American” political thought. My interest is not to assimilate Hispano or Chicano literature into the Anglo way of thinking but to challenge the traditions of “American” political thought to include non-Anglo texts.

In the dissertation, I use the Hispano and Chicano culture as an alternative structure against the traditional narrative of “American” political thought. While difficult to label, the

Latino culture of the southwest has maintained a cultural integrity, which is evident in their religious practices, family structures, language usage, social interactions, etc. At the same time, the culture engages with the dominant culture and there are significant points of intersection between them. This reality makes the southwest Latino a good candidate to study as a way of speculating about possible new ways of thinking about nature.

Unlike Blacks, native tribes and immigrants, the history of the Latinos has been one of conquest and absorption. Those who lived on the land at the time of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo became citizens of the United States on the day their land was incorporated into the United States. Theoretically, they have been accorded the same rights and privileges of Anglo citizens. The southwestern Latinos have suffered oppression as an “other,” but it is the oppression of the colonized rather than the enslaved. The history of conquest and the extent to which the rights of citizenship have not been accorded to Latinos in practice forms much of the basis of political resistance to the traditional Anglo narrative.⁴ Resistance also takes the form of an adherence to traditional Latino ways and the conscious development of an ethnic identity in more Anglo terms. To consider these texts as American political thought is to incorporate the image of the United States as a colonizing, dominating force into the discourse of U.S. history and citizenship. This is an expansion of “American” political thought that usually concentrates on defining “American” in terms of autonomous constitutional and cultural practices originally derived from English law which began at the Revolution and have continued to this day through westward expansion, Civil War, industrialization and the push for racial equality.

⁴ Early Chicano writing focuses on the experience as one of “internal colonization” and argues that despite nominal inclusion in the polity, southwestern Latinos were treated like colonial subjects. Irrigation, mining and ranching technologies developed by the Mexicans were appropriated them into the “American” national narrative. At the same time, the culture of the Latino was derided and re-interpreted to suit the needs of the Anglo (Blauner, 1972; Montoya, Fall, 1983; Moore, 1973; Barerra, 1972; Flores, 1973; Rosenbaum, 1981; Weber 1973, Weber, 1991).

I have chosen to concentrate on New Mexico, mostly northern New Mexico, because it is my home. I am familiar with the people and the problems and care deeply about the place. Beyond my personal interest, New Mexico is unique in many ways and offers case studies in the conceptions of nature.

Northern New Mexico is arid. This ecological condition has significant impact on the political and cultural patterns. The dynamic between human decision making processes and the environmental conditions is very apparent, as the success of human communities relies on the reliable provision of water. The problem is not unique to New Mexico. However, land use and water provision are keys to the history of the northern part of the state. The contemporary social and political situation is still centered on land and resource problems. The area has received a great deal of scholarly attention from many different perspectives. A considerable amount of scholarship has been produced in response to recent moves by land developers to use Spanish land and water law to perfect water rights over ground water (Ebright, 1989; Meyer, 1996; Tyler, 1991). Like the Twin Forks dam project discussed earlier, the arguments used in these contemporary cases illustrates the distinct conceptions of nature and the dynamics between these imaginings and day-to-day political practice.

A political fact of life in New Mexico is that the population resists homogenization despite consistent interplay between ethnic groups in the area. In contrast to many of the tribes that inhabited North America in the 17th century, the natives of the southwest have survived the onslaught of the white man. A large number of viable native pueblos and tribal nations exist in the state. The native tribes and pueblos are distinct players in the political theater of the state. However, they are not a single entity and have significant disagreement with one another as well as with both the Hispano and Anglo cultures. While traditional academic categories tend to treat

the tribes and pueblos as anthropological artifacts,⁵ it is a mistake to assume that the natives live in isolation from the mainstream. Though the various tribes have not been able to repel invading Europeans since the rebellion against the Spanish in 1680, they have never given up the desire to affect their own futures in accordance with their own cultural perspectives and experiences. They are active, participating, and often successful members of the whole southwestern social and political scene.

New Mexico is the only state carved out of the Mexican concession in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in which Hispanos have maintained a significant presence in local and state power structures. Also, New Mexico's relative isolation from the centers of power and large scale migration has allowed for a continuation of traditional Hispano life in rural areas. In short, despite the best attempts to co-opt them into the mainstream tradition of "nation-ness" and invented traditions, cultural traditions in New Mexico have remained heterogeneous. My concern in this work is the Hispano, Chicano and Chicana. I will not discuss the native populations. Their stories are being told in other places. What follows is a description of significant conceptions in the picture of a mestizo culture attempting to negotiate a politics of hybridity.

My sources are the material and legal history of the Hispano southwest and some of its literature. Cultural conceptions are made manifest in actions, in social constructs like the law and in art. The presumptions of "good" and "obligation" made in legal codifications reflect the authoritative collective understanding of the human relationship to nature both cosmologically and politically. Law makes assumptions about what is within the capacity of the human being to legislate and what is not. Hence, law contains presumptions about the appropriate relationships between human beings and ways to maintain that relationship. Resistance to the law often reflects alternative conceptions.

⁵ There is an old adage in New Mexico: The typical Navajo family consists of Father, Mother, two children and an anthropologist.

Artistic representations can be used as cultural signifiers insofar as they can be taken to represent some common understanding. In particular, literary metaphors must be subject to interpretation by readers. Novels and poetry thus provide illustrations of the concrete effect of cultural conceptions. Characters are drawn with recognizable cultural characteristics. Plots are often derived from particular events and issues of interest. The action of a story can approximate either day-to-day life or an idealization. In either case the novelist is bound by the need to create meaningful metaphor but is excused from the rigor of historical “fact.” In many cases, stories are actually able to present clearer pictures of the often silent undercurrents in a culture than social science analyses.

Literature is a good place to find the ethic of resistance that exists in any repressed culture. Stories can be printed or told when access to more direct political action is denied. Reminders of the “lost culture,” pointers to new alternatives, oppressive scenarios and remedies are described in stories. Narratives appeal to all ranks of the culture so they disseminate ideas with a force beyond that of any analytic work.

For the subject of this dissertation in particular, literature has often been the best source material. The subject of “nature” does not occur in the academic literature about or by Latinos. As an academic field, Chicano Studies concentrates more on the social and political aspects of life than on the philosophical aspects. Much of the work on the natural history of the southwest has been done by Anglos. To find the conception of nature at play in the southwestern Latino culture, I had to look beneath the actions, traditions and metaphors that operated within the culture.

Though I have used analytical sources, commentaries and histories literary sources turned out to be the most informative and accessible sources. If my choice of authors may reflect a partial cross section of thought in Latino culture, I have emphasized *nuevo mexicano* writers not because they are statistically representative of opinion in a particular culture but rather because they express individual ideas and concept of nature offering resistance to the traditional

“American” approach. But my choice is nevertheless not idiosyncratic: all my authors are well know and well respected in their academic fields or in the culture about which they write.

Sabine Ulibarri writes of an existential search for soul that he finds in a connection between the mountains and desert, his family, their traditions and history. While I can certainly understand the relationship to the landscape, I find that his connection to the traditional agrarian “Spanish” lifestyle of Northern New Mexico to be at odds with my own liberal, individualistic education. However, his descriptions of the life in that area, however romanticized, are also consistent with my own observations of and conversations with residents of that area.

I chose to use the work of Rudolfo Anaya because it illustrates the rural/town/city conflicts that beset all southwestern communities. Anaya addresses a typical problem from the aspect of a culture in crisis and so offered an alternative set of stories to the Anglo approaches to similar scenarios. He is considered one of the fathers of Chicano literature. He received the first literary prize issued by Quinto del Sol Press and helped to found Aztlán: The Journal of Chicano Literature.

The choice of Gloria Anzaldúa is perhaps problematic. She is not *nuevo mexicana* but *tejana*. Nonetheless, I believed that she provides an interesting complement to the traditional “American” conception of “nature” as a site of resistance. She, like Thoreau, writes the type of criticism that projects a universal normative position with the author as its prophet. The universality of Anzaldúa’s critique allowed me to overlook the lack of geographic specificity. I chose to counter Thoreau with Anzaldúa as both authors claim to speak from an authority that transcends the contemporary social authority. They also are both recognized by others as good examples of their kind of critical thinking. Also, Anzaldúa presents a radical critique of Anglo thought and practice on many levels beyond that of Thoreau. There are few other authors who find themselves on so many margins of the social order. Her willingness to use her marginality as a literary metaphor to criticize an oppressive world serves as a critique of Anglo thought in its totality.

The following discussion of Chicano/Hispano conceptions of nature in New Mexico is intended to counteract the traditional conceptions of nature which are used to support an ideological construction of national “American” identity. These illustrations will subvert the idea of a “pure” pre-Anglo nature with corresponding “native” simplicity that is posited as an “other” in anti-urban, anti-capital pastoral criticism. The point of this is not to destroy the value of environmental and rural critiques of “American” political economy but to illustrate some complexities. These illustrations will also subvert the racial stereotypes which ideological formations of national identity require. Instead, I will present the conceptions which the Hispano/Chicano use for themselves and develop the relationship between an conception of nature and a concept of community. Lastly, I hope to illustrate the workability of a kind of politics of negotiation, with nature and with others.

Chapter Summary

The dissertation focuses on the political implications of conceptions of nature. I show three implications of nature: as part of myths of origin in the national narrative, as a part of the epistemological framework that objectifies nature, and as a site of resistance. I will contrast ideas of the two cultures that share the geographical space of the southwestern United States and particularly of New Mexico as they relate to these three themes. The effect of the composition is to highlight the place of a conception of nature in the frames of reference and to illuminate the implications of re-formulating that conception.

The dissertation is in the form of a narrative rather than analytic exposition. It contains references to academic work in political science, anthropology, and literary criticism. It also contains references to actual political struggles between Anglo and Hispano/Chicano/a interests around natural resources and the Anglo use of “nature.” My goal is to criticize the traditional study of “American political thought” in both style and content. Rather than concentrate merely on an analysis of the established traditions, I used the stuff of everyday life to expose the

operative and contested realities of political thought as it is practiced. While Anglo tradition is placed first in the narrative, I chose those aspects of the tradition that contrasted with the alternative visions that I observed in New Mexico.

Chapter 2 illustrates that a conception of nature as separate from human beings is operative in modern culture and has implications for the development of the narrative of the nation. The national narrative incorporates separateness from nature that supports an image of sameness. This image does not accommodate difference and forces a conformity that denies difference or impels a frustrated, reactionary conservatism. Contrasted against this in Chapter 3 is a discussion of an alternative development identity and an alternative conception of political membership that suggests inclusive, negotiated models of membership.

Chapter 4 illustrates the conception of nature in traditional “American” thought as it relates to property and privacy and the importance of those places as part of the framework of liberal freedom. I have set this against an alternative sense of place, found in northern New Mexico, that authorizes a strong sense of communal sharing in Chapter 5. Both Anglo and Hispano people cast property lines across the earth in an attempt to mark a material geographic boundary to correspond with a political identity. However, there are different conceptions of ownership and possession at work within those boundaries and the political communities which ensue are markedly different.

Chapters 6 and 7 take a different turn. Anglo political thought does contain a strain of introspective criticism emanating from “nature writing.” In Chapter 6, I illustrate the conception of “nature” as a pastoral, apolitical space primarily through a discussion of Henry Thoreau. The chapter on Thoreau, like Thoreau’s work, stands as an alternative to traditional “American” political economy. However, Thoreau’s criticism does not cope with the issues of whiteness and maleness that are the acute criticism of our culture today. I found it necessary to supplement the criticism of Thoreau with an alternative vision of nature focused on the human body rather than an exterior surrounding. The Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa uses the human

body as her site of nature and in the process conjoins the subjugation of women, mestizos and the environment into one powerful and acutely critical metaphor. Thoreau still stands as perhaps the most radical critique of traditional “American” political economy from within the Anglo community. However, Anzaldúa’s work is broader in its critique of American society as it targets not only Anglo culture but also the tradition of Spanish colonialism and patriarchy in Latino culture.

The Final Turn

If the dissertation represents a journey into an alternative structure like Henry’s into Eastcheap, then the conclusion should include some discussion of the lessons learned. In the end I find the most problematic aspects of the conception of nature in traditional “American” political thought are (1) the reliance on ideological sameness that ignores real, material difference; (2) the commodification of nature and (3) the exclusion of human naturalness from the political debate.

These aspects of the ideological framework create blindness to alternatives, to an assumption of racial superiority, as well as the development and application of inappropriate environmental decisions. These problems characterize an inability of the Anglo-American political conceptions to protect “free individuals.” That is, “American” political thought cannot operate in accordance with its own terms.

These preconceptions limit the language available in debates of resource allocation. The market ignores ecological concerns while ecology, as a science, claims objectivity free from politics. The notion of “life on earth” or “life with earth” does not have a legitimate place in the universe of Anglo political discourse.

Third, discussions about the care of human naturalness are put outside the political. While there is no question that the natural behavior of human beings touches politics, it is nevertheless excluded from the political debate. The idea of human nature useful to Anglo-American thought is essentially *homo economicus*. The purveyors of this idea, at least originally,

knew it was an artifice. They therefore had to protect it from serious debate by putting other ideas of human nature out of bounds.

I cannot generate simple solutions or even public policy suggestions to resolve the foregoing issues. However, I think that the first objective must be to turn away from the impulse to constrict the meaning of "American." We must permeate the cultural lines drawn in the sand. If we do away with the need for lines on the earth and lines around our selves we can open language to ideas of difference.

CHAPTER 2

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP: TRADITIONAL ANGLO-AMERICAN

The concept of nature in traditional Anglo-American political thought as an “other” can be traced through the influence of Puritan Protestantism, modern science and Enlightenment political philosophy. This conception of nature has developed through a history of colonial domination over land and peoples into part of a common imagined “nation-ness.”

Puritan Words: Conscience, Love, Wilderness

The Puritan attitude toward nature implies both fear and contempt for it. In effect, the Puritan mission devalues nature and denatures humanity. The Puritan heritage in Anglo-American political thought contributes to the notion of an “American Way” that includes this contempt.

The Meaning of the Words

The devaluation of nature that occurs in Puritan thought is a development of Christian theology which supposes an other-worldly deity. The natural world was a gift from God to Adam. Nature, internal to the human being or external to it, was a source of evil and temptation to sin (Nash 1982, 36). In Puritan theology, when Adam broke the original covenant with God he fell out of grace and into disgrace in nature. Adam’s sin was immutable. Sin could not be redeemed through good works under any condition but God made a second covenant with Abraham in which grace was offered to certain chosen individuals. The choices could not be determined but when God called, the calling could not be denied. Despite the possibilities of redemption, the human being was destined to struggle against his sinful nature in pursuit of the grace of God. The natural world is conceived as a site full of evil and a source of temptation.

In Europe, the original Christian Church evolved into the less rigorous theological and institutional structure of the Roman Church. Protestants during the Reformation reacted against corruption in the Roman Church and rejected the concepts of good works and penance. The Puritans rejected the authority of the institutional Church and replaced it with the authority of the Scriptures. They based the service of their worship on the definition of the Word of the Bible. They concentrated on definition and exegesis to establish the authoritative meaning of significant words (Howard 1986, 91). Day to day piety meant the resistance of natural behavior in favor of a disciplined attendance on the Word of God. The Protestant Movement in Europe suffered a split over the tenet of predestination and the conservative Puritans ultimately found their way to the New World in an effort to establish the perfect community (Bremer 1994, 3-5; Howard 1986, 90; Winthrop 1826, original 1645).

The perfect community of the Puritans would be bound by the Covenant with God. The Covenant would be understood through exegetical analysis of the Word of the Scripture. Puritans used a logical system developed by the French theologian Rameau that structured exegesis in terms of “cause and effect; subject and adjunct; primarily relationships in kind and resemblance in quality and quantity.” Definitions were central to this kind of reasoning. Ramean logic also presumed that the discovery of truth preceded its exposition and that logic served to affirm it rather than to create a demonstrative proof (Howard 1986, 119).

Definition and exegesis constituted the method for finding the proper meaning of the Word of God and living within it. The Ramean method included a process of drawing dichotomies in order to reach the true meaning of words. Potential meanings were measured and analyzed and choices made in accordance with the already discovered truth. Excluded from a sanctified meaning, rejected definitions took on an evil character. The process of including and excluding by definition allowed Puritans to create boundaries between that which belonged in the community of saints and that which did not. The boundaries carried sacred authority and created a correspondence between Reason and an absolute Good.

The Protestant revolution in Europe arose during the time of political upheaval that resulted in the separation of politics from the household; the appearance of formally free men; the rational, amoral, pragmatic consideration of political methods and the rise of large scale political units (Walzer 1965, 12-15). These developments incited a politics of voluntary association that informed both Puritanism and secular political theory. Voluntary associations require like-mindedness and the Puritans offered one version of a right mind. It was a version that emphasized the continuity between method and purpose. Over time, the Protestant saints developed a political theory that ultimately conjoined the ideas of saintliness with citizenry.

What Calvinists said of the saint, other men would later say of the citizen: the same sense of civic virtue, of discipline and duty, lies behind the two names. Saint and citizen together suggest a new integration of private men (or rather of *chosen* groups of private men, of proven holiness and virtue) into the political order, an integration based upon a novel view of politics as a kind of conscientious and continuous labor (Walzer 1965, 2).

The processes of self and citizen construction were seen to be contiguous as the rules which governed each were the same (Bercovitch 1975, 4-5). Two important terms to the Puritan were “conscience” and love.” These two terms explain the earthly ties between saints by using similes between social relationships and the relationship between God and Man.

Conscience and Love

The concept that served to govern the Puritan mind was “conscience.” The conscience was that part of the mind that exhibited regulated moderate behavior. Success in any endeavor was taken as a sign of God’s approval; as such outward signs were considered the manifestation of inward grace. Exegetical explanations were derived using the Ramean system of dichotomous contrasts to support the idea of conscience (Howard 1986, 104-109, 119). The method of logic and the purpose of the Word gave the Puritan conscience an order with which to structure his own individual passions.

Conscience was an individual agency but the existence of conscience was a necessary prerequisite to “love.” Love was the tie that bound saints together. According to John Winthrop,

saintly love was a mirror of the concept of the love of God. “Love,” says Winthrop, “is the bond of perfection (Col. 3:14). First it is a bond, or ligament. Secondly, it makes the work perfect. There is no body but consists of parts and that which knits these parts together gives the body its perfection...” (Winthrop 1929, original 1630).¹ The law of the state of grace commands that men pursue this love both in relation to God and in relation to men.

Winthrop further argues that the body cannot be perfect if it is not complete. The love of God requires an acceptance of Christ. Only those who know Christ may know love. Only those who know Christ can be considered as “neighbors” who can share in the body of the covenant (Winthrop 1929, original 1630). “Love” is the operative element between men. At the same time it draws a boundary of inclusion around the members of the community. Only true believers could be true members. Backsliding and heresy could not be tolerated. Being a believer became a condition of political membership.

To the Puritan, the intrusion of nature on the human mind was the intractable problem caused by the fall of Adam. The wildness of natural passion could be curtailed only by discipline applied through the activity of the mind, that is, through education and subjugation to authority (Todd 1987, 19). Puritans ruled sexual relations with strict marital laws. Sexual desire was further relieved by an erotic element in the religious language. The potential evils of the natural passions were disciplined by turning love to the service of God.

The Puritan gave voice to religious ecstasy by creating a metaphor between the love of man to God; man to woman; mother to child. Christ was seen as the “soul’s spouse in the ‘little family’ structure.” God was the patriarchal authority while humanity served as the vessel of the Word. Using the metaphor of the “little family,” the Puritan created a correspondence between the Christian virtues as the Saints understood them and “feminine” virtues. Women were seen as the elect believers and the Covenant provided an ideal spousal relationship for women to emulate.

¹ I have used modernized spellings where appropriate.

As humanity's duty was to submit to God, then it was the duty of the saintly woman to submit to male authority. In turn, the husband was to respond with protection and affection. A similar dynamic existed between women and their children (Bremer 1994, 81).

The "little family" metaphor structured the pattern of domestic, political and theological relationships (Bremer 1994, 29). Through it the Puritan could moderate his natural passions and direct his energy to the good of the community. Social and religious life were combined and explained with one consistently applied metaphor. The well-ordered and disciplined family contributed to a peaceful, saintly community.

The Puritans in America were in a position to create political institutions that were in accordance with their theology. While most Puritan ministers did not actively govern the colony they were essential advisors to the magistrates. Puritan rules were written into the legal code and became part of the political fabric of the colony and its successors. Despite the relatively small number of saints in the colony, the early conscience of New England represented Puritan ideals. The legacy of the Puritan encourages the co-mingling of self and citizen creation that supports the traditional notion of American identity and finds resonance in the idea of "nation-ness."

The Wilderness

"Conscience" and "love" were defined terms for the Puritan and governed their life inside the boundary of the community. Everything excluded from the definition and the community was "wilderness." "Wilderness" was not a defined term as much as the place outside definition. The "wilderness" marked the negative boundary of the community.

The Puritans in Massachusetts turned their revolutionary spirit into a reactionary conservatism in the new world (Howard 1986, 88). In an attempt to build a pure city they drew firm boundaries against evil. Nature was a source of evil. In Massachusetts, nature was signified by the wilderness. The wilderness represented lack of order, cultivation, discipline and beauty. It was not a place where well-regulated minds could reach an understanding of the Word of God

(Edwards 1935, 1962, 351). The wilderness became a visible as well as metaphoric manifestation of temptation. It was the chaotic representation of Adam's fall into disgrace; the Puritan community was built against it.

Conscience, love, and the wilderness are artifacts of Puritan thinking that imply a conception of nature as contemptible. In the process of denaturing humanity Puritan thinking also devalues nature.

Denaturing Humanity

The Puritan turned against the wilderness of New England and against the wilderness of his own soul. He disciplined his reason by the rule of Ramean logic, his erotic passion by service to God. The aspects of being human that were "natural" were subjugated to those human virtues of the mind. The effect was to create a dichotomy between the "natural" parts and the "human" parts of the human soul and cast the "natural" in the part of "other." Included in the category "other" were nature as a place and the humans who lived outside the Puritan definitions of the state of grace.

The Puritans recognized both their method and product of their style of discipline over natural passions as divinely inspired. They were also in the habit of drawing distinctions between those who were not of similar mind outside the community and the grace of God. By using logical analysis, the Puritans disassociated themselves from other humans and created a man-made distinction in the natural category "human being" that took them, ideologically, one step further out of nature.

One effect of their use of language as a source of authority was to create a sense of superiority in certain kinds of humans. "Outside" was the other-ness of the wilderness and its untamed naturalness. Those who inhabited the outside were creatures who did not discipline themselves or heed the Word of God. They were "others," too. These natural creatures represented part of humanity disowned by Puritan theology. In the application of these

judgments, the Puritan projects a category of “man” separate, with godly approbation, from the rest of humanity. In creating a category of denatured humans the Puritans also created a category of “other” that included nature and many other human beings. They gave themselves a cosmological sense of the superiority for the white mission in the new world.

The Secularized Mission: Science and Enlightenment Liberalism

Another primary source for the U.S. national narrative is found in classical Liberalism of the eighteenth century. From the contemporary perspective, Puritanism and Liberalism seem to be at odds with one another. However, it is not difficult to see their common ground. Both the religious idealism of the Puritan and the political idealism of the liberal theorists, like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, begin with a belief in the individual human mind as an independent agent. Both paths believed that the application of a disciplined method was the means to knowledge. The Puritan looked for the grace of God through the exegesis of the Word while the liberal looked for certainty through experience and the application of scientific method. Both placed nature firmly under the control of human discipline. For the Puritan, wildness was subjected to rule. For the Liberal, human nature was organized by right reason. Both Puritans and Liberals understood desire to be ordered through the “natural” institution of family. Both placed humanity and the human ability to reason as superior to any natural aspect of their being and decried the value of things unexplained or magical. To both the Puritan and the Liberal, belonging to a community was a matter of contract rather than a matter of birth or other fated condition. However, Liberalism provides a secular view of knowledge and authority that plays to a broader national audience. Classical Liberalism takes epistemological cues from Bacon’s views of scientific method and Newton’s mechanics.

Science

In developing new theories about political institutions appropriate for independent individuals, classical liberals applied the lessons of Bacon and Newton and created new metaphors for politics.

The Newtonian world view developed both a systematic model of behavior for nature (mechanics) and a mode of generating understanding about nature (scientific method). The primary characteristics of this world view were determinism and objectivity. The natural world was seen as a fixed place with set processes that could be discovered using proper examining techniques. The scientist considered himself an observer of the process and, as such, maintained an objective distance from nature. The “truth” of scientific method depended on a belief that experience was the best proof. Experiments were controlled experiences and scientific method argued that truth, insofar as we can know it, ensued from replicating experiential results. The mechanistic model argued that the world was the effect of a systematic conglomeration of things and processes. The cause of every effect could be determined by an analysis, that is by separating the totality into elements. To understand totality, the scientist needed to understand how the parts worked together. Both causes and effects could be established. Scientific logic and method gave eighteenth century thinkers insight on nature as a utility:

The hope that science would one day allow human beings to control the natural world made them much more attentive to the relation between man and his environment, and they came to view knowledge not as a form of disinterested contemplation, but as a tool in the human production effort, directed at the comfort and convenience of life (Rapaczynski 1987, 7).

Like the Puritans, the logical problem for classical theorists like Hobbes and Locke “was not merely to find such solutions, but also to *justify* them, that is, to situate them within the context of a broader system of beliefs to which their contemporaries (or at least the more educated and open-minded among them) could subscribe” (Rapaczynski 1987, 7). If the scientist can be objective about material nature in order to understand environmental phenomena, then other people of reason can stand apart from fate or God to understand the process of human life,

including governing. Liberal theorists used Newtonian mechanics and scientific method as a means to justify governmental systems in a polity of educated reasoners.

To define a scientific study of society the liberal theorists had to define human nature or the human in nature. They used a heuristic “state of nature” and derived from that state the essence of civilized man. Every such state-of-nature theory depended on the ability of the human mind to overcome its imagined natural condition. The natural condition was replaced by a superior set of human-contrived institutions. To Locke, human nature would lead any reasonable self-interested individual to consent to join a like-minded community. Hobbes believed that fear was the greater motivator. However, both agreed that human community transmuted the state of nature into a sophisticated human-governed state of a certain epistemological structure and the political institutions that followed therefrom. These institutions were constructed with a realist’s eye: they focused on the actual behavior of men as determined by the epistemological approach rather than enforcement of ideals.

In Liberal theory, governments would not be interested in proscribing the moral character of its citizens. The limited nature of liberal institutional arrangements allowed for toleration in private affairs including religious affairs. However, the successful operation of a set of liberal institutions relied on a level of trust between men such that participants in a social contract could believe that all other participants would act in good faith. A belief in the good faith of others depends upon an acceptance of the morality of others. Locke argues that religion is the institution for teaching morality and anyone who did not hold to a religion could not be trusted. Locke also argues that the precepts of certain religions are too dangerous to civil society to be allowed. He includes Roman Catholicism in this category, as it gives political authority to the Pope who functions as a “foreign monarch” (Locke 1983, original 1689, 50-51).

However, classical liberal theory fails to provide an adequate source of commonality among members of a large scale polity. Jefferson foresaw the difficulty and posited the virtuous “yeoman farmer” as the appropriate model citizen of the new nation. The farmer would find

order through agreement on private labor and public markets. Puritans used the concept of love; but love only works on a small scale. The contemporary nation is urban, capitalistic and built on a grand scale. The yeoman farmer is long gone, even as a myth. We have neither a commonality forged by common labor or common values. What then defines us as a nation?

Nation-ness

Theories advanced to explain the cohesion of the U.S. as a polity rely on a presumption of the general similarity in overriding values. That is, they assume that a single definition of “American” exists. This assumption reflects what Benedict Anderson has called “nation-ness”

(4). Anderson argues that ideology does not hold nations together. Rather, large scale nations are held together by a “common imagination:”

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion...it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship (7).

The modern nation succeeds as a political entity because its citizens believe in it. In other words, there may not be a common definition of “American” but there is a belief among most Anglo-Americans that such a definition not only exists but is operative. “Nation-ness” is a kind of faith secured by a presumption of sameness.

The terms of the common imagination are engendered by the complex dynamics among productive economic relations; a standardization of language disseminated through a popularly accessible media and the propagation of a national narrative (Anderson 1991, 42-43, 205).

Max Weber identified the importance of this Puritan work ethic in the development of capitalism (Weber 1958, 27). Weber’s analysis delineates an historical process that combines the ascetic values of the Puritan with the secular values of money-making. Martin Diamond posits the relationship between asceticism and bourgeois values as “acquisitiveness” and argues that it is the American Way (39).

Acquisitiveness, Diamond argues, is not greed. Greed emphasizes “having” while acquisitiveness is focused on “getting.” Getting is the product of labor on material resources.

The need to work and earn what one can get teaches a moral lesson. It teaches:

moderation to the desiring passions from which it derives, because to acquire is not primarily to have and to hold but to get and to earn, and moreover, to earn justly, at least to the extent that the acquisition must be the fruit of ones' own exertions or qualities. This requires the acquisitive man to cultivate certain excellences, minimal ones perhaps from the classical perspective, but excellences nonetheless, as means to achieve his ends. He wants enlargement and increase and these require of him at least venturesomeness, and hard work and the ability to still his immediate passions so as to allow time for the ripening of his acquisitive plans and measures, In short, acquisitive man, unlike avaricious man, is likely to have what we call the bourgeois virtues (64).

The bourgeois virtues that Diamond identifies as the American *ethos* reflect the Puritan notion that success is a sign of grace but ostentation is a sin. The moral of acquisitiveness reinforces the Puritan values of moderation and discipline while supporting the capitalistic economic system. By espousing these values as the “American Way” Diamond generalizes the Puritan experience as a broadly applicable part of the national narrative.

In the process of nation-building, the use of single shared vernaculars is a common denominator that cuts across bloodlines and wealth. As the material representation of the polity became geographic rather than personal, language became the tie that bound. Part of the presumption of the similarity of citizens became the notion that, whatever their heritage or class, everyone spoke the same language. The success of the nation and the reified authority of language went hand in hand (Anderson 1991, 82ff).

The national model requires a reification of not only of the nation's vernacular but also its history. Anderson says that the narratives of nations are “set in homogeneous empty time. Hence their frame is historical and their setting sociological” (205). That is, in the language of the nation “history” shifted from an activity or a representation of activity to a set of descriptive stories about origination and justification, i.e., the grand narrative of the nation. “History” became a narrative to justify or explain the frame of reference for the social order. This narrative

history grounded the principles of the nation at an originary point in time and generated a formal set of referents as it told the tale of nations conceived in terms of necessity, right and justice against corruption and sometimes evil in a story of mythical and religious proportion. "History" also told the story of daily lives spent working out this fixed, formal set of ideological principles. It describes the rationale of the "good" which authorizes the shared national imagination. Continuity of history was a requisite companion belief to the transparency and authority of language. The national narrative of history becomes the framework for the collective memory that is necessary for the imagined community.

Common language and common history work together to frame the consciousness of the citizen. Common language serves to define the terms of interpretation for everyday experience while the common history offers a set of corporate values. These two work with political support of the economic relations of capitalism which defines a division of labor and capital within the society. The constellation of modes of mediation, models of ethics and a structure for daily activity constitutes a frame of reference for the unreflective citizen within the nation.

The common imagination in the national state has proven to be remarkably elastic. Leaving aside the limitations of race for the moment, the nation has managed to absorb strangers as long as the strangers have been willing to accept the common imagination. Such acceptance is manifest in ideologies and patriotic fervor. In return, the society adopts some signifier of the stranger's culture into the national narrative, pretending that it had always been there. Eric Hobsbawm calls this the "invention of tradition." An invented tradition is

a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past (1).

The recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and singing the National Anthem, celebrating St. Patrick's Day, Columbus Day and Martin Luther King's Birthday are examples of invented traditions. These acts become an articulation of a collective "memory" or identification with others that supports the imagined community.

The invented tradition is a way to manipulate a static definition of “American” in the face of change. As a technique, it maintains the authority of the language and the illusion of collective permanent meaning while avoiding a structural political crisis. The inclusion of an immigrant or ethnic culture into the invented tradition gives the illusion of equal opportunity. This does not necessarily translate into a practice of social or political equality. Nonetheless the invented tradition serves to incorporate new members into the definition of “American.” Those who buy the invented tradition show a willingness to merge into the sameness. Those who do not buy it are by definition “outsiders.”

It is possible to consider the public marketing of technological marvels like Hoover Dam as invention of a tradition. The dam represents a technological fix to a problem of nature. However, it is not merely a piece of technology. It represents the ability of the white man to make “progress” by conquering the land (see Slotkin 1973; Worster 1994). There is an exhibition hall at Hoover Dam. Millions of people stop to see it and pay homage to the nation that conceived and manufactured a large scale re-incarnation of the desert as a verdant homeland or playground.

The conceptions of nature as inferior or merely utilitarian are fundamental parts of the national narrative informing the U.S. “imagined community.” This conception is built into the origination stories of Puritanism and Liberalism. We valorize these conceptions with traditional artifacts like Hoover Dam. It is possible to say that a resistance to these concepts of nature can be seen as unpatriotic. An attempt to re-write the conceptions of nature results in more than different public policy but also in a re-vision of the conjunction between self and citizen that marks traditional Anglo-American political theory.

Pluralism and Toleration

The concepts of nation-ness and the common imagination seem to be contradicted in Anglo-American political thought by notions of toleration and pluralism. It is true that the ability

to allow differences of political opinion has been a cornerstone of traditional Anglo-American political thought. Following Locke's theory, the government exists to judge disputes between men but not to enforce generalized moral codes for individuals. In the U.S. the Framers left highly divisive issues outside of the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. Madison argued in Federalist #10 that preventing debates between factions would be an infraction on liberty but that debates could be controlled by keeping the sides of the arguments separate and factionalized. By corralling hot issues like slavery within state jurisdictions the central authority could avoid a public showdown over unresolvable issues that would destroy the legislative machinery of the government. The Federal Government could define a space where reasonable men could ultimately coalesce into a unified deliberative body. Jefferson exemplified this in his First Inaugural Address.

Let us, then, fellow citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself are but dreary things...every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all republicans--we are all Federalists (Peterson 1985, 292).

Jefferson's address goes on to suggest that differences of principle will bring down the government. While toleration is allowed outside the frame of political reference, within the defined political arenas and particularly on a large scale, similarity was essential.

Jefferson's vision of unified body was never realized. It was impossible to keep Congress focused on its limited function of security from external invasion and easing economic relations between states. The question of introducing new states into the Union brought slavery back into Congressional debates with unquenchable furor. Madison proved correct in his belief that this would destroy the Union, as slavery was ultimately ended with the Civil War. The Civil War amendments (13th, 14th and 15th) to the U.S. Constitutions presaged the end of the Constitutionally limited role of the Federal Government vis-à-vis state jurisdictions. Since the middle of the nineteenth century the Federal Government has increased its influence over individual interests. As the national influence has stretched, so has the need to find sameness.

More and more characteristics of individuals must fit within the boundary which results in a more abstract but also more rigid definition.

Theoretically, issues of difference in the U.S. are handled through the concept of pluralism. Pluralism copes with differences by offering a broad range of potential members access to the political system, either as an official or as a voter. At the same time, pluralism projects a measurement for results. By applying the principle of majority rule with minority rights, broad scale voting privileges and winner-take-all elections are seen effectively to represent the public interest. To borrow the common metaphor, pluralism argues that the playing field is level for those who play by the rules. One of the rules is the purchase of the national narrative; the appearance of sameness in reference to political matters and a willingness to put matters of differing principle aside.

However, pluralism breaks down in the course of localized experience. It is furthermore impossible to keep all significant differences away from the processes of the national government. This is increasingly true as the Federal Government involves itself in many issues once reserved strictly to state jurisdictions. Beyond that, the image of sameness is becoming less acceptable as large conglomerations of people are beginning to identify themselves in terms that do not conform to the rules of the level playing field. Reducing their politics to voting or electoral participation is no longer sufficient.

In short, the exclusivity of the national narrative is belied by diversity and a growing number of diversity claims. Various groups seek recognition or reformation within the political system. The narrative of nation-ness cannot cope with a multiplicity of origins, histories, ethical systems or languages. Reactionary conservatism has appeared with attempts to more rigorously define "American" values in such a way as to exclude the multiplicity of voices. The political system is once again rife with unresolvable issues.

CHAPTER 3

CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP: HISPANO AND CHICANO

Just as for the Anglo tradition, a conception of nature can be found embedded in the Hispano tradition of northern New Mexico and Chicano politics. Both exhibit a conception of nature as a shared space where individuals are integrated into a place that includes the natural environment and the community. The Hispano is rural and represents an identity formed through a dialectic with nature and soul. The Chicano is more urban oriented and illustrates the importance of an abstract connection to the land in the maintenance of an urban community. Chicanos also construct theories that include more expansive concepts of membership. Hispano and Chicano culture reflects values established in a tradition different from the Anglo frame of reference. The interpenetration of Anglo and Hispano culture in New Mexico creates an opportunity to view them as alternative structures.

Hispano Nature

In rural Northern New Mexico, the Hispano community structure has remained relatively isolated and therefore fairly representative of the traditional Hispano way of life in this area. One of the small towns in the area, Tierra Amarilla, lies in what had been the far north borderland of Spanish *Nuevo Mexico*. Even in the days of Spanish colonialism, this area was isolated by distance and in importance from the centers of power. A rural ranching and subsistence farming community originally organized on a colonial land grant, Tierra Amarilla, has long been accustomed to relative independence with only minimal, often nominal, allegiance to a distant political authority. It also has a history of incidental uprisings when that distant authority has made its presence too heavily felt in the district. Once the site of a tax revolt against the Spanish imperial government, Tierra Amarilla was also the focus of one of the few rural protests during

the Chicano movement of the 1960's. One literary representation of this way is the poet and storyteller Sabine Ulibarri who was born in Abiquiu and raised in Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico, small communities in the foothills north and west of Santa Fe.

Sabine Ulibarri can be read as part of a borderland tradition. His concern lies with the deterioration of the nobility of his rural-identified culture as it becomes urbanized and mobilized. His writing serves as a reminder to the *nuevo mexicano* of the heritage and values of the rural Hispano. From his writing we see what is meant by the Hispano integration of soul and land as well as the belief in the nobility of the rural Hispano community tied to that land (Herrera-Sobek 1995, 59f).

Ulibarri began to publish in the 1960's. His early work reflects an existential search for identity and, with the exception of the story *Hombre sin nombre* (Man Without a Name), consists of poetry. In this body of work, Ulibarri represents the nobility of the soul of *nuevo mexicano* or Hispano. He notes that the Hispano "is a tragic soul fighting to overcome itself" (Ulibarri 1970, I-3). The overcoming occurs with a recognition of belonging to both a place and a community across a wide expanse of time. His soul is shared among the members of the community. By recognizing the limits of individuality and humanity the journeying man understands of his place and purpose.

Finding One's Place: Connecting Earth and Sky

Ulibarri's poem *Soy* (I Am) is self-reflective piece that represents a consciousness of the connection between soul and nature.

Soy

*La nube entera
no cabe en el cielo.
Rueda a la tierra
e inunda el suelo.*

Entra en los ojos

*e invade la vena.
Abre los poros
y se hace conciencia.*

*Nube mía fuera,
mi nube dentro,
vida gris interna,
y en el mundo, sueño*

The first stanza reads: "The entire cloud does not fit in the sky. It rolls to earth and floods the ground." In this stanza, Ulibarri uses as metaphor the summer thunderstorms in the dry mountain environment of Tierra Amarilla. Even in the mountains of New Mexico, a storm often can be watched from the first cloud development to final dissipation. It is possible to see the rain coming, that is, if there is any rain. It is possible to see the precipitation develop and fall to the ground in distant clouds. A black shadow begins to extend slowly from the cloud toward the ground. If the air is too dry, the moisture evaporates and the shadow stops before it reaches the ground. The meteorologists call this "virga."

In the desert, virga is a continual sign of the tragic life. If the cloud is very full, then the rain not only reaches the ground, but inundates it. If one is in the proximity of a storm when it breaks, the fullness of the cloud comes to earth in sight and sound as well as in rain. Rain brings the water supply and water is life in the desert. The human mind is overwhelmed by the onslaught of life.

"It gets into the eye and invades the vein. It opens the pores and becomes consciousness." The narrator's proximity to the storm is physical and psychological. He is getting wet. In the desert water, like blood, is life. The tragedy of virga is overcome momentarily and the man is full of life and joy. Surfeit of feeling displaces rational control of the mind and upsets it. On a universal level, the inarticulate stuff from the sky cuts through the skin of the human being. He becomes part of the earth and the earth becomes conscious through the mediation of his human body. The invisible "I" in Ulibarri's poem is the universal soul.

However, the mediation is not between man and God but between the man's consciousness and the earth.

"My cloud outside, my cloud inside. My gray interior, and in the world, dreams." This passage illustrates the existential errand that marks Ulibarrí's early poetry. The human soul is like a thundercloud. This is more than metaphor, however: it represents a world view that encapsulates human experience and human identity within a context of "nature." The narrator appears with a soul that is marked by the gray fullness of nature that must be precipitated, i.e., written. He recognizes the continuity of himself with the earth's other noisemakers even if this understanding can only be a dream.

As a representative of his culture, Ulibarrí exhibits the perspective of the Hispano as a medium between the elements of nature. "Soy" is contained in a volume titled *Al cielo se sube a pie* (One Reaches the Sky on Foot). Title and poem express the human continuity with nature as well as the notion of the journey needed to achieve recognition of one's place in the cosmos. The narrator in this collection of poems and in Ulibarrí's other volume of poetry *Amor y Ecuador* seeks a connection between high and low, between heaven and earth, between passion and thought. Understanding the connection is necessary to his sense of being because it is intuitively obvious to him that the connection is the key soul of the human being.

In Ulibarrí, the soul is a medium between natural elements; its corporeal reality is a constant tragic theater. The human being is subject to the vagaries of fate and of nature. This fatalistic sense of tragedy is also reinforced by the influence of Catholicism (Ulibarrí 1970, I-31; Duke Dos Santos, 1995, 41). Catholicism exemplifies the tragic sense of life as it supports the notion that life is a vale of tears even in the face of God's Grace. Though redemption is available in this world, justification for suffering can only be found in the hereafter. If a moral excellence is not necessary for salvation, then life can be "free, unhampered and enjoyable." Last but not least, the possibility of eternal life and a life of fame makes a man unafraid to die. "A man who is

not afraid to die is able to live.” The tragic Hispano, according to Ulibarri, is a “winner” when he is “humble, but with a deep sense of dignity and self-respect.” (Ulibarri 1970, VI-2-5, IX-1).

The soul of this Catholic man expresses itself in the joy of life and in laughter because it can afford not to take tragedy of the material world too seriously. The ability to laugh in the face of a tragic world view a sign of strength of character. Renato Rosaldo notes in “Politics, Patriarchs and Laughter” that this will to life and laughter offers a site and a means to resist the oppressor (Rosaldo 1990). The tragic man is capable of heroic deeds, including silence in the face of a demand to go along with the dominant regime and the firm adherence to a way of life that is derided and repressed by the dominant culture.

Ulibarri’s sense of identity and purpose despite the fatality of life is underscored in the story *Hombre sin nombre*. This story tells of a man who leaves his mountain home for the city. He becomes educated and successful. He writes a biography of his father and takes the tale back to the mountain home of his family. The family and the community identify the writer (the son) with his subject (the father); they both carry the same name. Throughout the rest of the story the son/author suffers a confusion of identity.

The son had attempted to shed the mantle of name, blood and place by writing his father’s life story in order to create a vestigial interpretation of it. By writing the biography he has placed himself in the position of observer and abstracts himself away from his subject. The moral to *Hombre sin nombre* makes it clear that the son is a living part of his father. The attempt to write an end to the elder’s life has led the son into an existential confusion because it separated him from the connections that defined him. Whatever tragedy lies in the familial connections, they cannot be avoided. Confusion and *susto* lie in the negligence or refusal of these connections. When the son accepts his part then he is at home--more integrated and far less individualistic.

It seems likely that *Hombre sin nombre* is autobiographical. In the hero, Ulibarri sees a search for identity similar to his own. His journeys ultimately took him to the mountains of Ecuador and back to Tierra Amarilla. The existential search that brought him home reinforced a

deep respect for his land and its people. The story, *Hombre sin nombre*, contains Ulibarri's essential message: the continuity of tradition is the lifeblood of the community. The nobility of the peasant roots of the culture must be nourished by every generation. A disjunction between life and history will always result in *susto* and that sickness will leave the community and its traditions vulnerable.

This fatalistic man of tragedy contrasts sharply with the Anglo who believes that science releases him from the vagaries of fate; that nature can be subjugated with technology and that a national identity is possible through the reconciliation of differences. It is the self-satisfaction of these things which gives the Hispano the subjective identity to resist Anglo domination, albeit in a quiet and restrained manner which is easily overlooked. The Hispano tradition continues in Northern New Mexico as a viable community standard. The mere existence of these communities whose ethos is so contrary to the Anglo is evidence of its continued integrity. Ulibarri's tactics of resistance seek to reinforce this alternative community rather than draw Anglo attention to it. To him, silence is the means to continue the tradition of the community.

On the other hand, we must note that Ulibarri's description of the heroic man is contrasted with those of his own culture who follow "questionable leaders, who rant and rave and spit spiders and serpents down a path that leads only to jail, to the hospital or the cemetery" (Ulibarri 1970, IX-2). This is perhaps a reference to Tijerina or to a group of Chicano leaders who railed against the elite for their lack of participation in the Chicano struggle. For Ulibarri, to do as the radicals wished would violate the "respect, dignity, pride and intelligence" that kept the Hispano together among themselves and set apart from their oppressor. While they could laugh within the community and even at themselves, they should not "come out into the street and play the fool and the loser in a lost cause" (Ulibarri 1970, IX-2).

Costumbrismo--Reinforcing the Tradition

Ulibarri writes a set of *costumbrismo* stories--short, didactic, pastoral tales set in Tierra Amarilla that are addressed to a culture beginning to visibly fracture and become politicized in the Anglo way. Ulibarri writes these stories to remind the members of his community of both their roots and the things they will lose if the collective memory disintegrates. Some of Ulibarri's stories convey the noble simplicity and laughter learned by coming of age in the Hispano mountain communities. In stories like *Mi caballo mago* (My Wonder Horse) and *Un oso y un amor* (A Bear and a Love Affair) young men investigate their own potential, sexuality and the environment around them and in the process discover virility, nobility and respect (Ulibarri 1977; Ulibarri 1982).

Mi caballo mago is a story of a boy who dreams of capturing a wild white horse. The horse taunts him. One day the boy succeeds and brings the stallion home. Everyone is amazed and the child achieves a right of passage. The next morning the horse has escaped. The boy, though saddened, understands the wild nature of the horse and yet he is cheered by his own achievement (Ulibarri 1993). In another story *Un oso y un amor*, Ulibarri tells of a young man who is shepherding his family's sheep. Friends came to visit him at his pastoral job. "There was so much to say. Questions. How beautiful all of that was! We were young. We knew how to care and how to sing. Without liquor, without drugs, without vulgar forwardness." One of the friends is a "gringa"--an Anglo girl who lived in Tierra Amarilla but spoke Spanish. "We were all one society then," says the young shepherd. The sheep are frightened by a bear and the young shepherd is required to protect them all, friends and animals, with a rifle. "I felt primitive defending my woman." The bear was felled and the young man gave the girl the bear skin. In later years, though they were separated by time and circumstance, both were said to remember the occasion with fondness (Ulibarri 1982).

With these stories, Ulibarri notes the nobility of a life formed by coexistence. Peaceful so-existence depends on respect, both given and received. Coexistence with the earth means

using the earth as a testing ground against one's own limitations and potentials. At the same time, it teaches limitations by re-asserting its wildness. Coexistence with others, even Anglos, is possible if mutual respect and kindness are shown.

In another story, *Sister Generosa (La hermana Generosa)*, Ulibarri explicitly makes the point for mutual respect and kindness (Ulibarri 1993). This story deals with a boy who is moved from his childhood home into an unfamiliar place and he reacts by becoming isolated sullen and violent. Sister Generosa searches him out and shows him respect and kindness. She became his friend. "She was my first friend in the world of the Anglo-Saxons. She socialized me. She civilized me. She taught me that there is tenderness, gentleness, and courtesy in the Anglo world." One day, Sister Generosa intervened in a knife fight and her young friend accidentally wounded her. The wound was superficial and the nun consoled the young man. The young man remembers, "I believe that at that moment I became human and able to appreciate the love and brotherhood that God gave us..Sister Generosa...you more than anyone made me an American" (86). In *Sister Generosa*, Ulibarri suggests that *nuevo mexicano* values are "American" values without suggesting that all "American" values are amenable to the *nuevo mexicano*.

The *costumbrismo* stories also contain an element of a trickster. While authority and power relations are a matter for serious consideration, Ulibarri is not above poking fun at either one. There is one story, *The Frates Family*, that mocks the manners of an Anglo family whose stomachs made "impolite noises" in Church and another titled, *El relleno de dios* (The Lord's Stuffing) about a young man who became a priest's acolyte in order to have access to sacramental wine. The priest in this story is inept at the Spanish language and a constant source of fun for the Spanish-speaking community (Ulibarri 1993). This capacity to laugh allows a release of tension and disallows a sense of absolute subjugation to any single authority. For Ulibarri laughter, not protest marches, remains the escape hatch for individual feelings of resentment.

The work of Sabine Ulibarri offers insight into the social and political organizations that stem from the Hispano view of a human group consciously living in a particular space. Each

individual soul must recognize the collective connection to the place for the sake of its own identity. The nobility of the community with a sense of place transcends time. Ulibarri believes that these noble souls are created through an understanding of their places in nature and to God, all the while recognizing the limitation of their understanding with laughter.

The strength and weakness of Ulibarri's work is in its nostalgia. Ulibarri deliberately romanticizes the past. It is a way of living with the irreconcilable contradictions of life as a colonized other. He lives in a political situation that imposes a set of institutions and cultural relationships on his society. He accepts this condition but does not concede the inevitability of assimilation. Rather, the stories suggest that the subjugated society must concentrate on their faith, live within their own moral code and strive to seek a peaceful coexistence. If the Anglo forces a world view on the Hispano then the best reaction is to be silent toward the Anglo and live according to the values of one's own community. In many ways, this strategy has helped the Hispano community survive 150 years of Anglo domination.

On the other hand, Ulibarri's work is politically naïve in its plea for mutual respect and politically inappropriate for increasingly urbanized Hispano and other Latino populations. As Latinos moved into the cities they usually found themselves "ghettoized" in *barrios* and severely disadvantaged in the labor market. In the city, Latinos did not have recourse to the land as a means of survival when inequality and exclusion kept them out of work. Laughter was insufficient redress against the Anglo when cash became necessary. The Chicano movement addressed the political problems of urban Latinos and in the process developed the traditional conceptions of nature into an ideology.

Chicano Nature

Unlike the Hispano, the Chicano demands inclusion. Despite this political difference, the Hispano and the Chicano agree on the conception of a place can be shared communally. Chicano nationalism and ethnic identification is substantially rooted in the ideal place, "Aztlán."

Aztlán is the mythical Chicano derived in the imaginations of Chicano nationalists. Though it has lost much of its value as scholastic currency¹ it remains a symbol for the collective identity of southwest Latinos. Rudolfo Anaya's early novels exemplify the use of Aztlán as a signifier of urban community. A generation of Chicano writing has generated theories of political inclusion that reflect the ethic of sharing evident in Anaya's depiction of Aztlán.

The Origin of Aztlán

The early Chicano movement contained a significant nationalist element. The traditional Hispano reflected the knowledge of origins in colonial Spanish culture whereas Chicanos claimed to be native to the land. They argued that the northern borderlands of *Nuevo España* had been the land of their ancestors since before recorded history. The Chicanos were descendants of the Aztecs whose ancestors had gone to Mexico "from the north", that is, from Aztlán. Given this history, they were a native people like the other tribes (J. R. Chávez 1984, 3). They had been subjected to gross oppression from Europeans and deserved the privileges accorded the other native tribes, i.e., to be treated as a separate nation.

As part of an awakening resistance to this history of oppression Chicanos of the 1960's developed the symbolic homeland "Aztlán" that helped to create a geographical boundary around their identity. The symbol was significant enough that a journal was named for it. The poet, Alurista wrote the following poem which constituted the "preface" to the first volume of Aztlán, the Journal of Chicano Literature.

¹ For example, F. Chris Garcia wrote The Chicano Political Experience in 1977. In that text he notes that the term "Chicano" is not universally used but that he anticipates that the usage will increase. Garcia's latest work uses the term "Latino" for example, Latinos and the Political System published in 1988 and Latinos and Politics, published in 1990.

Poem in lieu of a Preface

Aztlán

it is said
that MOTECHUHZOMA ILHUICAMINA
SENT
AN expedition
looking for the NortherN
mythical land
wherefrom the AZTECS CAME
la TIERRA
dE
Aztlán
mYthical land for those
who dream of roses and
swallow thorns
or for those who swallow thorns
in powdered milk
feeling guilty about smelling flowers
about looking for Aztlán

The poem served as a rallying cry. By referring to the ancient exodus of the Aztecs to the south and to the search for gold by the Spaniards, it speaks to the long history of oppression by Europeans over natives. Those “who dream of roses” are the children of Juan Diego whose vision of an Aztec goddess was legitimated by the existence of a rose bush in bloom in winter. This was the goddess, *Coatlicue*, later transliterated into *La Virgen de Guadalupe*. From the time that the myth was appropriated the people of Aztlán have “swallowed thorns.” The tragedy is that the Chicano is made to feel guilty by “Americans” for his desire to recover Aztlán when the search should be a matter of celebration.

While the poem appeared as a political tool in a nationalist struggle, the idea of Aztlán resonates with traditional cultural values. It reflects an identity that is not bounded by nationalist geographic borders but is materially tied to a life on the land. It reflects a sense of belonging to a shared space and makes reference to a past made vibrant again. The Chicanos share an idea of identity closer to Ulibarri’s shared rural space than to the ideal of Anglo nation-ness.

Natural Metaphors in Aztlán

Rudolfo Anaya contributes to the development of the Chicano identity by representing Aztlán as a place with traditional Hispano values but changing those values to reflect current political realities. He depicts a culture that awakens the spirit of Aztlán by recovering history, updating the traditional values and rebuilding community in *el barrio*. Using the metaphors of heart and blood Anaya joins the contemporary, physical being to its ancestors and gives the individual a strength that comes from belonging to a community, its people and its place.

Anaya's first novel, Bless Me, Ultima, is a coming-of-age tale that represents the awakening self-consciousness of the Chicano (Anaya 1991, 1972). The story takes place in a home beset by a familiar southwestern conflict between land usages, i.e., between cowboy and farmer. Antonio, the protagonist of the story is the youngest son of a *vaquero* father from the *llano* (cowboy from the plains) and a mother whose family were farmers. Antonio must choose which path to follow. His mother wants him to be a priest and carry on her Luna family tradition. His father wants the child to know the freedom of riding the plains as the Maréz family had done for generations.

Antonio is helped through his decisions by a *curandera*, Ultima. A *curandera* is knowledgeable in the healing ways of the earth. She practices herbal remedies and other forms of "magic." Ultima teaches Antonio some of the magic ways but for the most part she protects him. Her protection comes in the form of interpretations of dreams and in teachings from the difficulties of everyday life as well as from some form of magic.

In his time with Ultima, Antonio experiences the alienation of his brothers from his family, his father's disillusionment with the loss of the *llano*, his first self-conscious interactions with the Catholic Church, an identification with the earth's creatures as spiritual agents, and the effects of hatred and fear. His final lesson is that Ultima's magic is mortal, that is, it comes through an insight about the ways of the earth but does not pretend to be greater than the earth.

Ultimately, the child learns that his blood reflects the wild spirit of the river that is the lifeblood of the land. Like the water, it can roar as wildly as the sea and be as calm as the fields. It is all the same water, it is all the same blood. He carries this insight with him into a uncertain future finding security in neither politics nor church but in his sense of belonging to a history.

In Antonio, Anaya represents a character coming to age when the future looks very uncertain. The simple dichotomous world of rancher against farmer is moving into the past. The scope of Antonio's world is more urbanized and the experience of the community is broader. Antonio's three older brothers are drafted to fight in World War II. They were never able to stay home again. The land is also shocked by atomic bomb testing. The traditional sense of relative safety and isolation is irrevocably breached but to walk completely away from the old ways, as Antonio's brothers do, leads only to alienation. However, the character of Antonio offers a sense of identity that can be a vehicle for taking the ancient ways into the future. It is significant that Antonio remains in the village and does not take to the farm. He is an amalgam of old magic and new ways, but one who will have to live in town. Antonio signifies that the relationship with the land must be carried into the city as an abstraction.

In another story, Heart of Aztlán, Anaya draws on the notion of a shared identification with the earth to bridge a rural past with an urban future (Anaya 1988). He uses the connection to water and blood to show that history--that is, Aztlán--lives in the heart of Chicanos. Separated from the land, the idea of a connection to the earth and to one another can hold Chicanos in the *barrio* together.

In Heart of Aztlán, a Hispano family is alienated from the land and its history. The family is lost in a kind of rootlessness that the urban environment exacerbates. In the city they are confronted with poverty and repression. They suffer from poor working conditions and a disintegration of family cohesion. They find that the values that they took for granted on the land are not operative in the city. Members of the family respond differently to the disintegration. The oldest brother marries and melds into the *barrio* community. The youngest son joins a gang.

The middle child, an adolescent, tries to find some middle ground. The father carries his traditional sense of obligation to his community but is unsure how to actualize it. He resists the difficulty and gets a *susto*, a sickness of the soul.

To cure his *susto* the Father makes a late night visit to see the spectral woman-of-the-river. She may be, like Ultima, *curandera* or *bruja* (witch) or some combination of both. In a dream, the man sees her as *Malinche*, the new-world Hispanicized version of Eve, who shows him that his blood is like the river running through time. This woman of water and time shows him that he--his heart--is the connection to his past and he must carry it into his immediate world as a leader among men. In order to fulfill his destiny, he must give up the nostalgia for the past and become the embodiment of the Chicano identity in *el barrio*.

The family in Heart of Aztlán epitomizes conflicts that face occupants of *el barrio*. The community must deal with oppression and discrimination from outside as well as the disintegration of their rural tradition from inside. The son is an adolescent who watches his brothers and father as they try to negotiate their adult difficulties. He wants an ordinary life--to fall in love, marry and have a family in this place that will become his own. Like his father, he will have to also cope with the communal memory and continue to actualize the spirit of Aztlán found in his blood.

Traditional and Chicano "Nature"

Ulibarri and Anaya represent two sides of the identity debates for Latinos. Ulibarri brings home the traditional values of the rural nobility while Anaya argues for the a re-evaluation applicable to an urban population. Ulibarri is self-consciously nostalgic while Anaya's early work is equally self-conscious in its future-oriented outlook. Ulibarri's work argues for a quiescent relationship with the Anglo that protects the culture from formal interference from the outside. The Chicano is a radical political activist demanding inclusion and equality from the colonizer. Ulibarri tends to emphasize the Spanish heritage while Anaya emphasizes the Mestizo.

They may differ in political perspective but there are many similarities in their conceptions of nature. In cosmological terms, nature is part of the home. Nature is resources insofar as a person needs the earth to sustain life but nature also contains mysteries and fates that transcend human understanding. Politically speaking, both men seek a way to restore communality. Their view of a space where human beings are integrated into the environment lends itself to ideas of a communal social order. The tropes of blood and water are significant to them as fertility metaphors but also as icons of connection between people and the land. In both, there remains the sense of timeless connection to place and family.

Like Ulibarri, Anaya considers himself and Chicanos to be included in the category American despite any potential Anglo ideology to the contrary. His choice of plot in Bless Me, Ultima is a common theme in traditional Anglo literature. His Chicanos have “typical” problems. Those problems include the urbanization of culture, the social disjunction caused by war and returning soldiers and the need for children to translate the values of their parents into their own future. Anaya’s critical message to the Anglo reader is that the day to day conflicts on the land are (1) more philosophical than economic; (2) not exclusive to the Anglo experience and (3) that any resolution to the questions about the future of the people must include a spiritual element. The problems may be familiar to Anglos but Chicano resolutions to them are not.

Neither Chicano nor Hispano separate personal issues away from politics. They do not deny magic or the notion that spirit inhabits place. In fact they tend to see nature as a teacher with characteristics outside rational understanding rather than as an object to be mastered through science. When these ideas are turned to political formations the structures that ensue do not support the development of scientifically minded individualists. Rather, they support communal structures vested with a high degree of social sharing.

Cultural Citizenship

Renato Rosaldo, an anthropologist, presents a category of grass roots Latino cultural identification that he calls “cultural citizenship.” Rosaldo presented the idea in Culture and Truth, published in 1989. Since that time, a collection of academics called The Latino Studies Working Group has been working out the concept (G. Flores and Benmayor 1997; Rosaldo 1989). “Cultural citizenship” yokes two categories that are generally separated in “American” political thought and challenges the models of assimilation and cultural pluralism.

“Cultural citizenship” models a dynamic that allows cultures to retain their difference while retaining political rights. Rather than concentrate on national commonality, the notion of “cultural citizenship” identifies social, ethical and political structures in more localized communities. The idea of membership is then expanded beyond the national narrative to include the narratives of the Hispano and Chicano.

In Rosaldo’s model, incorporation into the national ethos would not require buying into the “common imagination.” Rather, the “American” ethos would act according to its own terms and treat “others” equally and with respect. “The central hypothesis of the cultural citizenship project has been that people in subordinated communities struggle to achieve full enfranchisement and that they search for well-being, dignity, and respect in their ordinary everyday lives” (Rosaldo and G. Flores 1997, 95).

Rosaldo and The Working Group work from the assumption that notions of citizenship are already under reconstruction and that the fruitful ideas for post-nationalist politics will come from the roots of the population rather than from elites (Rosaldo and G. Flores 1997, 95f). The concept of cultural citizenship is a hybrid of Anglo concepts of individual rights and the Latino values of respect and sharing. The concept of cultural citizenship allows for personal identities that are local and ethnic rather than national and common. The kind of politics that ensues from the existence of self-consciously different constituencies is also local and small scale rather than

national or global. Cultural citizenship stands as an alternative proposal to the common imagination and national narrative. Such a concept competes with the trend toward the greater centralization and national scale of the imagined community that characterizes traditional “American” political thought and much of Anglo-American culture.

Rosaldo’s idea reflects the southwest Latino cultural attitude toward hybridity and shared spaces. “Cultural citizenship” denies the need for homogeneity in the common imagination. It redefines the unit of membership from the individual to an individual as part of a community. This reflects the communal understanding that the Latino brings to politics as part of his heritage. It advocates a sense of politics without an enforced ideology. These ideas are contrary to the common imagination. More importantly, they do not play very well to a theater of acquisitive individuals. Cultural citizenship may help the non-Anglo achieve political parity but it does not speak to the problem of persuading an Anglo to expand his own vision of citizenship.

The concept of “cultural citizenship” confronts Anglo-American political thought on another level. The notion of a political recognition of cultural differences raises the specter of those cultural differences becoming a real and legitimate topic of political debate. Such a debate is contrary to requirement for sameness that underscores liberal politics and the national common imagination. Permeating the boundaries of sameness is a big risk. Open debates on issues of race and other difference may break the fragile alliance that tie “American” imaginations together and may break the faith that holds the “common imagination” together. On the other hand, disallowing discussion of these issues is liable to end in the deterioration of political rights. The prospects for these or other scenes of political disintegration require that the fundamental values of “American” political thought be reconsidered.

Rosaldo’s re-visioning is not the only one in process. It appears that elements of the contemporary Republican Party are considering a shift in the Federal Government’s role to one of moral guardian--a role contrary to the federalist vision of the government. The values that they present as “American” are resonant of the Puritan values and represent less a moral re-visioning

than a shift in institutional goals. In many ways, the Republican push to turn the government into a moral agency reflects the next generation of missionary fervor. Like the early Puritans, these modern moral conservatives offer an institutional revolution in the name of preserving values. Ironically, it is those like Rosaldo who hope to keep the values of the liberal institutions--limited government and civil rights--while suggesting a shift in the ideological basis of political membership.

In the preceding chapters I have discussed the relationship of the cultural conception of nature to the ideas of national and communal identity. In the following sections of the dissertation, I will take on the presuppositions about land and personal identity within Anglo-American culture as well as the conception of nature as an ideal, de-politicized space. The Hispano/Chicano alternatives to these conceptions show the use of nature as a communal space and the potential for re-integrating the natural into politics.

CHAPTER 4

OWNED NATURE: ANGLO PRIVATE PLACES

The first two chapters of this dissertation discuss the conception of nature in relation to issues of nationalism and membership. The following two chapters discuss the conceptions of nature as “owned” or “shared.”

The Conception of Owned Nature

In 1890, the U.S. Supreme Court opined that “all lands should have an owner” (Jeffers v. East Omaha Land Co. 135 US 178, 179 1890). This dictum expresses a fundamental aspect of traditional Anglo conception of nature as property. In the Anglo mind in general, “nature” has been fractured into pieces so that the individual elements of an ecology can be considered as unit that can be owned. As property, these elements of nature can be alienated from their ecological niches and placed in the marketplace. Ideas about property in the U.S. are a product of social and legal history. The pattern of land and resource use is important in the Anglo-American concepts of individual freedom. Decisions over land use have been and continue to be the cause of many conflicts.

Social and Legal History of Property

In the mid-eighteenth century, England turned away from the feudal land holding system toward a mercantilist economy. Ideas about property were altered with the economic system. The theory of John Locke exemplifies these ideas about property.

The feudal system had operated on a principle of inclusive right (a right in something), the modern system generated a system of exclusive right (a right to something). The effect was to parcel the elements of the natural world into units that could be identified, bought and sold. The

social relationships accompanying these changes altered from the *noblesse oblige* system to a trade relationship (Steinberg 1995, 11-13).

The political theory of John Locke is built upon the notion of owned nature. In his Second Treatise, John Locke states, “The earth and all that is therein is given to man for the support and comfort of their being...there must of necessity be a means to appropriate them some way or other before they can be of any use or at all beneficial to any particular man” (para. 26). The material resources of the earth belong to human beings to use; human beings can own these material resources. Humanity, according to Locke, has a natural right to life, liberty and property.

Ownership in property is conveyed through labor. Nature has no intrinsic value until it is used. The agent of value is the human capacity for reason and technology. Labor creates value through production. When one labors on the land one’s right to the produce necessitates one’s right to the land. The land is considered “improved” by this cultivation. Since persons own their own labor, they own the cause of the improvement and therefore own the improvement and subsequently the land (Locke 1690, para 43). For Locke, virtue lies in the organization and operation of society in a way that encourages individual labor by preserving individual rights to the free enjoyment of property.

The medium of identifying land as owned by an individual is the process of naming. A person is identified to others through the property owned (Locke 1690, para 45). The combination of site, labor and produce were represented geographically by survey lines cast over the earth’s surface and reproduced with lines and color in two dimensions. This space was identified with the name of an individual. Ownership was represented on maps that could be carried to other places as evidence of one’s wealth and security.

The act of surveying and mapping carved a space out of Nature. This space was “home” and became both the boundaries of one’s own private space and the credential for political membership. This use of nature resulted from the natural action of men. To Locke, this organized “private” space was the condition of men in the state of nature. To protect this land

holding, men would join in a social contract, a common security agreement that would generate a political state charged with the protection of private interests.

Property in the New World

Thomas Jefferson turned Locke's phrase into "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." With the introduction of happiness, Jefferson inserted a particular kind of agrarian virtue into the formula. His free and independent, i.e., self-sufficient, yeomen were produced from the gardens of the homes that they own. From that scheme of ethical development Jefferson theorized a kind of democratic landscape where the private home was both the building block of a democratic political system and a site of resistance against centralized authority.

Jefferson and Nature

Like Locke and others before him, Jefferson believed nature to be permanent, orderly, systematic and fundamentally unchanging (Miller 1993, 23). He accepted the idea that: "Nothing can come out of nothing; nothing can be destroyed into nothing; and the universe never was nor never will be in a condition which differs from its present one" (Long 1974, 31). Nature constituted the fixed point of reference from which knowledge and progress would ensue. Jefferson did not believe in the Christian God but that "the world is nature alone" (Miller 1993, 23). The reference to "Nature's God" that appears in the Declaration of Independence suggests only a prime mover. The prime mover was only a Creator and does not offer a "nature" that gives moral imperatives. For Jefferson, Nature was independent of the soul and thus quite separate from the human being. It was a tool to be utilized in the progress of humanity.

Jefferson believed in science and scientific method. His heroes were Bacon, Newton and Locke. In them Jefferson found "reasons and methods for understanding nature...Newton, by discovering natural laws in the physical world, seemed to vindicate the Baconian strategy of reasoning from natural facts" that Locke later applied to epistemology for understanding the

social order and politics (Miller 1993, 11). Through the systematic application of scientific method the facts and laws of nature could be identified, categorized and correlated. Only in this way and in regard to the natural world could truth be known.

Jefferson thought that human beings also have a nature, that is, an essence. Imbued with the potential for reason and intelligence human nature could be trained and directed toward good ends. Ethics, rather than religion or any kind of naturalized fate, was the rational, scientific way to direct human nature.

Happiness

According to Jefferson, human beings used natural material to secure “life, liberty and property.” The first order of use was the construction of a “home.” Jefferson’s orientation on this process reflects Locke’s theory of property and labor theory of ownership. At the same time, Jefferson’s “home” was a self-sufficient place--productive and secure with family and friends--where one could go to enjoy private endeavor without the intrusion of public authority. Jefferson instilled spirit into Locke’s theory when he changes “property” to “happiness” by allowing some contemplative satisfaction in the fruits of one’s own labor, and by allowing space in political society for good character.

Jefferson’s happy property existed outside the authority of centralized authority. According to Locke’s social contract theory, property owners were the parties to the social contract and the governing agency was the product of it. If the government failed to live up to its part of the contract, the parties involved could dissolve it. They retained a right to devolve the authority that they conceded to any governing agency and therefore retained an extra-political authority. The Declaration of Independence is grounded in this principle and Jefferson re-iterates the position in the Kentucky Resolutions written in 1798 (Peterson 1985, 281-9).

Monticello represented Jefferson’s version of this free and independent named space. It was his garden, the place where he enjoyed his property, his family and his friends. It was his

laboratory as well as his means of self-sufficiency and in general, a place free of civil strife. The grounds, as they are preserved today, exhibit Jefferson's desire to manipulate nature into a place of beauty and comfort. From the gardens of Monticello, Jefferson viewed the western territories as the garden of the nation.

The Yeoman Farmer

For Locke, independence meant being left alone. For Jefferson, independence meant physical, psychological and political self-sufficiency. He believed that self-sufficiency generated sustenance, a sense of permanence and a place to go. An independent person could afford to reject the authority of others. Manufacturing, on the other hand, required specialization; producing adults with limited experience who were unable to make good judgments. Wage labor created a dependency on others for basic needs. The accumulation of capital and of land into unproductive hands, resulted in hunger and disease. Human beings needed space and arable land to form good characters. Hence, for Jefferson, as many people as possible should be provided with the means to becoming good citizens.

The concept of the free enjoyment of property was a keystone of the Jeffersonian concept of liberty.

Those who labour in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which he keeps alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth. Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on the casualties and caprice of customers. Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition (Peterson 1985, 217).

Whether Yankee or Virginian, independence was the value that accrued to those who labored on the earth. Farmers provided their own subsistence. Ideally, they did not exploit others, nor were they cash dependent. The yeoman farmer was free from public interference and therefore free to develop his own good nature. In his later years, Jefferson admitted the existence of cash-based

economy in the United States, but did not give up the idea that personal labor on the land constituted the “germ of virtue.” This experience should, in Jefferson’s mind produce a “natural aristocracy” (Peterson 1985, 415).

Jefferson believed that labor would yield character; good labor would yield good character. The formula included physical and contemplative labor. Concrete experience turned ideas into reality. Farmers were required to use reason and ingenuity resolve their problems. They retained a control over their affairs and were thus well trained material for democratic citizens. To promote the democratic republic, the land should be available for use. Jefferson writes, “The fundamental right to labor the earth returns to the unemployed...as few as possible shall be without a little portion of land. The small landholders are the most precious part of a state” (Peterson 1984, 841-2).

For Jefferson, the farm was the source of character formation and the repository of happiness. The society needed to ensure this by a proper education for its citizens. By applying the mechanical explanations found in Newtonian science, Jefferson believed that the determined relationships between cause and effect held in regard to education and ethical practice. A well-designed and functioning political (including educational) system would turn out consistent civil products. It was, indeed, the only way to formulate human character since the fundamental nature of human beings could not be changed. If properly educated, from books as well as in nature, the farmer would make good political decisions. When representation was necessary, he would choose good men for the job. And those good men would also be properly educated according to a plan set down in the constitution, in the broadest social sense of the word.

The Democratic Landscape

Jefferson believed that the western territories could be carved into a democratic landscape by applying a logical system of allocation and by allowing the citizens of the west to participate as equal partners in the republic. In the process a state of ethical citizens who could

resist the excesses of urban living would be generated. In this way the United States would be able to avoid the struggles which European society had endured.

In Jefferson's imagination the West was "the realization of the commercial desideratum that had existed since Europeans recognized the presence of a barrier continent barring their way to the riches of Cathay" (Allen 1997, 19). To this end Jefferson drew up the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787, commissioned the Lewis and Clark expeditions and purchased the Louisiana Territory (Peterson 1985, 254-8).

Jefferson derived his ideas on the political organization of the democratic landscape from studies on the Saxon system of hundreds (Horsman 1981, 19-20; Peterson 1984, 751). According to Jefferson, the Saxons, prior to the Norman Conquest, had the purest form of democratic organization. It was a local, participatory system. Local interests held sway over grander interests in pre-Norman England and to Jefferson this was right and just. He dreamed of instituting a similar sort of local system in the United States. His vision was a set of tiers where least amount of authority was devolved to the largest organizational structure and the most important issues handled locally.

...the way to give good and safe government, is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many, distributing to every one exactly the functions he is competent to. Let the national government be entrusted with the defense of the nation, and its foreign and federal relations; the State governments with the civil rights, laws police, and administration of what concerns the State generally; the counties with the local concerns of the counties, and each ward direct the interests within itself. It is by dividing and subdividing these republics from the great national one down through all its subordinations, until it ends in the administration of every man's farm by himself; by placing under every one what his own eye may superintend, that all will be done for the best (Peterson 1984, 1380).

Vesting the man with an interest in his own governing was the best way to ensure democratic liberty. Distance and centralization deprived man of this basic freedom. While a national government was necessary for security, it was also necessary that the central authority be limited. Jefferson accepted the limitations built into the U.S. Constitution including the Bill of Rights, but also agreed with Locke that the social contract could be rent if the agent of that contract, the

government, did not hold to the bargain. Indeed, the United States was established under just such circumstances (Peterson 1985, 235 f, 281-9).

It seems ironic that Jefferson held this view of the democratic value of land and labor and yet held slaves. However, according to Locke's liberalism, the work of the members of the household accrued as the property to the head of the household. The Father was the natural head of the household and his paternal authority extended to the executive function. That is to say that the paternal authority of a household named the father as the signifier of the family and its property to the public world (Locke 1690, para. 74). In that sense the "father" represented the family. All values produced through labor on this named piece of property accrued to the father's name. Slaves, according to Locke, cannot hold property as they have forfeited their lives and liberty in becoming slaves (Locke 1690, para. 85). Slaves were not considered to be part of civil society and were not granted rights to property. The produce of slave labor on Monticello accrued to Jefferson.

However theoretically justified, the inequity of Jefferson's slave holding is evidence that Jefferson's democratic landscape was one of an ethnic homeland. Patricia Limerick notes: "There is no way to erase race and ethnicity out of the story of either Jeffersonian principle or Jeffersonian practice" (Limerick 1997, 187). Nonetheless, it is the Jefferson of Monticello who, as a public figure, brings to the new nation the concept of a democratic landscape he called the "empire of liberty."

Jefferson dreamed of Anglo-American white settlers, sturdy yeoman, increasing in number until they covered "the whole northern, if not southern continent, with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms and by similar laws; nor can we contemplate with satisfaction either blot or mixture in that surface" (Bergh 1801, 11). The land could be obtained from the natives through persuasion or force. If the natives could be convinced to take up farming then they could be persuaded to alienate their land. If they did not assimilate it then would be ultimately necessary to "terminate their history" (Onuf 1997, 37). Any other European

presence in the Americas that did not conform to the Anglo-Saxon or pre-Roman notions of democratic landholding were also at risk but the general assumption was that the Western territories were more or less empty (Kanellos 1998, 64). The land remained a natural *tabula rasa* for the use of superior Anglo intelligence in pursuit of their manifest destiny.

Jeffersonian Vestiges

The Rectangular Survey

An aerial view of the Western United States illustrates the impact of Jefferson's geographic sensibility and his tendency to impose a rational design on chaotic nature. The agricultural land is marked by squares that represent parcels of land. (Many of those squares contain the circles made by particular types of irrigation devices, but the circles still exist within the original surveyed plots.) Urban aerial views are much less Jeffersonian but urban plots are also identified by the geographic survey that measured and marked the territory into parcels. In the Northwest Ordinance Jefferson outlined a scheme of rectangles drawn over the geography. The rectangles were drawn in reference to a fixed geographical point. The rectangle constituted an area of 640 acres--usually a square with sides of 6 miles (townships). Each square was divided into 36 sections and divided again into fourths (quarter sections). Land surveys register the locations of plots with legal descriptions that make reference to a these townships, sections and quarters. Legal descriptions and dependable titles became the paper instruments that made "empty" space intelligible and useful. These instruments were "basic to any system of private land ownership" (Clawson 1968, 44).

The Democratic Impulse

Jefferson dreamed of a nation of freemen endowed with property. By the turn of the twentieth century, Henry George is making a case against land speculation in order to protect the

Jeffersonian dream. George asserts Lockean ideas of nature, labor and value as self-evident propositions. "Nature" has been turned into a pot of resources to be used for the benefit of human development. George wrote, "The right of every human being to himself is the foundation of the right of property. That which a man produces is rightfully his own, to keep, to sell, to give, or to bequeath, and upon this sure title alone can ownership of anything rightfully rest" (85). George is using this statement of ownership in an argument against land speculation and a monopoly of land ownership. He is arguing that land speculation runs against the natural right of men to have free use of nature and is fundamentally undemocratic.

The Federal Government of the U.S. took title to land through accession by the states, by conquest and by purchase. The disposition of these lands was a matter of some debate. Those of the Hamilton camp believed it should be sold to benefit the public treasury while those of the Jefferson camp thought it should be cheaply transferred to individuals for the benefit of the democratic polity. In general, land was sold but the Federal Government made little profit.

Some land was ceded to private individuals through land sales or through pre-emption or squatter's rights. According to Clawson, the land titles of more than one-half of all privately owned land in the United States can be traced back to federal land records (51). Other land was privatized through land grants to communities. A provision in the Northwest Ordinance stipulated that one section (640 acres) out of every township be given to the state to support primary education. Later the allotments were increased.¹ The Federal Government also granted a certain amount of the public domain to each state government in order to generate seed money for public universities. The result of this land cession are the state agricultural colleges. Public domain was also given to private holders for the construction of roads and railroads. Legislative initiatives like the Homestead Act of 1862 were intended to offer title to land in exchange for

¹ These plots can still be seen on maps of National Forests. They often appear as square sections of privately or state-held land in the midst of a federal land and are colloquially known as "the school parcels."

occupancy and cultivation. Most of the legislative initiatives succeeded in moving land into the hand of speculators (Clawson 1968, 51-65). A great many people were granted title to real property by the Federal Governments programs. Others paid dearly for it. Nonetheless, the dream of an independent soul developed in an atmosphere of the private home became deeply embedded in the Anglo-American ethic.

Developing land resources played a pivotal role in the development of the American citizenry. The legal system developed in accordance with these values. It is in the legal system that Theodore Steinberg finds the “folly of owning nature.”

The Folly of Owning Nature

Theodore Steinberg’s narrative offers several examples of the parceling of nature into bits that emphasizes the implications of a property system of ownership. He notes that the law assumes that nature is static. However, nature changes. Riverbeds move, earthquakes and floods change the landscape. These problems do not fall within the established definitions of property and create bizarre but important legal decisions. For example, land is considered to be inelastic in supply. When the river shifts, who owns the newly created land? Another problem occurs when new technologies expose new aspects of nature. For example, the basis of water law in the arid southwest was written when underground water reserves were not known. Now the law must develop legal theories to adjudicate the public interest in water and satisfy the criteria of property. An example of this kind of conflict occurs over an underwater aquifer in Colorado’s San Luis Valley.

The Baca Grande Grant #4

The arid San Luis Valley sits atop a massive deep water aquifer. In a water-hungry state this underground lake was a tempting but inaccessible feast. The technology to harvest the water is simple. The political problem of ownership and allocation is very complicated.

The State of Colorado claims all tributary water as part of the public domain and holds the right to grant property rights to any individual or corporate owner. Water is measured and allocated on the basis of acre feet. Once these rights are granted, they may be traded like shares of stock. Water rights are considered to be personal property. Tributary water is not legally connected to any piece of real property and both water and land may be sold separately.² Water may be stockpiled or used up to the limit of the allocation. Hence, water owners can build reservoirs to hold their annual allocations of water as long as sufficient water to satisfy other holder's rights gets downstream.

The San Luis Valley (SLV) is a large basin measuring 70 by 120 miles between the Sangre de Cristo and the San Juan Ranges in the Colorado Rockies. The area is predominantly agricultural and water for agricultural and domestic use comes from the Rio Grande River and from wells sunk into the aquifer.

There are really two aquifers under the SLV. The upper aquifer lies near the surface and is fed by snowpack and rainfall. The quantity of water in the upper aquifer fluctuates. The deep aquifer is contained beneath the surface of a layer of impermeable clay and is generally considered to be a fixed resource. However, this is a matter of debate. The deep aquifer is believed to contain approximately 2 billion acre feet of water (Woestendick 1991). Harvesting the water in the deep aquifer has significant costs. The cities that hunger for more water lie beyond the mountains. Building and maintaining pipelines is expensive. There are also environmental costs. Mining aquifers has been known to cause land to collapse (Steinberg 1995, 100). Also, there is a question about who owns the water.

² The law surrounding the allocation of water is complex. Water law is governed by state law. In Colorado, you may capture water which originates on your property naturally, like springs. You may also capture snow melt if it is deemed to be non-tributary water, i.e., does not enter into a streambed but would be absorbed into the ground. The distinction is ambiguous and the source of contest in the SLV case.

Much of the aquifer sits beneath a piece of ground known as the Baca Land Grant #4.³ The land has been subject to disputed land claims under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo because, under the Treaty, the water rights would flow with the land.⁴ However, under Colorado law, any claim to the water in the aquifer falls within the jurisdiction of the Colorado water courts system. Any unallocated water within the state must be adjudicated by the court. The water in the deep aquifer was already being mined by the Federal Government under the “Closed Basin Project.” The Closed Basin Project pumps water out of the aquifer into the Rio Grande, so that water flowing out of Colorado into New Mexico and Texas meets federally mandated levels. In the 1980’s, AWDI, a group of investors decided to begin the process of mining the Baca aquifer for profit by applying to the water court for a judgment.

AWDI’s claims of ownership to the water took three forms. They first applied for an exemption to the Colorado statutes claiming rights to the water under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This claim was dismissed by the judge who argued an “over romanticism” concerning the land grants and a missing link between ownership of AWDI and any descendent of the Mexican Republic (Gallegos 1990; J. Hill 1990a). However, this legal maneuver did have the effect of erasing the claim from the arena and establishing the legal right of the State of Colorado to adjudicate the resource.

AWDI’s claim argued (1) that the water in the aquifer was “non-tributary.” That is, that mining the water would not affect water levels in any other surface stream. (2) They argued that even if the water was tributary, there was sufficient supply to accommodate their claim. The first argument took up the majority of the hearings held in Alamosa, Colorado in 1988. At the end of

³ The majority of the information on SLV water and the Baca Grant #4/AWDI case is gleaned from the local newspapers, including the Valley Courier published in Alamosa Colorado and the weekly paper, The Needle published in Crestone Colorado, The Rocky Mountain News published in Denver, Colorado and The Albuquerque Journal published in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

⁴ See Chapter 4 below.

six weeks of arguments, the judge in the case ruled that the aquifer was indeed tributary and that in fact, there was no non-tributary water. Without allowing further argument or discovery, the judge ruled from the bench that the second argument would also be denied on the basis of a lack of market or any evidence of a dedicated beneficial use (J. Hill 1990b; E. Smith 1990).

Most residents of the SLV opposed the project. Much of the resistance stemmed from old grievances against urban interests profiting at the expense of rural ones. Also, the initial AWDI consortium was headed by Canadian interests and the SLV residents perceived this as the invasion of foreign interests and an attempt to steal its resources for the sake of distant profit centers. A number of Hispanic farmers in the area supported the Baca project as they saw it as influx of capital into the SLV and a move away from a historical hegemony by white farmers and ranchers in the area (Clutter 1990). The resisters were joined by the Federal Government and the Governor of Colorado. Both governments were interested in protecting the Closed Basin Project. Together the resisters were called the “Joint Objectors.” Environmental groups were not included in the Joint Objectors and were more or less absent from the case altogether.

After the court battle and appeals were lost, AWDI did not pursue any further claims to the Baca aquifer. At that time the urban economies on Colorado’s front range were in a downturn and water demand was not growing as quickly as had been anticipated. AWDI sold the property.

In the summer of 1998, the water war in the SLV heated up again. This time, the battle lines were political rather than judicial. Stockman’s Water Co., the current owner of the Baca land, began a campaign to mine the aquifer.⁵ If the AWDI claim for tributary rights lost due to a lack of “beneficial use” then the new owners have met at least the initial criteria for a grant of

⁵ As was true with the AWDI claim, the most available source of information on the Stockman’s claim has been local newspapers. In this case, I have made use of The Pueblo Chieftan published in Pueblo Colorado and The Valley Courier issued prior to and just after the 1998 November general elections.

water rights. The developers admitted that the project was designed for profit but argue that it this would always be the case. They argued further that the operation could be accomplished in an environmentally sensitive way. Stockman's Water Co. intended to petition the water court for rights to 150,000 acre feet of water from the deep aquifer. The developers intended to sell the water to Colorado Front Range and California interests but return the profits to the Valley for local improvements.

In the face of opposition from most of the SLV's farmers, ranchers and businessmen, the principals of Stockman's Water Co. began a campaign to have certain initiatives place on the Colorado ballot. In the form of amendments to the Colorado Constitution, one initiative required meters to be placed on irrigation wells and a second required owners of existing wells on state-owned "school parcels" to pay the State of Colorado for the water. The second initiative would effectively bankrupt the local Water Conservation District which represents the most organized permanent barrier to exploitation of the Baca aquifer. The initiatives were included on the 1998 General Election ballot but defeated by a wide margin (McAvoy 1998a; McAvoy 1998b; McAvoy 1998c).

On the face of it, the SLV aquifer is merely an example of an on-going political battle. It is certainly that. It is also an example of the conflict between interests and concerning ideas of the "free enjoyment of property." More importantly, the conflict exists in the first place because of the preconceived idea that the water ought to be used. As it sits, under the ground, it is not meeting any standard of "beneficial use" since that use is understood in terms of human use. The conflict is not if the water should be used, but by and for whom.

Ironically the latest attempt to mine the water came from a vocal objector to AWDI's claim. Gary Boyce published the Crestone Needle, a weekly newspaper primarily devoted to disseminating information about AWDI. The paper clearly objected to the claim. Boyce closed down the paper shortly after the initial trial court decision. He subsequently bought the Baca and is the chief stockholder in Stockman's Water Co.

Residents of the SLV understand that once the water rights are adjudicated the resource will become a marketable “asset,” to be taken for private interest. Many residents in the San Luis Valley resent the threat from the city to their rural way of life. On the other hand, people who live in the city believe that they are entitled to adequate water supplies. In fact urban water suppliers are chartered to fulfill that expectation. There is a clash of individual interests which cannot be resolved simply because there is not enough water to satisfy all demand. However, the general approach to solving the problem is to increase the water supply rather than decrease the demand. At some point, the former alternative is limited by the availability of capital. However, the growth potential of the Front Range of Colorado is not expended and capital will be found when the profit margin warrants the investment. At that point, the interests of Valley ranchers, Front Range and even local water developers, the Federal Government and environmentalists will clash again.

Throughout the debate over ownership of the water under the Baca, environmental interests have been relatively silent despite evidence of significant potential environmental degradation.⁶ However, these concerns played little part in the political rhetoric surrounding either AWDI or Stockman’s Water Co. The terms of the debate now come from the market place economies, and by that language, nature is broken into pieces and commodified.

The Anglo-American system of property depends upon a commodified nature. In short, the folly of understanding nature as property is that the legal system cannot accommodate a conception of nature as a system. We are coming to realize that nature is a system but changing

⁶ There is concern that mining the aquifer for the Closed Basin Project already threatens water table levels. There is evidence that a grand scale pumping operation would further lower the water available for irrigation and might cause the ground to subside.

the legal and political systems requires more than judicial tinkering. Property is fundamental to the Anglo-American ideas of freedom and political equality. To change the way nature is viewed is to risk a fundamental pillar of the political structure.

CHAPTER 5

OWNED NATURE: HISPANO SHARED SPACE

When the Spanish appeared in the New World they cast survey lines over the territory and claimed it as owned. This geographic sensitivity is common to colonizing powers (Said 1994, 10) and the Spanish shared the habit with the Anglos further north. However, the Spanish idea was still governed by the feudal relationships that had been overthrown in England. In Hispano northern New Mexico, the *río arriba del Río Grande*, vestiges of the pre-modern ideas of owning a share in--instead of to--something still exist.

Richard Nostrand describes the *río arriba* as an “ethnic island” whose legitimate political boundaries have disappeared but whose continuation as a “cultural region” seems likely to survive (Nostrand 1992, 24-25). Nostrand’s model illustrates the idea that centuries of living on the land can create the “geographical outcome” of a homeland even if it is not legitimized by national boundaries. This illustrates the sense of belonging and of sharing invested into material practice within the territory. The implication of the term “homeland” for this “geographical outcome” implies that the sense of place is a sense of belonging at a level beyond private ownership. In contrast to the dominant Anglo concept of land as a place for individual development, Hispanos conceive of the land as a part of a communal, shared space. This conception is apparent in the vestiges of practices developed through the period of Spanish and Mexican rule including the traditional land grants with common lands (*ejidos*) and irrigation systems (*acequias*). The continuation of these sharing practices reinforces the image of an Hispano Homeland in northern New Mexico.

The Concept of Shared Space

The concept of shared space is reflected in the land and resource policies developed from the time of the Spanish conquest. Under Spanish imperial rule, land and natural resources were held in common under a feudal system of royal patrimony. Royal authority was legitimated by and tied to pre-Reformation Catholicism. The two governing institutions--Church and Royal House--were highly centralized organized around one power and a subsequent chain of authority. The notion of a community as a collection of individual interests is a product of the Reformation and such an idea is not part of the Spanish colonial heritage of the Hispano. Rather, their orientation was to a community that transcended any single individual. Part of the success of any local community was the allocation of resources for the good of the whole.

Colonial administrators carried their traditions with them to the new world. The vicissitudes of life in an isolated desert required local developments to emerge. The ensuing system of land and water allocation was Spanish in authority and form but distinctly *nuevo mexicano* in detail and practice.

Traditional Land Tenure

The tradition of Hispano land tenure has its roots in Castilian land practices. Land tenure in Castile incorporated royal and municipal public domain with private control (Ebright 1989, 3). Land remained part of the royal patrimony unless it was specifically allocated to a municipality or individual. Statutes controlling the use of municipal grants usually included an allocation for *ejido* or common land. Unallocated royal land was considered to be “commons in the public domain” (Vassberg 1989, 12). Public buildings, like government offices, shops and the church were aggregated around a central meeting place. The *ejido* was used for pasturage, hunting, fishing and timber. Private land was available for all other uses including family gardens

and homes. The entire complex made up the community. Members of the community lived in a feudal hierarchical relationship.

The northern border of New Spain stretched to the Arkansas River which runs out of the Sangre de Cristo Range east across southern Kansas and ultimately to the Mississippi. The borderlands were a considerable distance from the colonial center in Mexico City, and travel was difficult. Nomadic native tribes camped along the Arkansas and often raided the Spanish settlements. Encroachments from other European cultures from the east also threatened the northern border. When the Spanish re-conquered New Mexico after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, colonial government in Mexico City viewed northern New Mexico as a military buffer zone rather than an important source of wealth (R. Ortiz 1980, 40). The local territorial government was seated in Santa Fe and the governor reported to Mexico City. However, communication and trade was sporadic. Bounties and taxes often went unpaid. This relative isolation allowed the *creole* Spaniard to acclimate and acculturate himself to the new territory and to make it a home.

Land Grants

When the crown allocated land in the northern New Mexico it used a process of land grants similar to the Castilian system in Spain. However important colonial and royal legislation was, “it was the interpretation of this legislation, a judicial function, that gave the Spanish empire in America its unique contours” (Meyer 1996, 113). The policy-makers relied on their experience, their customs and their imaginations (see Cline 1964; McKnight 1989). The adjustments for living in the high mountain desert engendered deviations relative to land apportionment, water apportionment and the interest of native populations. Throughout the process of legal codification and communal practice, the concept of a shared nature was retained.

In accordance with Spanish tradition, land and water were allocated through a process of land grants or *mercedes reales*. Land grants were issued by the authority of the crown or Mexican national government. The local process of allocation was controlled by the governor of the

territory in Santa Fe and overseen by the *alcaldes*--local officials akin to mayors (Jenkins 1976, 38). Most early land grants were made to individuals. Though carrying the traditional imperative for sharing but they were intended to achieve a settlement in a new colony. Most recipients of land grants in the new world were not of the aristocracy at home. The appeal of land in the new world contained the possibility of becoming a landed aristocrat. Many of the individual grants were also made to missions. The appearance of the ethic of sharing in legal cases and administrative decisions suggests that the ethic existed within the tradition of the *padres y conquistadores*.

Later, communal grants were also issued. A communal land grant allocated a piece of territory to a group of people mostly to "groups of landless heads of Spanish families, usually closely related by blood or marriage, as well as to groups of *genízaro* (exiled) Indians." Members of the group were granted specific tracts with water access for agricultural purposes while woodlands and pasturage were held in common. In the early 1840's Anglo/Hispano alliances formed and speculated in land. The land grants made under these conditions were often quite large. They were "clearly illegal" but many remained in place by virtue of the political chaos that surrounded the area (Jenkins 1976, 38-39).

The land grants functioned as a kind of zoning. In Spain, statutes regulated uses in municipal land grants. Land was to be divided first into *solares*, then into *ejido y dehasas*, then into *propios*¹ (Tyler 1989, 24; Vassberg 1989, 12). Towns were planned on a concentric land use scheme. Government buildings, the church and shops were built around a plaza with arable land around the perimeter of the town while exterior parts of the municipal grants were common land used for grazing and timber. For the most part this pattern is recreated in the *río arriba*. Settled communities contain a central square with municipal, religious and commercial buildings

¹ *Solares* are town lots. *Ejidos* are "unplanted, unenclosed areas used for grazing, recreation, a place for stray animals and a garbage dump. *Dehasas* are pastures which may also be cultivated grass and *propios* are lands owned by the municipality and leased out to provide income for the town.

surrounding an open space. However, since access to water was extremely important, the land allocation for family garden plots extended in a linear pattern away from the river's course. Rather than the circular pattern of the Castilian landscape, the pattern in northern New Mexico resembles ribbons extending from a central line. Although the land parcels have become very narrow as they have been split for successive inheritances, the social ethic of communal sharing, providing right in, rather than to, has remained.

Water Usage

In reference to water allocation the first interest of the Spanish colonial administration was for domestic use. The primary legal codification or *Recopilación* of 1681, provided "that all waters in the New World should be common to all inhabitants...whatever local provisions might be established should be conceived so as to promote public welfare" (Simmons 1972, 140). General personal use of water was granted by "common understanding." Available water could be used for daily needs without specific grant.

Agricultural and industrial uses of surface water were available through specific grants. The grants were revocable if they were seen to impede the common need. All of the legal codes and case law agreed that the operative administrative and judicial principle was one of communal interest over private interest. The only right that came with a land grant was for water which originated on that property (Meyer 1996, 119-120). While excess water could be sold, the water grant could not be. Unlike the Anglo system, the water could not be alienated. If the land was sold, the water was sold as well. The common understanding was that excess water would be used by indigents (Meyer 1996, 138). The administrative rule was '*proportional sharing*, not public rights" (Tyler 1990, 13 italics in original).

Land grants also specified how much acreage could be irrigated. The only type of land designation that carried an implicit grant for agricultural water rights was a "*huerta*" or family garden. *Labores* seemed to carry an implied water right based on a common rather than individual

or household need. “The *labores* was designed for intensive agriculture and orchards needed to feed the local non-agrarian population and to provide excess agricultural production for missions and Indian communities” (Meyer 1996, 129). If excess water existed, that water could be bought, leased and sold even from the common stores. Also, land grantees controlled the use of ground water sources that originated on their property (*sobras*). However, even private property rights carried an obligation to care for others. *Sobras* were usually used to sustain the very poor (Meyer 1996, 138). Conflicts between users which could not be settled privately were adjudicated through a judicial mechanism called the *repartimiento de aguas*. The *Recopilación* stated that *repartimientos* were to be made “such as to offend no one.” The whole idea was to “find an equitable solution on the basis of available water” (Meyer 1996, 133-135; see also Baxter 1990).

From this examination of land and water allocation we can see that the primary concern of the governors of colonial New Mexico was the communal interest. This was fundamentally a social system based on the feudal notions of a multiplicity of interests in any one manor with divisions of use governed through a hierarchical set of authorities. This practice was assisted by the need for cooperation in the desert. The Spanish perceived natural resources as an essential part of the community and reserved for themselves authority to allocate them for the good of the commons. A fateful sense of the “tragic life” also worked in conjunction with that patrimonial system of allocation.

Of course, the Hispano territory was not completely isolated. Anglo ideas, economics and exploitation have caused significant upheavals in the traditional way of life. The need to replace the resources of the *ejido* has forced the Hispano into the cash economy. The need has caused many to seek employment in the city or to engage in migrant agricultural labor. For many years, men would travel to far away fields while the women would stay and manage the family land. Later, many of the women began to join their men in the fields. The effect of migrancy on the communities of the Hispano has been to spread the community across wide expanses of territory and to strengthen the communal ties of family and ethnicity (Deutsch 1987, 201). For

those Hispano descendants of the Spanish colonials who remain in northern New Mexico two particular vestiges of their heritage of sharing remain operational: the *ejido* and the *acequia*.

Ejido

The meaning of shared over privately owned resources can be seen in the division of land grants into both individual and common land. The *ejido* connoted a space open to everyone for hunting, fishing, timber and grazing as the need required. Water resources were also “public domain” as the first consideration in the allocation of this scarce resource was public need. The *ejido*, in conjunction with land tracts granted to families for individual use, provided the necessary material conditions for life for even the very poor. The *ejido* was not “owned” but held in common under the terms of the land grant or under the common understanding about the nature of the royal patrimony.

Ownership and property rights of the Mexicans became an issue after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848. In theory, the property rights of the erstwhile Mexicans were protected. Article VIII of the Treaty recognized priority and validity of land grant claims; Article IX stated that all Mexican citizens who elected to become U.S. citizens “shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty, their property, and the civil rights now vested in them.” However, the claims had to be proven within the Anglo-American political system. (Jenkins 1976, 40). The size and shape of land plots, the shared interest rather than specific ownership position in the *ejido*, the tradition of splitting property for inheritance and the tradition of access to resources as communally needed all conflicted with the Anglo notion of nature’s resources segregated into rational, economic units with title vested in specific persons or left in the public domain.

The process of validating land claims within the Anglo-American system proved difficult. Despite the assurances in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo the United States government delayed six years before taking action on certifying title to the land grants. In the interim, land speculation

was rampant (Jenkins 1976, 40). Ebright's studies of the land claim process expose that many Hispanos were exploited by people who were able to manipulate a situation for their own profit (Ebright 1993; Ebright 1994). When the national government did act, it created the Office of the Surveyor General "to investigate the origin and nature of claims; to segregate land documents from the official archives; to encourage land grant claimants and the Pueblo Indians to bring in the papers for adjudication; to examine the records and to hear the petitions of claimants" (Jenkins 1976, 41). Later the Court of Private Land Claims was created to adjudicate land claims. Both the Surveyor and the Court required paper documentation to support land claims. This was often hard to find. Grants made prior to the Pueblo uprising of 1680 were impossible to validate as the natives destroyed all records after the Rebellion. Later documents were lost or illegible. Official copies were kept in Santa Fe, but many were lost to fire in a temporary storeroom. Many lost land; everyone lost access to the *ejido*.

In the Hispano system the *ejido* was part of the grant and every family had access to it. It was not owned but merely used. In the Anglo-American system, unowned territory was available for redistribution. Land claims included claims to the *ejido* but it was often difficult to decide how to apportion a private interest in "common" land where title was held by a multiplicity of undifferentiated interests.

In practice, the *ejido* of the Hispano was claimed as public domain in the United States just as the Spaniards had alienated the natives 200 years earlier. It became open, uninhabited space that could be sold or otherwise allocated through the Federal Government. In any case, it was not any longer free to use as the need required. The loss of the *ejido* created an economic hardship for the Hispano which has not ever been overcome. It remains a cause of resentment for the Hispano that has occasionally flared into political protest.

Tijerina and the *Alianza Federal de Los Mercedes*

Much of the *ejido* lie within National Forests or on state-controlled land. During the 1960's an evangelical preacher named Reies Tijerina rallied a group of Hispanos from Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico to a protest against the illegal taking of the *ejido* from the Hispano.

Tierra Amarilla is a small village in Río Arriba County that lies along the Chama River. The area is in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. It is sparsely populated and surrounded on all sides by state and national owned land. Tierra Amarilla is not very far from the first Spanish settlements. Far away from the centers of colonial and state administration, the area has a tradition of independence and resistance (Lecompte 1985). The area is extremely poor. For most full time residents, the economy is still agriculture but it has been seriously impacted by capital commodification of land, the imposition of the national forests, wilderness area designations of state land and a cash economy.

In 1967, was a vibrant and charismatic speaker with a dream of taking back the Hispano homeland. One of eight children of a Texas migrant worker, Tijerina was the product of the poverty that motivated the Chicano *movimiento*. He was also driven by a lively intelligence and a sense of shame for his father's lack of resistance. An autodidact, Tijerina learned Christianity and the law. He was ordained in the Church of Christ but later defrocked. Nonetheless, he continued to preach and retained a remarkable capacity for oratory. Tijerina found his cause in the poverty of the Hispano and its source in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. In Tierra Amarilla he found a group of people willing to act with him to redress the grievances of the new mestizo breed of Chicanos against the land-hungry Anglo.

Tijerina argued that Article X of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo guaranteed the Hispano farmers control over their land and that the United States had failed to live by the provisions of the Treaty. According to Tijerina's reading of the treaty, The Carson National Forest in northern New Mexico was constituted by an illegal taking. The land actually belonged to the owners of the old land grants who had been unjustly dispossessed of their *ejido* by the Surveyor General and the

Court of Private Land Claims. Tijerina took his case to the government officials in Washington but was unsuccessful. He moved into acts of civil disobedience. The first act that received public attention was the occupation of the Echo Canyon Amphitheater.

Echo Canyon Amphitheater is a geographic curiosity. Millennia of drainage has carved a colorful scoop-shaped hollow in one of the sandstone cliffs that mark this land of *mesas* and *valles*. The sight is visible and accessible from the highway. It is situated in the Carson National Forest and the Forest Service has constructed a picnic ground between the Amphitheater and U.S. Highway 84. Tijerina's *Alianza Federal de Mercedes* occupied the campground and claimed the territory as separate from the United States. The Forest Service rangers came and the *Alianzistas* met them with shotguns. Arrests were made and the picnic ground returned to Federal control.

Alianza had support outside its membership. Governor Cargo, an Anglo, was sympathetic and willing to converse with Tijerina and his group. The Governor's wife had contributed money to the cause. Others in the state were less sympathetic. Within the Hispano community, the reactions were mixed. Many were offended by his approach. Many approved of his disruptions but were not openly supportive. Many believed that he was simply a troublemaker.

In the summer of 1967 threats to disband a meeting of the *Alianza* were carried out by local officials. The *Alianza* assembly was peaceful and the arrests made were clearly in violation of the 1st Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Members of *Alianza* believed that once again they were being mistreated but that their complaints would find no redress in the power structure. They needed to make a statement.

On June 5, 1967 some *Alianza* members entered the Rio Arriba County courthouse in Tierra Amarilla armed with shotguns to make a citizen's arrest of the District Attorney. Stories about the events of that day differ but in any event shots were fired and the County Sheriff was wounded. The protesters escaped from courthouse and headed into the mountains taking a sheriff's deputy with them. The notorious Court House Raid had occurred.

The sheriff's department called in the New Mexico State Police. They were nearby anyway as Tierra Amarilla and Tijerina were known to be trouble. The police moved into the mountains toward the village of Canjilon after the *Alianzistas*. The raiders were not found but the police herded their friends and families from a backyard barbecue into a local sheep pen and kept them there overnight. The police hoped to entice the men out of the mountains in reaction to this incarceration. The raiders did not come out of the mountains and hostages were released in the morning.

The National Guard was called in. They brought tanks and 60,000 rounds of ammunition. When they reached Canjilon they discovered that tanks were not effective in steep mountain terrain. In the end, the artillery was not necessary. Tijerina was captured at a local gas station several days later. The others were soon arrested, too. Tijerina said later that he feared that many of his people would die if he and his men did not surrender.

Other reports say that the Governor, who had been out of town when all of this happened, returned and began conversations with Tijerina. The Governor, to this day, says that if he had been in town, none of this would have happened, because he had been talking to *Alianza* and something would have been done about the illegal raid. Still and all, it happened and the government reacted. Tijerina became front page news, even in the New York Times. Tijerina was arraigned on 150 charges. He would later be tried on three counts of kidnapping. He would be acquitted of those charges but would serve a three year sentence for the occupation of Echo Canyon (Bernard 1972; Blavis 1971; Ebright 1993; Ebright 1994; Gardner 1970; Jenkinson 1968; Klein 1997; Knowlton 1985; Knowlton, 1989; Lecompte 1985; Nabokov 1969; Novick 1988; Steiner 1969, 1970).

Jefferson wrote to James Madison in reference to Shay's Rebellion: "I hold that a little rebellion is now and then a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. Unsuccessful rebellions indeed generally establish the encroachments on the rights of the people which have produced them" (Peterson 1984, 882). The newly born United States

government did not listen to Jefferson. Nothing changed in that regard in the ensuing 180 years. Tijerina and the *Alianzistas* were cast as troublemakers and no one in power pursued redress for the resentments that caused the uprising. According to an Albuquerque newspaper, the mere name “Tijerina” can still incite negative responses. Tijerina’s relatives have trouble renting apartments and refuse to answer questions about Reies’s whereabouts. Tijerina himself showed up in a local newspaper on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the courthouse raid. His words are still messianic but his cause has changed and he is unlikely to enlist recruits anymore (Klein 1997).

Today Tierra Amarilla is quiet. The courthouse still shows the holes in the plaster created by the gunshots on that July day. The people still farm the dry land and life goes on. However, the ability of an irritant like Tijerina to raise the resentment of a group of normally pastoral farmers to acts of civil disobedience against the Federal Government reflects the depth of feeling for the *ejido*. The reaction which such a small scale protest can incite also suggests the level of concern and antipathy that entrenched interests have toward this culture and toward the idea of a shared interest in property.

Other Issues in the National Forest: *Ganados del Valle* and the Carson

Not all Hispanos have taken the route of active protest. Much of the *ejido* was incorporated into the National Forests or other state controlled “public land.” With the advent of the National Forest, it would appear that the Hispano had only traded one central administrative authority for another. However, the Anglo-American priorities rarely coincided with the Hispano interest. When the Forests were first introduced at the turn of the twentieth century, they were intended to keep certain “wild” lands out of the hands of speculators. Over the course of their history, the National Forests have become large recreational facilities and resource shops. The resources are subject to rules about gaming seasons and other use restrictions. These do not favor the small Hispano hunter but instead favor Anglo-Americans in search of a wilderness in

which to discover their “self,” mere vacationers and/or commercially minded utilitarians whose image of the forest was as the producer of commodities to be bought and sold. Conflicts over the protected forests still occur. The shepherding collective called *Ganados del Valle* offers an example.

Ganados del Valle is a cooperative of sheep herders in Los Ojos, a small community on the Chama River in northern New Mexico. These shepherds have traditionally raised *churro* sheep. The breed is rare and well adapted to the high altitudes and dry conditions of the mountains in northern New Mexico. The sheep provide the raw materials for a group of weavers in Los Ojos. This local economy has been in place for centuries however it has become profitable of late due to an influx of wealth into nearby Santa Fe. As the demand for the weavings of Los Ojos has grown, the shepherds have had to find pasturage for larger flocks. The traditional pasture, part of an old land grant, now lies within a state controlled wilderness and is not open to sheep grazing. *Ganados* claimed that the land was illegally guarded from traditional uses. Embedded in this claim is the notion that the task of sheep raising is more than a capitalistic venture but is part and parcel of the traditional way of life of the Hispano peasant in Los Ojos. The cooperative asserts a right to continue its traditional way of life that supersedes the state’s right to control the wilderness area. The state of New Mexico does not agree.

The public forests, managed by either the National Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management, regulate grazing on public land through the sale of permits. Cattle ranchers argue that sheep ruin grazing land for cattle and oppose shepherding. The shepherds have grazed on forest land without permits and argued that they are making use of an ancient right protected by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo.

Shepherding is not the only way that Hispano practices have conflicted with the U.S. administration of public land. Like most of the public lands held by the National Forest Service, the Carson National Forest in Northern New Mexico provides the opportunity for Anglo-Americans to experience “the wild.” The forest covers a wide territory and varies from savanna

grass land to high alpine. It is managed by the Forest Service for “multiple use” that is, parts of it are accessible by recreational vehicles, hunting and fishing are allowed as are snowmobiles and cross-country skiers. There are campgrounds and backpacking trails. The Forest is selectively logged and grazing permits are issued. Uses are determined through a standardized study and reporting process that uses standard models for forest eco-systems. The primary goal of the public agencies is to maintain the forests for the beneficial use of Anglo-American citizens. The models consider economic potentials of forest products but do not consider aesthetics.

Hispanos regularly take advantage of the resources in the national forest. They are not generally recreational users but they do make use of the permit process that provides access to the forest resources: timber, game and grazing space. However, they do suffer a hardship for it. The Carson National Forest was once the communal territory of Hispano groups/village in the area. Prior to the imposition of Anglo land policies, the forest was open and available to the local residents to hunt, fish, log and graze at their will. When the National Forests came at the end of the nineteenth century, these practices were curtailed. The subsistence life of the Hispano farmer now requires cash and a permit. From the perspective of many Hispanos, a source of everyday needs has been taken away to be given to vacationing Anglos. When the Hispano attempts to engage in the system he finds that that was once free and available to him is now costly and subject to a the rules of a stranger’s authority. He also finds that his desire to engage in the process of allocation as written by the National Forest Service is protested by well-meaning environmentalists who do not want him to touch the old-growth trees.

Acequia Associations

While the *ejido* remains a vestigial idea within the Hispano community the *acequia* systems remain a working part of the Spanish heritage.

In the Spanish system, water was a shared resource unless a right was specifically granted. While abuses occurred, the system assumed that everyone had right to the water. However,

distribution of the resource was always a problem. The cultivars that the Spanish introduced increased the need for irrigation and a ditch system (*acequia*) was generated. Through a communal institution, the ditches and the system of administering them are still operational throughout New Mexico.

The *acequia* association is a group of landholders who contribute to the manufacture and maintenance of an irrigation ditch in exchange for a share of its water. Before the spring runoff begins, a work party is organized to clear out the ditch and repair any damage. The sluice gates are cleaned and the ditch readied for the summer. The association is spearheaded by a *mayordomo*. This person is often the most important political figure in these small rural communities. Stanley Crawford tells the story of the *mayordomo* whose job is to inspect and supervise repair of *acequia*, regulate the number of days labor required from each member, distribute and apportion water, adjudicate disputes, and seek out infractions. (Crawford 1988).

The *acequia* association ties the rural neighborhood together around a shared resource. The *acequia* is “a sodality which formed the nucleus of rural life in Hispanic New Mexico” (Meyer 1996, 185-187; see also, Crawford, 1988). “The necessity for irrigation, with resulting social interaction arising from conflicts and cooperation inherent in the operation of the system, has contributed substantially to the formation of the social structures of the people of the region” (R. Ortiz 1980, 7). The system survives in face of Anglo-type commercial interests and adverse legal conditions. This is testimony to its ability to work with relatively little friction between members. In this way the continuity of the *acequia* tradition illustrates the concept of nature as resources to be shared for the common good.

In the Anglo-American system, water can be alienated from the land and turned into a marketable secured property instrument. It can be bought as sold as shares. The effect of this manner of allocating water in the southwest has been to remove the scarcest and most necessary resource of life in the desert from the control of those who live there. Land that was once arable can not be used because the water to irrigate it belongs to someone else.

Irrigation ditches have long been a part of the agricultural life in the southwest. Dry ditches with defunct sluices can still be seen in parts of the country. I found one on the property of *San Xavier de Bac* in Tucson, Arizona. In the *río arriba* the water in the *acequias* is diverted out of the Rio Grande and its tributaries. Since allocating the water in the river falls under the general police power of the state, New Mexico has claimed the right to allocate the water. Water rights in some *acequias* have been adjudicated and validated. However, claims are often difficult to prove as the ditches are ancient and the paperwork is hard to find. As Crawford's Mayordomo and John Nichols' Milagro Beanfield War make clear, local water law favors Anglo land developers and Anglo-American land use ideas usually at the expense of older Hispano claims (Crawford 1988; Nichols 1976; see also Cheever 1986; Knowlton 1973).

The continuation of the *acequia* association brings to light another aspect of sharing: the ability of the Hispano system to incorporate strangers. The idea of incorporation has a history in the mission system. Unlike the Puritans who excluded the natives, the Roman Catholic friars intended to convert them. The idea was to bring the truth of the Church to the unenlightened and also to build an obedient agricultural labor force. The natives resisted the conversion but did eventually compromise.

The ability to incorporate strangers is also apparent in the literature of the *río arriba*. It is interesting to note that the most accessible information about life around *acequias* is written by Anglos - John Nichols' Milagro Beanfield War, and Stanley Crawford's Mayordomo. Admittance to membership in the homeland seems to be tied to a respect for the traditions that have been evolved there. Crawford, a small landholder and farmer, acted as mayordomo for his community. There is no contradiction in an Anglo holding the position of mayordomo. It appears that Crawford's election to this position reflects a continued willingness on the part of the Hispano to concede leadership even to an outsider so long as he acts within traditional communal values.

Hispano communities in northern New Mexico reflect a deep-seated cultural concept of nature. This sense of belonging is supported and regenerated by the political thought manifest in

traditional centralized Spanish colonial authority and administration with an attendant idea of communal access to resources. The focus of the Hispano concept is one of sharing within the community rather than individual development. This focus, combined with relative isolation has allowed the Hispano to maintain a cultural homeland. The example of northern New Mexico offers an alternative structure, i.e., a middle ground between Anglo conceptions of nature as a commodified object available for manipulation in the market and as a wilderness to be left untouched by human activity. The necessity for the counterpoint is evident in public policy problem that arise in places like the Carson National Forest and with *Ganados del Valle*.

CHAPTER 6

NATURE IN RESISTANCE: AMERICAN PASTORALISM

In previous sections I have shown the importance of nature in the Anglo-American frame of reference as it relates to the national common imagination and to the public representation of individuality in terms of private property. A third conception of nature as “outside” civil or political society exists in Anglo-American thought and is used to ground pastoral, radical criticism. The Transcendentalists of the nineteenth century are the prime examples of pastoral criticism in the United States. Henry David Thoreau is the most enduring Transcendentalist writer in the Anglo-American mind. Thoreau uses “nature” as a normative force.

American Pastoralism

Pastoralism is a literary style that represents the natural world as an alternative conception of order. Pastoralist writing emphasizes natural virtue that is obscured in practice by sophistication, technology or satiety. It is radical in the sense of finding the root, the germ or essence of a natural moral code and then asserting a need to return to a purified form. The authority of nature becomes the foundation for a reactionary ethics that resists social fashions and suggests a reformation, not a revolution, of a social *ethos*. This takes the form of a reconciliation between the words and their original or pure, natural meanings. Pastoral writing is not straightforward political theory but represents a substantial critique of theory in practice. As a critique of fundamental theory, pastoralism has real implications for the political theory of its society.

The pastoral critic legitimates his construction of nature by claiming an older or more original authority in “nature.” For example, Bruno Snell notes that the original pastoral writer,

Virgil, drew on the authority of the Arcadian myth to ground his criticism (Snell 1953, 281-283). In the process, Virgil initiated a literary genre that criticized contemporary society through an imagined state of peace in nature. He also initiated an additional set of meanings for the term “Arcadian.” In the same tradition, the American Transcendentalists sought an alternative authority for definitions of method, economy and individuality. In the process they brought to light a fundamental conflict in the national narrative’s moral character.

Nature for the pastoralist defines the peaceful, sublime and beautiful. It does not contain anything ugly, contentious, inefficient or problematic. It is a space where a man, acting intuitively and contemplatively, will act virtuously. Such a life is a work of art grounded in the beauty of the pure and simple. The image of the innocent re-evaluates the virtue of sophisticated knowledge and civilization in favor of deeper, purer, more natural understandings. However, the universal terms are familiar to the common reader and so offer a real opportunity to reform the real political practice.

In the United States, pastoralism takes on an additional character. It is not merely a type of literary form but also constitutes a substantial part of the organizing national mythology. Leo Marx writes in The Machine in the Garden:

The pastoral ideal has been used to define the meaning of America ever since the age of discovery and it has not yet lost its hold on the native imagination. The reason is clear enough. The ruling motive of the good shepherd, leading figure of the classic, Virgilian mode, was to withdraw from the great world and begin life in a fresh, green landscape (3).

By being both a model of resistance and part of the constructive mythology, pastoral writing in America represented a fundamental conflict in American political thought and practice. By the nineteenth century, the nation of resisters had become economic conformists. The moral strength that supported a nation of resisters was being overcome by the softness of relative luxury and the temptations of wealth. Transcendentalists went back to many of the same ethics as the early New World pastoralists, the Puritans, but left aside Christianity in favor of a universal soul. They went back to the origins, back to “nature” as the classical liberals had done to find a source

of authority to ground their criticisms of technology and growth. In the process, they generated explications of an ethic of “nature” that could claim to be the original.

Marx argues that the American pastoral writers in nineteenth century New England found “nature” in the rural areas outside the towns but not in the wilderness. This “middle ground” offered some potential for finding a reconciliation between the technologically advancing capitalists, symbolized by the intrusive locomotive, and the wilderness (11). The locomotive tore through the peace of the middle ground. After the train passed, the rural area was no longer stable and peaceful and the writer was left acutely aware of “two states of consciousness.” Pastoral writing illuminated the contradiction in America between the desire to build the new Eden and the desire to develop financially and technologically by bringing “a world that is more ‘real’ into juxtaposition with an idyllic vision. It may be called *counterforce*” (25, italics in original). The effect of this counterforce was to engender self-reflection and effect progress beyond a sentimental nostalgia for past peace to a “complex pastoralism” that acknowledged the “the reality of history” (28).

With the tendency to see progress, Marx’s analysis of the pastoral tradition in the nineteenth century is a typical interpretation of American thought. In his interpretation the resisters can be enfolded into the national narrative. The story he tells resonates with the preconception that the American thought evolves as a body. The pastoralists use a writing style that projects reconciliation in a dialectical process of resistance and acceptance. As the nineteenth century pastoralists move beyond naiveté to a pragmatic realization of the passing of an era they induce intellectual progress and American thought matures.

Thoreau: The Anglo-American Radical

Transcendental philosophy and literature deserves its place in the canon of American political thought. It represents an ethic of spirit that is present in the origins of the national character. Any contemporary debate over natural resource allocation today will divide along the

same lines of contradiction identified by Marx with both sides making claims in terms of economy and freedom. The value of studying transcendentalists, particularly Thoreau, is to find support for theories of resistance that are grounded in an integral relationship with nature from within the canon.

Thoreau's writing exemplifies the idea of "nature" as a site of resistance in American political thought. As a pillar of what Buell calls "the environmental imagination," Thoreau is a standard in a field of American literature that defines the "real" in terms of the imagination rather than through science and finds meanings of terms through correspondences with natural artifacts and events. The environmental imagination does not seek to define nature or to expel it but accepts that human beings are intrinsically and inescapably entangled with nature. Thoreau is important as he "stands for nature in both the popular and scholarly mind" (Buell, 2). His work remains as a clear and accessible description of an ethical position that stands in resistance to aggressive acquisitiveness.

Thoreau's work offered a critical and alternative argument against the *ethos* of acquisitiveness. Grounded in the belief of order in natural history, Thoreau looked for his place in that order. The labor of life consisted in refining one's natural soul. In taking the journey of self-reflection, Thoreau offers an example of a natural being to his neighbors. He is, as Leo Marx says of Hawthorne, an example of the whole in the small (3). Thoreau uses common words but gives them deep meanings. He writes about economy and individuality. His method is ordinary, too. He collects data and draws conclusions. Despite the focus on the individual, Thoreau's writing has a public purpose. He writes Walden to "brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up" (Thoreau, 1985a, xiii).

Perspective

I have noted in previous sections that Puritan and classical Liberal thought were congenial in many ways. Thoreau appears to be congenial as well. He uses a classical logic that

depends on concrete definitions. He is fascinated with the details of the natural world. He looks at natural spaces as vestiges of a process. He seeks a legitimization for his individual psyche and takes the value of independence for granted. Nonetheless, Thoreau's project is to reformulate definitions with true meanings. Truth is found in nature, not in the Puritan's revelations or in the scientist's results. "The wisest man[']s...scheme must be the framework of the universe; all other schemes will soon be ruins" (Thoreau 1985).

To be a wise man requires minute self-understanding. To uncover the actualities of one's nature is to know the details of the natural space that one inhabits. Other men will domesticate nature and cultivate gardens or farms. Such a mastery of resources offers a limited perspective on nature or on the limits of the human being. Real observation of nature must come from "fingering" the scenery in all of its details (Bennett 1994, 28). Thoreau goes about seeing his surroundings from every possible perspective. He is a surveyor of landscapes but his tools are his sense and his imagination. The survey lines are not recorded as maps of territory but as descriptions of the place. In those short-lived surveys Thoreau finds evidence of the continuity of nature, signs of things and times past that he calls "vestiges." To him, the appearance of these vestiges in the present illustrates the omnipresence of nature's logos.

A wise man tries to live a life in which his actions, his words and the universal framework (natural events) correspond as closely as possible. The logic that proves the correspondence is syllogistic. Events are the material of nature; language is the material of humans. Nature can be found in natural events, man can be found in language. Therefore if language can be made to reproduce natural events, then man reproduces nature.

The logic requires correspondences be as close as possible. Refining the correspondence of action to word to nature means describing the relationships between them in all possible permutations. The man must see the whole of his environment in all of its perspectives in order to understand the totality. Minute observation and careful articulation are required. The act of refining language to its natural essence is a service to the universal, a kind of prayer. It is a life's

work. The work and the life are art, sublime and beautiful. The man who can achieve this root understanding is citizen of the universe, the perfect member of the nation originated with a pastoral *ethos*.

Economy

“Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!” writes Thoreau. The simple life is one without the trappings of fashion or capital. “Most men live lives of quiet desperation” because they do not believe that they have any other choice. Thoreau went to Walden as an experiment in economics. He wanted to “drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion” (74). Living in accordance with “strict business practices” Thoreau explored a meaning of economies of simplicity.

In the first and longest chapter of Walden, Thoreau’s uses the language of economics to outline his project at Walden Pond. He writes, “I determined to go into business at once, and not wait to acquire the usual capital, using such slender means as I had already got. My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles”(15). Those obstacle include fashionable clothes, household goods, debts and cash.

In economics, efficiency is measured by cost. Thoreau measures cost by “the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run” (24). Most men pay too much and receive little comfort from the luxuries they labor in the factories and on farms to afford. “The man who independently plucked the fruits when he was hungry is become a farmer; and he who stood under a tree for shelter, a housekeeper...The best works of art are the expression of man’s struggle to free himself from this condition...”(29). As an experiment, Thoreau built his house at Walden, clothed and fed himself amply but at little cost.

He came by the little money he needed by selling some of his wood and doing some trade work. "I found that, by working about six weeks in a year, I could meet all the expenses of living" (55). The accounts were rendered and showed a remainder. Whatever profit came from the experiment is not reflected in his accounts but in his ability to live freely.

In his revaluation of "economy" Thoreau illustrates that "quiet desperation" came from a misunderstanding of the true value of labor and goods. The valuable end of life is not wealth but an honest soul. With that goal in sight, the labor and goods do not have intrinsic value. However, Thoreau's life is not without order or discipline. It is excess--wealth, comfort and luxury--that evidence disorder. Thoreau's exhortations to "simplify, simplify, simplify" represent a call to deliberate about one's life, to make choices and to live within those choices. It is a life that builds structure and requires discipline. It is also an ascetic life but not a lonely one.

The "economy" that Thoreau describes for Walden supports a free individual. It contrasts with the urbanizing aspects of mercantile economics. Since Thoreau's economy is built within the system of nature it also resists the wasteful utilization of natural resources. At the same time, Thoreau's language is familiar. He has altered the metaphors of business, making them narrower and deeper, and in the process, changed their focus. Business at Walden was not about making money. It was about finding soul.

Individuality

Thoreau writes essays about the travels of one man in nature. He is acting on his perception that the native good sense of his community has been overwhelmed misguided ideas of by profit-making, fashion and luxury. At stake in this loss of direction is the ability of the individual to come to terms with one's "self." The "self" is the product of a solitary journey which each man must make. The journey is taken within a framework larger than the political community. It is taken in the cosmological frame of "nature."

The Wanderer

Thoreau is a type of critic that I call “wanderer.” As the term suggests, this type of critic is peripatetic. They resist permanence. Wandering keeps the mind precisely honed. It creates a critical distance and usually puts the wander at the margins of society. Radical distance from society results in solitude and silence. In solitude the life of the wanderer can be memorialized in writing.

In Thoreau’s case, wandering hinders temptations toward the ease of an undetermined and conformed life. It also necessitates an economy of goods and an ascetic discipline while avoiding acquisitiveness and fashion. In the quiet that comes with solitary wandering, Thoreau can free his senses to gather perspectives of the environment around him.

Thoreau’s desire to see nature from every perspective required confrontation with all the angles of life. For Thoreau, time is nature’s motion and if he is to know all of nature’s perspectives, he must confront time. Thoreau goes to live at Walden Pond to gain a perspective on time. This confrontation at “the crossroads of the past and future” tears the veil away from the fashionable definition of settled life--economy--and finds real value “amid the weeds.” In coming to terms with Walden, he comes to terms with himself and his place in the order of things. He writes about the experiment to “wake the neighbors” but also to leave a vestige of the experience to mark his niche in the natural history of the place.

Like the work of nature itself, the work of the self is never finished. The wander must keep moving and keep writing. Thoreau leaves Walden and in the conclusion he writes: “I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare nay more time for that one” (270). However successful the experiment, the time for it is passed. If the senses are true and the reporting honest, such a revision is a waste of time. He does not want to go where other men go. He goes his own way but leaves Walden as an urging that other men to theirs armed only with truth and honesty.

The Wanderer at Walden Pond

The year at Walden Pond was an experiment carried out so that Thoreau could leave a vestige of a way to live the wise man's life. In that way it was a political experiment. Thoreau seeks virtue in the labor to use the right words and use them rightly. Walden is an allegory for the good life and the good life is simply, individually--in accordance with one's niche in the world.

The creation of the self is an artistic project and Thoreau undertakes it by seeking individuality--a life of decision founded in sublime experience (Bennett 1994, 16). Thoreau's means to virtue were poetry and allegory with life out-of-doors as the subject. "The poet's words are the relation of his oldest and finest memory, a wisdom drawn from the remotest experience. Other men lead a starved existence" (Thoreau 1985). Real knowledge of nature can only be expressed through profound metaphors and poetic images that are accurate representations of the poet's experience of natural events. By virtue of their correspondence, poetry or poetic images can then be used allegorically to illustrate both man and nature. For example, when Thoreau measures Walden Pond he discovers that it is symmetrical, deep and clear. These are effects of nature and values of good men. His description of them connects the *logos* of their existence in nature with man's *logos*.

Thoreau as Counterforce

Thoreau's place in Anglo-American political thought is as a radical reformer. He reminds it of its ideal forms and attempts to re-instill those ideals in everyday practice. His ideal form is the pastoral notion of every man knowing himself in nature. He emphasizes the natural innocent man living simply in accordance within the most basic terms. A man of his time, Thoreau's ethic of nature manifests in a sense of reliance on an intelligent self-reflexive being. The Transcendentalist movement in the U.S. serves as the basis of a theory for a secular national moral conscience. Thoreau, taken in the whole as written word and man, serves to project an

ideal of spirit which is necessary for a complete definition of the self first and the rational citizen next.

While Thoreau does not set out to write political theory he does engage in political practice. The experiment at Walden produces an allegory of a good life and a good man. These are essential elements in any political system based on the ability for rational men to choose their own governance. When the government loses its integrity, the citizen falls back upon a transcendental authority and confronts the errant order. "Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it...Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator?" (Thoreau 1948, 282).

It is apparent to Thoreau that the State's power lies in the misguided values of people who treasure property and wealth. The State can dispossess them and so they are afraid. To Thoreau, this is a case of the men being manipulated by their tools. If they lived a spare life without the unnecessary encumbrances then the State would not frighten them. In "Civil Disobedience" he tells of a night he spent in jail because he would not pay his taxes. From his viewpoint, a jailhouse is a waste of bricks and mortar but his night in a jailhouse is an opportunity to find a perspective on the State and its inhabitants.

When I came out of prison...I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends; that their friendship was for summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right; that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices and superstitions, as the Chinamen and Malays are; that in their sacrifice to humanity they ran no risks, not even to their property; that after all they were not so noble but they treated the thief as he had treated them, and hoped, by a certain outward observance and a few prayers, and by walking in a particular straight through useless path from time to time, to save their souls. This may be to judge my neighbors harshly; for I believe that many of them are not aware that they have such an institution as the jail in their village (298).

Thoreau immediately left town for a huckleberry field and put the State far behind.

Thoreau has little interest in government or in theorizing about it. "If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which *is not* never for a long time appearing *to be* to him,

unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him” (301). The best government would be one that “can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow-men.” Until such a state can be found, democracy is the best bet.

“Civil Disobedience” illustrates the character of the ideal pastoral citizen. He is without need of the state. He acts with respect towards his neighbor who returns the feeling. He is independent insofar as he is free of encumbrances and his judgment is his own honed by the transcendental values of nature. He is a citizen who is no more than the self-defined man.

Thoreau ends “Civil Disobedience” with the obviously utopian version of a world free of politics. It is, however, not a state of nature, but a state of man.. Thoreau uses nature as a theater for his own imagination in order to justify non-political meanings of terms. He is not interested in the exterior cosmology as such, but in its ability to illuminate the “mythopoeic power of the human mind” (Marx 1964, 264). By using nature as the alternative structure against the political world he perpetuates the image of an impermeable boundary between nature and politics. If other origins of Anglo-American thought deny or dominate nature, Thoreau makes the opposite mistake. He denies politics. Neither denial can be born out in reality. One of the gains of contemporary scholarship is the realization that this border exists only in the imagination. Reality impinges on a regular basis with cases like the Two Forks Dam and the Carson National Forest to remind us that the two are inextricably linked.

Pastoral Idealism in the National Forests

Thoreau exemplifies the traditional in American political thought that combines transcendental experience in nature with the formation of citizens of good character. His opinion has been shared by many and constitutes a substantial part of the national narrative.

As the public domain of the United States became increasing privatized some land was protected through a series of legislative initiatives. In 1872, President Grant created Yellowstone National Park. Other parks soon followed. Theodore Roosevelt, Gordon Pinchot and John Muir inspired and realized the development of the National Forests and other acts of wilderness conservation around the turn of the twentieth century (Taylor 1992, *inter alia*). A desire to protect “untouched” spaces resulted in the Wilderness Protection Act of 1964. Other parcels of the public domain remain under federal control through agencies such as The Bureau of Reclamation and The Bureau of Land Management.¹ At the end of the twentieth century significant portions of most western states are under federal or state management. Principles of use and management have always been points of contention.

In part of the national narrative the forest and wilderness are understood to confer a kind of spiritual peace on the human soul (Nash 1982, 203). Much of the argument for the forest reserves centers on the need for wild spaces in the creation of the unique Anglo-American character (200). The National Forests also have a place in the utilitarian chapter of the national narrative as they have been managed for “multiple uses,” that is, for timbering, mining, oil exploration, recreation including backpacking, hunting, fishing and recreation. Development within National Forests has led wilderness advocates to search for a way to insure the permanence of the “untouched spaces” within designated areas. The desire to identify and draw boundaries around the “wilderness,” that is of a place that is construed to be untouched by humans, remains.

The desire to protect the “wilderness” can be explained in many ways. A “wilderness experience” can result in an epiphany—a recognition of the sublime in nature and the limitations of human endeavor. This can rejuvenate the sense of “self” in an individual. Many, like John

¹ The Bureau of Reclamation oversees water projects which are used primarily to irrigate private land. The Bureau of Land Management regulates grazing and other land uses in particular parts of the public domain.

Muir, have believed that such an experience can recreate the kind of person suited to a democratic polity. The “wild” may simply offer new domains to conquer. This impulse can be seen in the proliferation of so-called “X-treme” sports like competitive mountain biking and rock climbing as well as in advertisements that portray off-road vehicles conquering the landscape. Whatever the effect of our uses of the forests, I believe that most users of the “wild places” would argue that the place is good for their souls or psyches.

Governments maintain the forests, parks and monuments in accordance with various sets of rules. In 1996 a group of Department of Agriculture officials met in Santa Fe, New Mexico to discuss new management techniques in the National Forest. Among these new strategies is an initiative to improve the Forest Service’s response to soul searching in the wilderness (Driver and others 1996). In an attempt to develop an ecological consciousness among Forest Service managers, the team wrote a document that helps explain the spiritual value of the forest. The document includes articles on the attitude toward the forest, the Forest Service and the United States government in general by the people who live around and/or use the forests. In essence the document argues that part of the management function of the Forest Service should be to make a spiritual experience with nature possible for every citizen of the United States.

A significant portion of the Forest Service document, Nature and the Human Spirit, is concerned with various religious approaches to the wild and to nature. Holmes Rolston III contributes an article in which he states that nature generates a spiritual experience providing meaning extending beyond recognized organized religious institutions (20). In the end, the Forest Service document seems to be suggesting that the protected forests and wilderness serve a necessary function within the community by providing a ground for spiritual and moral development. The Forest Service can provide a provide the space for ethical development outside the political arena that a liberal society needs. National Forests become part of the moral management for the nation as well as a material supplier for cattle and lumber interests.

The Forest Service document encourages a spiritual investment in the common imagination where the abstraction of an “experience with nature” can serve as a point of commonality. The manager’s document is careful to include the spiritual journeys of many ethnic cultures. It presents the National Forest as a source of common ground where these ethnic searches can find a common goal. It is particularly “American” because such an experience would represent spiritual understanding of one’s self both in and against nature. However, the Forest Service does not endorse radical resisters. In fact, activity by groups like EarthFirst! is not only discouraged but prosecuted. In this way the National Forest Service managers maintain their authority over the resource, apply discipline over spiritual “uses” of the forest and assist in the promulgation of the common imagination.

The National Forest Service has a vested interest in the definition of the ideal American and works to reinforce the conception of a firm boundary between the authority of man over nature. The spiritual sojourn into the forest envisioned by the forest managers is not life’s work--like Thoreau’s product of deliberation--but a momentary escape from the real world. The point of the journey is merely refresh the soul in whatever manner the user feels appropriate, not to create a recognition of the dissonance between one’s longing for nature and the advent of technology. In fact, technology is often necessary for the user’s purposes. Thoreau’s experience in nature resulted in a reconstruction of the ideal dialectical relationship between nature, individual and citizen. The Forest Service document does not imagine experiences in the wilderness that integrate or reinforce the boundaries of the individual against the common. Rather it replicates the notion of the forest as a commodity or product and reinforces conformity to the social order.

Thoreau’s criticisms of the mercantile (now capitalist) economic thinking remain as valid today as they were in the early nineteenth century. His work represents the continuation of the resistance between individual consciousness and herd mentality that marks the concept of free

individuals in society. His work provides an example of an ethic that integrates man into nature and he gives us an exemplary form of political dissent.

Taken on its own terms, Thoreau's work is no longer viable for the contemporary seeker of a middle ground. Thoreau's writing is directed at the problems of his time and his choice of terms is common to his time. Despite the desire to find a universal ethical principle, Thoreau finds the contrary structure of a "middle landscape" that is neither city nor wilderness but the marginally inhabited rural areas of New England. Those landscapes are gone, unless one accepts the National Forests as "middle" sites. It is impossible to mimic Thoreau's journey nor would he have approved of such a plan. Contemporary journeys must necessarily take us to different places. Those, like Edward Abbey for example, who have reproduced Thoreau-like journeys have ended their texts in decidedly different tones of voice. Where Walden ends with a sense of achievement, Abbey's Desert Solitaire concludes on notes of anger and despair.

Marx would have us put Thoreau on the historical calendar as a marker for progress in American thought. However, inclusion in the canon of American thought, even as a dissenter, makes Thoreau's work problematic as an exemplar for contemporary environmental thinking. Viewed as an icon of the "America as Nature's Nation" pantheon, Thoreau's work is used to replicate the reductionist model of the American citizen into the Anglo-American form. This continues a problematic tradition of excluding without explanation a significant aspect of the real American experience that sees nature from urban, non-white and non-male perspectives. Such a criticism would have meant little to Thoreau, for he did not claim any authority for those perspectives. However, as part of the model of the American citizen, the exclusion of these points of view is significant.

It is clear to me that fundamental criticism of "nature" in Anglo-American political thought cannot be written from within the traditional canon. However, it does seem necessary to find a critical voice that originates from within the United States. The presence of such an

internal voice negates the claim of sameness perpetrated by the ideal definition of "American." The voice needs to be on the margins of the social order--from the borderlands.

The work of Sabine Ulibarri presented here is one counterpoint to Thoreau. His work is of the pastoral genre and written from the borders of the Anglo-American tradition. Ulibarri certainly projects a sense of self integrated into a place and his work stands in resistance to an aggressive and arrogant disregard for spirit. The pastoral life of the northern New Mexican Hispanos is also a counterpoint to the Anglo-American version of nature. However, there are voices that bring to bear the most silenced aspect of nature--the voice of the human being whose political condition is substantially the product of natural conditions of race and gender. The problem of race is implicit in Ulibarri's work. Radical Chicanas have brought the issue out into the open and in the process they have opened the horizons of American political thought. The work of Gloria Anzaldúa among other has "fronted" the issue of the body as a political site. Anzaldúa's wanderings across the borders of "American" identity is the subject of my final chapter.

CHAPTER 7

NATURE IN RESISTANCE: ANZALDÚA AND DIFFERENCE

In this work, the writing of Gloria Anzaldúa serves as an alternative to the alternative. Like Thoreau, Anzaldúa fits within the category of the wanderer. She is reacting against oppression by idealizing a moment in the past. Like the pastoral critic, Anzaldúa uses a middle ground trope. In her case the trope is a “bridge.” While she resembles a pastoral critic in many ways, she differs from that genre in her willingness to bring questions of the natural back into the language of politics rather than segregate the two. By disrupting the fundamental habit of bifurcating categories, particularly those of human and nature she proposes a kind of politics different from that suggested by the traditional Anglo-American national narrative.

Anzaldúa identifies the fundamental corruption in her social world as the homogeneity of identity that results in racism and gender discrimination. As a Chicana lesbian feminist, Anzaldúa confronts Anglo-American life from the perspective of the totally marginalized. She creates a bridge by crossing categorical boundaries including national, ethnic, and gender categories. Her criticism is directed to colonial oppression from both Anglos and from her own ethnic culture. She takes on traditions that are found in both Latino and Anglo habits. Nonetheless she claims memberships in both communities. The ethics that she seeks is one that crosses dualistic boundaries and attempts to negotiate difference.

Her writing is pastoral in the sense that her life and her writing combine to form a substantial individual resistance to corruption around her. Anzaldúa’s work seeks a connection with the ancient chthonic myths of the Nahua (Pre-Aztec) and seeks access and discourse with this past. She does not describe historical events or museum artifacts but sees the ancient mesoamericans as a part of her history and part of her lived experience. While hers is not a new

endeavor, I find it is an apt and timely one for the search for meaning whose critique constitutes the framework of this dissertation.

Anzaldúa as Wanderer

Anzaldúa uses the motifs of the wanderer. She moves in and out of order and disorder in search of perspective; she searches for self-identity; she writes as part of the process of self-creation and she writes as part of the process of social criticism. Anzaldúa's nature is very different from the traditional Anglo-American wandering critics. Anzaldúa's quest is a female one and she is conscious of the silence imposed upon her by the ascetic discipline of the male wanderer. Anzaldúa projects a feminine version of "nature" that emphasizes the fecund and sensuous. She idealizes the Nahua goddess as a means of touching the pre-conquest past and she universalizes this feminine complexity in order to transcend the effects of current cultural oppression. For Anzaldúa nature is not only situated in the natural history visible in rural areas but in the history of the natural human soul. When the sensuousness of the soul is recovered a bridge may be constructed to heal the wounds caused by oppression.

Motion

Anzaldúa's vision of the individual is not as a monad moving through or across nature as if it were a palette of resources. She sees herself as an amorphous spirit who moves in and out of the conscious, visible world. Anzaldúa has *la facultad*: "the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface...a quick perception arrived at without conscious reasoning. It is an acute awareness mediated by the part of the psyche that does not speak, that communicates in images and symbols which are the faces of feelings, that is behind which feelings reside/hide." *La facultad* is a shift in perspective that can give one an "awareness--an experiencing of soul (Self)" (Anzaldúa 1987, 38-39). It is a frightening thing to see into the soul and courage is required to continually confront those things

that tear the comfortable fabrics of life. Nonetheless, Anzaldúa is drawn by *la facultad* into a search for an ancient mythological authority.

Anzaldúa's search for soul takes her into the realm of the mystic and into a conversation with *Coatlicue*. This archetypal character "is the mountain, the Earth Mother who conceived all celestial beings out of her cavernous womb. Goddess of birth and death, *Coatlicue*. gives and takes away life; she is the incarnation of cosmic process... [simultaneously] *Coatlicue* depicts the contradictory" (46f). When she is depressed or suffering a dark time, Anzaldúa finds that the spirit of this goddess "inhabits" her psyche and they communicate. The boundaries between her conscious and unconscious being disintegrate and she achieves a fluidity of being that is not bound in the present (48). This condition is called *susto* and is considered to be an illness caused by fright or possession.

This excursion into the realm of the mystical is a "prelude to a crossing." The period of disintegration is followed by clarity of thought and a belief in the integration of the past and present, both of which are always present in the soul. Through the correspondence with the past, Anzaldúa achieves the courage necessary to be a bridge between oppressors and oppressed.

To overcome the multiple conquests through the ages she must sift out the noise of Anglo and Spanish and find the voice of the lost goddess. She must "cross over, make a hole in the fence and walk across, to cross the river, to take that flying leap into the dark, that drives her to where she is cradled in the arms of *Coatlicue*, who will never let her go" (Anzaldúa 1987, 49). The ancient chthonic myth is Anzaldúa's authority for the individual soul that must confront her contemporary reality of oppression. Her journey across time relocates her in her own space but with an expanded authority. She has become the prophetess of the ancients, an example of the whole in the small and the representation of a pastoral criticism.

Creating the Self: The “New Mestiza” Consciousness

Anzaldúa’s bridge is grounded in the recovery of a respect for the sexuality of women. Respect for those aspects of nature that Anzaldúa would consider to be essentially feminine- the giving of life, care of the body and death--has been co-opted and corrupted by Europeans of all colors. This silencing of the human as a natural creature has created a blindness that allows violations of the human spirit. Freedom from these violations requires a renovation of the female voice.

Anzaldúa is part of a group of Chicanas who are working to reconstruct the meaning of female archetypes within the Latino culture. The reconstruction of those archetypes represents a revision of the social image of women in Latino society from one of filth and degradation to one of natural nobility. The group nature of this endeavor is important because Latino culture is built on community. The reconstructed view of women is a shared phenomenon. Anzaldúa re-incarnates the myth of *Coatlicue*. Others work to rescue *la Virgen de Guadalupe*, *la Malinche* and *la Llorona*.

Chicanisma

The Chicano *movimiento* conceived of itself as radically different in comparison to Anglo culture but when it turned its eyes inward, its perspective was radically conservative. Indeed it was this traditional lifestyle that much of the movement intended to protect. Among those traditions was “*la familia*.” Chicanos argued that “*la familia*” was an essential element of Chicano identity. “The *familia* values of cooperation, unity, respect, dignity and honor of individuals which are traditional, are the forces of ‘*La Raza*’ today” (Armas 1976, 24f). According to Armas, these values of cooperation, unity, respect, dignity and honor are encapsulated in the concept of “machismo.” Machismo is “a personal code of honor that is self-imposed...a kind of existentialism...[in which the Chicano] learns to respect the space of all others” (Armas 1975, 52). This “space of all others” includes the gender roles and division of labor within the family. It

includes a respect for the authority of the father and the responsibility of the mother. Women-in-the-home were to be provided for and protected by the men-in-the-world. Armas' understanding of machismo reflects a conception of natural, fated gender roles. He implies that women who disputed the ideal of the family rejected her nature and the honorable position provided for her by the community. She also damaged the institution of the family and threatened not only cooperation and unity of the movement but the integrity of the culture.

Early Chicana *feministas* did not dismiss the idea or importance of the family. They did not argue with the naturalization of the family. Nor did they reject the image of the family as the central metaphor for the community. Rather, they argued that sexism should be a *movimiento* concern. *Feministas* argued that “machismo” was used by the Anglo majority to create an image which oppressed both men and women. It was not a form of resistance to discrimination or a source of cultural pride. The *feministas* argued that the internal colonial model which dominated early Chicano theory “[w]as a myth which supported colonialism” (A. Garcia 1989, 223) as it allowed the Anglo to set the terms of the debate. In accepting Anglo authority Chicanos allowed Anglos to set the terms of identification within the movement.

Feministas argued that the family didn't have to reflect patriarchal authority or privilege the relationships with men over the needs and relationships of the women. They argued that the idea of the role of the woman in the family as passive and submissive was “a creation of social scientists and journalists [which has] its roots in two distinctive traditions. The first treats women as constitutionally and socially inferior to men and....less interesting than men. The second tradition treats people of color as inherently or culturally inferior to Anglo-white people.” In reality, women are not powerless in the Latino family structure. They have informal power in the matrifocal or mother-centered family despite the patriarchal formal authority that overlays their position. This informal power is “persistently revealed in the literature.” Despite the fears of Chicanos, addressing the concerns of women would not destroy the family but correcting the

problem of the family would act as a means to recover respect for the power of women (Baca-Zinn 1975, 19-28).

While sexism merited some attention within the movement it continued to cause a schism. According to Garcia *feministas* began to argue for an analysis of race and gender as multiple but separate sources of oppression. In the 1980's the critical questions in *feminista* discourse were concerned with the consequences of the intersection of race, class and gender in the daily lives of women in "American" society, emphasizing the simultaneity of these critical variables for women of color" (A. Garcia 1989, 238). For their own means of resistance, *feministas* did not look to the Anglo feminist movement but to an alignment with other women of color. Since the late 1970's Chicanas have explored this strategy of alignments with other women. The endeavor has produced work like This Bridge Called My Back, published in 1981, that continues to influence Chicana theory and literature (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981).

Chicanismo still relays concerns about the treatment of women in the family. According to Lisa Flores, contemporary Chicanas are attempting to establish a "homeland" of their own. It is a "discursive space" realized through criticism and stories like those of Sandra Cisneros and Ana Castillo (142f). Part of this discursive space is a redefinition of the ethos of motherhood. The ethos of motherhood is supported by two archetypal mother figures: *La Virgen de Guadalupe* and *La Malinche*. These myths have been re-interpreted by Chicanas with readings intended to liberate women.

Guadalupe

La Virgen de Guadalupe is probably the most important female figure in Mexican and southwest Latino culture on both sides of the Rio Grande. *Guadalupe* represents the spiritual mother of the race (Wolf 1958, 34). She represents, severally, the religious, political and racial mixture of Mexican with Spanish or the appropriation of the Mexican by the Spanish. Her image is omnipresent in Mexico and common in the southwest U.S. She holds a focal place in every

Mexican-influenced Catholic Church.¹ She has been an important rallying figure in Mexican nationalism. She has been firmly situated in the service of the patriarchal and national discourses of power. She “has become almost wholly incorporated into a hegemonic ideological symbol to produce a false, pacifying maternal sense of ‘national unity’ for those who are clearly marginalized” (Limón 1990, 407).

According to Gloria Anzaldúa, *Guadalupe* is derived from the Nahua Indian goddess *Coatlalopeuh*, who was an aspect of the earliest Mesoamerican earth and fertility goddess *Coatlicue*. The Aztec culture “drove the powerful female deities underground by giving them monstrous attributes and by substituting male deities in their place.” In the process the character of *Coatlalopeuh* was split into light and dark aspects. Light aspects, called *Tonantsi* or *Coatlicue*, governed health and the growth of crops. More “sinister” aspects, called *Tlazolteotl* and *Cihuacoatl*, “were ‘darkened’ and disempowered much in the same manner as the Indian *Kali*.” The Spaniards and the Catholic Church continued the splitting by “desexing” *Tonantsi/Coatlicue*. Half of her became a chaste virgin who contrasted against the *puta*,² *Tlazolteotl/Cihuacoatl* (Anzaldúa 1987, 27-29).

A temple to *Tonantsi* stood on a hill at Tepeyac when the Spanish arrived in Mexico. They destroyed it. Near the remains the Spanish Roman Catholics “installed their own venerated Virgin” (Gonzalez-Crussi 1996, 5). However, as Gonzalez-Crussi goes on to note, *Tonantsi* was

¹ There is an interesting contrast to be found in the two Roman Catholic monoliths in Tucson, Arizona. The old mission, San Xavier de Bac, is ornate in design and decoration. A huge whitewashed Moorish building that shimmers in the heat, it rises majestically out of the poverty of the desert landscape like a spiritual oasis. Inside, the place is a representation of devotion and it is not subtle. The walls are covered in murals painted directly on the plaster. They have been recently renovated. The altars are made of plaster painted to look like marble. A statue of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* stands at the crux of the aisles in the church. The statue is dressed in real clothes which obviously receive careful attention. The Cathedral in downtown Tucson is a marked contrast. The interior of the church is sparsely decorated with most of the decoration is found in the architectural details. *La Virgen de Guadalupe* is not in evidence at all.

² loosely translated as “whore.”

not so easily extinguished in the minds of the natives. Resistances grew up against the new lady in favor of the native goddess. Tributes, alms and offerings to the Virgin Mary were “whisked away on short notice” and transferred to Tonantsi. Her image appeared on a piece of fabric--some say painted, others say divinely authored.

The image of this mesoamerican *Virgen* is not like the Iberian. She wears a *rebozo* or shawl, not a crown. While the Iberian image holds her child the old “new” world image is pregnant. The Spanish icon is surrounded with stars. The Mexican is “framed by a refulgent sun, while her feet, light as feathers, rest on a black crescent moon.” Lastly the European idol is pale as alabaster; the other is dark skinned (Gonzalez-Crussi 1996, 6 ff). Unable to contain the effect of the old goddess, the European co-opted the symbol and subsumed her into an image of the Virgin Mary, *Coatlicue/Tonantsi* was transformed into first “new” world symbol of female purity: *Nuestra Señora de Santa María de Guadalupe*. The new world was provided a troublesome image of sexless fertility.

This co-option of a native symbol was achieved through the story of a miracle: the tale of Juan Diego and the roses. In the winter of 1531, an ordinary *indio*, called *Cuautlatóhuac* by his parents but “Juan Diego” by the Catholic Church on the day of his baptism and thereafter by everyone, had an uncle sick with smallpox. He went to Tepeyac to pray to Tonantsi. He had a vision of *Tonantsi/Guadalupe* (Gonzalez-Crussi 1996, 8). She showed him the kind of maternal care and love that assured him she was the native goddess (Castillo 1996, xviii). The legend of Guadalupe says that the vision told Juan Diego to go to the Bishop and to tell him to build a temple on the site where she stood. The legend says that the bishop humiliated Juan Diego and disregarded the goddess' wish. The legend says that Juan Diego went back to Tepeyac and Tonantsi gave him signs--roses and her image on his *tilma*³--to prove her existence to the Bishop. The Bishop came to the mountain top and found a flowering bush and saw the image of *Nuestra*

³ cloak

Señora on Juan's cloak. The Bishop ordered the temple built and named for the saint from his original Spanish province. The vision, once *Coatlicue/Tonantsi*, became *Guadalupe* and the chthonic goddess of the natives was appropriated as the new world content for the old world symbol of the Virgin. Her full emergence as a national symbol occurred when she appeared in 1810 on the banners proclaiming independence for Mexico from Spain (Limón 1990, 399; Wolf 1958, 38).

Malinche

Consistent with the split between virtue and sexuality, the Hispano has another icon of motherhood. If *Guadalupe* is the Mother Mary of the Mesoamerican culture, then *Malinche* is Eve. Though an actual historical figure she has been made to carry a heroic load. She is the myth of woman as the bearer of evil. Gloria Anzaldúa and Octavio Paz note that *Malinche* operates in Latino culture as the archetypal “*la chingada*.”⁴ Paz writes:

In contrast to Guadalupe, who is the Virgin Mother, the Chingada is the violated mother ... Both of them are passive figures. Guadalupe is pure, receptive, and the benefits she bestows are of the same order: She consoles, quiets, dries tears, calms passions. The Chingada is even more passive. Her passivity is abject: she does not resist violence, but is an inert heap of bones, blood and dust. Her taint is constitutional and resides, as we said earlier, in her sex. (85)

When Rudolfo Anaya tells the story, *Malinche* is a poor but intelligent woman/child who did not believe that the Spanish intruders were gods.⁵ On the contrary, she saw them as dangerous. She chose to join Cortés, influence his actions and thereby help her people. She fails to save her people from annihilation and is still remembered as both the mother of the *mestizaje* and agent of its destruction (Anaya 1984). Anaya, and many others, conflate *Malinche* with the mythical *Llorona* (wailing woman). *Malinche/La Chingada* is the symbol of treachery caused by the passion of her sex. Her real history is often forgotten under the load of this symbolism.

⁴ From the verb “chingar”--to rape. To use the term to describe a woman implies that responsibility for defilement rests with her.

⁵ The story says that Cortés arrived in South America at the time when myths foretold the coming of a god. Many believed Cortés in his bright metal armor was a god.

Malinche and *Guadalupe*, are the bookends that bind Chicano women (Enríquez and Mirandé 1979, 28). Woman is idealized as *Guadalupe*--caring, submissive, innocent, pure with a moral obligation to bear children. She is in need of protection. At the same time, she is castigated for her sexuality. Her essential being is imbued with evil. Unable to help herself, she is subject to guidance and correction. *La Virgen* is a figure of redemption for the sins of *Malinche* (Limón 1990, 403).

Revisions to the mythologies are becoming more common. Attempts to theorize a life within the new mythologies is part of the project of radical Chicanisma (sometimes Xicanisma). Revisions to the *Malinche* myth restore the historicity of the actual woman by emphasizing her biography and the political reality in which she lived (Alarcón 1983; Cotera 1976; del Castillo 1977; Soto 1986). *Malinche*, also called *Malintzin* or *Doña Marina*, was an Amerindian noble woman sold into slavery by her “complicitous parents to enhance her brother's inheritance” (Alarcón 1983, 185). Her owners gave her to Cortés when he landed at Vera Cruz in 1519.

Martha Cotera writes:

Her intelligence, eagerness to serve, language skills in Nahuatl and Maya, and also her beauty, soon established her in an enviable position with her new masters. Malinche, born a leader, knowledgeable in politics, desirous of her freedom, quickly learned Spanish and became indispensable to the conquest...Unfortunately for her image as an historical figure, she was also taken by Cortés as a lover, mothered his child, and was later discarded by him when he brought a wife from Spain. Symbolically she has represented the thousands of Indian women who through similar circumstances suffered the same fate (Cotera 1976, 32-33).

There seems to be little doubt that *Malintzin* was valuable to Cortés as a translator and a source of information. In this way, she is indeed part of the story of the conquest. Considered as real person with a material history, she can be seen to represent the informal power of women that Baca-Zinn reminds us is still operative within the Chicano family (19). Still, she is only an exemplar of this and not its symbol. When she is considered as an intelligent and sexual woman, as an individual rather than a symbol for the conquest of her race, then her behavior is understandable, even predictable. She had been sold twice by her own people and found herself

in a position of influence within the new power structure. Neither passive nor powerless, Malinche seems to have used her available resources to gain a position of advantage. She seems to have acted with reason and deliberation to achieve a political end.

The image of *Guadalupe* has also been rescued from her position as a “hegemonic ideological symbol.” In the revisions, the symbolic authority is maintained but the content is altered. Jeanette Rodriguez notes that *Guadalupe* offered the colonized natives a “feminine face of God.” The masculine face of God represented conquest while the symbol of *Tonantsi/Guadalupe* represented “forgiveness, mercy, compassion and reconciliation.” These were considered to be female traits and were superimposed on the comforting Lady of Tepeyac who spoke with maternal care. Jeanette Rodriguez argues that this idea allows Mary to be released from the burden of being the Mother of God and allows God to be female (25ff). Given reprieve from male-given responsibility for purity, this feminine God is capable of a sexualized subjectivity. This manner of feminist theology is important to Chicana spiritualism as it elevates women and the characteristics of women in relation to the divine.

Sandra Cisneros notes that the recovery of the complexity of *Coatlicue* allows for Chicano women to overcome the “culture of denial” that tells young women not to get pregnant but doesn't tell them how not to (Cisneros 1996, 48). Cisneros goes on to say that she resented the icon of *Guadalupe* because it represented this contradiction in female role models. *Guadalupe* allowed only “pure” love; Cisneros wanted love that included her body and wanted it to be good and right. Cisneros found this complex symbol in the “rubble of history” when she discovered *Guadalupe's* antecedents:

I found *Tonantzin*, and inside *Tonantzin*, a pantheon of other mother goddesses. I discovered *Tlazolteotl*, the goddess of fertility and sex, also referred to as *Totzin*, Our Beginnings, or *Tzintzotl*, goddess of the rump. *Putas*, nymphs, and other loose women were known as ‘women of the sex goddess.’ *Tlazolteotl* was the patron of sexual passion, and though she had the power to stir you to sin, she could also forgive you and cleanse you of your sexual transgressions via her priests who heard confession. In this aspect of confessor *Tlazolteotl* was known as *Tlaelcuani*, the filth eater. Maybe you've seen her, she's the one sold in the tourist markets even now, a statue of a woman squatting in childbirth, her face

grimacing in pain. *Tlazolteotl*, then is a duality of maternity and sexuality. In other words, she is a sexy mama (49).

Cisneros sees *Guadalupe* as all of these goddesses and *Coatlicue* too. *Guadalupe* is not reduced to the simple representation of pure womanhood, but a complex symbol of sexuality and consciousness. She is not the symbol of Juan Diego but the 'Lupe of the "1990's who has shaped us as Chicanas/*mexicanas* today, the one inside" (50).

It is significant that Cisneros names *Guadalupe* and not a single version of the ancient sources. It is important that the contemporary symbol carry the history of the Spanish conquest and the Mexican national war and the Anglo domination as well as the complexity of the sexual nature of human beings. This revision of *Guadalupe* adds to rather than reduces her meaning. She is pulled out of the past into the present. She represents the hybridity of the mestiza's blood.

Lastly, the symbol of *Guadalupe* has been re-written as a subversive symbol. Margaret Randall notes

[a] targeted group relates to a particular figure and turns that figure around, pointing it toward its own desperate need. Then people look it in the eye, converse with it one on one. A saint or secular being may be spawned by the orthodoxy, but claimed, or reclaimed, by people in need. More impressive still is when groups of people gain self-knowledge and power enough to produce warriors of their own. Control of our history, of our stories, has traditionally been in the hands of those who hold power over our lives. Social change is largely about people retrieving their stories (122).

Guadalupe represents the everyday cares of everyman. Downtrodden souls everywhere seek her kind of care. She appeals to groups of people who are fighting against oppression. Since the Mexican revolution, she has most often been seen as a sign of the Mexican nation. However, even in that iteration she was a symbol of subversion as she marked the Mexican rebellion from Spain. Prior to that, the Spanish church had been unable to quell her spirit and was made to accept and honor her. She was seen in the fields during the campaign by César Chávez to unionize farm laborers in California. She can now be seen as the symbol of women who need to subvert the patriarchal paradigms that oppress them (Randall 1996, 123).

The reinterpretations of the icons of motherhood provide a site of subversion against the dominant paradigms of nature, demonstrate the connections between women, validating the characteristics of the female symbols as powerful and allowing female sexuality to be an appropriate category of discussion. In retrieving the stories about *Guadalupe* Chicanas reconnect their sexuality with their social positions as mothers and women. They present the passion of *Guadalupe* as subversive of both the Chicano and Anglo conceptions of the place and image of women. These revisions have redeemed “woman” from the sign of original sin. She is no longer envisioned as in need of protection or ashamed of her soul. She is an agent of her own. She connects her worldliness with the qualities of “care” that *Guadalupe* represents: forgiveness, mercy, compassion and reconciliation. These qualities are presented as equally valid foundations of a subjective ethics.

Anzaldúa is a part of this tradition of criticism. By claiming to re-incarnate the original version of the goddess, Anzaldúa grounds her subjectivity in this newly found legitimization. She is formed by a more ancient myth. When she speaks to *Coatlicue* she brings the myth into the present. The margins of the world’s definitions do not bind her. She is able to stand apart from them and even to create a bridge across them. The “new mestiza” consciousness seeks to direct a new age toward a politics that can negotiate the contradiction.

Writing the Self: Border Crossing

Anzaldúa uses language to illustrate the multiplicity rather than the economy of life. She employs code-switching. She uses a mixture of English and Spanish, of colloquial and formal expression, of poetry and prose, of polite and impolite terminology. In using this technique Anzaldúa creates a continual confrontation with readers who have a vested interest in maintaining the integrity of codes. One chapter of *Borderlands/La Frontera* makes the point more directly. In this chapter Anzaldúa continues to express her multiple marginalities as mestiza, as a woman, as a lesbian. She notes that Chicanas are ashamed of their language. By using her language she

confronts that sense of shame. To use her own language is also a sign of self-representation. She is her language. It is “twin skin” to her ethnic identity. When she is proud of her language then she is proud of herself and when she can use all of the languages that she can speak, then all of her pieces will be legitimate (59).

For Anzaldúa, listening and speaking the language of the other is a representation of respect. It is a site of sharing that conveys a legitimacy to the soul of the speaker. To be unheard is to be rejected; subjugated; illegitimated. In this explanation for her style Anzaldúa exhibits the need for an interlocutor. One cannot be silent, and if one is to speak, one must speak to someone. It is necessary to come back to the present and talk to others. However, if anything is to be accomplished others must and talk back. The political arena that Anzaldúa describes depends on discourse and negotiation between equals. She is not asking to be included. She is demanding that everyone--both oppressed and oppressors--give up the dynamics of the colonial relationship and begin to respect one another. Anzaldúa is not pleading for mere equal treatment under the rubric of Anglo rights but for an equality of souls in a larger framework. This is a difficult demand as Anzaldúa is telling Chicanos and Chicanas that they must give up their reliance on identities constrained by categories of oppression. Instead, they should find their grounding in the ancient voices of their pre-European past. At the same time, the Anglo must also give up the identity based on categories of superiority. It is necessary for the Anglo to hear and respect the Chicano, not because it is good for the Chicano, but because it is good for the Anglo. Anzaldúa's larger framework is the nature of the human being as an ambiguous, uncertain, fecund, natural creature. In this frame, neither race nor gender has any claim to superiority. Any political decision that ensues from this frame of reference cannot make claim to a superior epistemology but only to experience and imagination.

Unlike the traditional Anglo-American pastoralists, Anzaldúa does not use nature as a middle ground in order to establish a subjectivity of the self. She uses herself as the middle ground between two seemingly incoherent or incommensurable things.

To Live in the Borderlands means you

are neither *hispana india negra española*
*ni gabacha*⁶, eres *mestiza, mulata*, half-breed
caught in the cross fire between camps
while carrying all five races on your back
not knowing which side to turn to, run from;

To live in the Borderlands means knowing
that the *india* in you, betrayed for 500 years,
is no longer speaking to you,
that *mexicanas* call you *rajetas*,⁷
that denying the Anglo inside you
is as bad as having denied the Indian or Black;

*Cuando vives en la frontera*⁸
people walk through you, the wind steals your voice,
you're a *burra, huey*⁹, scapegoat,
forerunner of a new race,
half and half--both woman and man, neither--
a new gender;

To live in the Borderlands means to
put *chili* in the borscht,
eat whole wheat *tortillas*
speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent;
be stopped by *la migra* at the border checkpoints;

Living in the Borderlands means you fight hard to
resist the gold elixir beckoning from the bottle,
the pull of the gun barrel,
the rope crushing the hollow of your throat;

In the Borderlands
you are the battleground
where enemies are kin to each other;
you are at home, a stranger,
the border disputes have been settled
the volley of shots have shattered the truce
you are wounded, lost in action
dead, fighting back;

⁶ white woman

⁷ traitor; having betrayed one's word. Literally, "split."

⁸ When you live on the borderland

⁹ beast of burden, donkey or ox.

To live in the Borderlands means
the mill with the razor white teeth wants to shred off
your olive-red skin, crush out the kernel, your heart
pounds you pinch you roll you out
smelling like white bread but dead;

To survive the Borderlands
you must live *sin fronteras*¹⁰
be a crossroads.

Anzaldúa lives and survives in the Borderlands. She is this hybrid character. She has the capacity to express many sides. Supported by the arms of *Coatlicue* Anzaldúa can create herself in the image of the bridge. Beginning with the image of a beast of burden, she has shifted the Borderland perspective from one of tyranny and oppression to one of hope.

The notion of this life as a crossroads reflects an essential female characteristic common in Chicana writers. The role of feminine knowledge is to be the channel or the medium between incommensurable or incommunicative things. It is in the nature of woman to be able to see all sides; to understand and accept the ambiguity of life and death. Situating herself in her own ethnic position and using a common literary motif she writes engenders the “new mestiza” consciousness that is a kind of feminine pastoral.

Anzaldúa manifests herself to the world through writing. She is her writing. The spirit that she feels in her veins spills out in stories. The activity of storytelling manifests the spiritual images in her head in the real world and makes them available, vestigial. Her storytelling and her writing are public acts. Anzaldúa stems from a communal culture. Unlike Thoreau who is willing to leave the spiritual development of others to their own ability to listen, Anzaldúa assumes the engagement of the public. She speaks/writes in her own way with the expectation that she will have hearers/readers who will accept the task she lays before them. She understands the

¹⁰ without borders

interaction between interlocutors to be a work, in some sense, a shared experience. In this way not only the writing, but the reading is representative of a public and shared spirit.

Writing the Self: The Bridge

Anzaldúa places her body on the middle ground of the no-man's land that is the border between Mexico and the United States. This border represents the primary artifact of ethnic discrimination against Anzaldúa and the people she represents. This line in the sand, drawn in the process of the Anglo conquest, represents a boundary of the U.S. state and of the Anglo-American consciousness. With her voice on this border, Anzaldúa cries out that this line in the sand creates real damage to people--even those it is theoretically intended to protect. Her voice is one that resonates with the ancient goddess of nature who gives her authority. Yet her body exists in the present on the solid earth.

From El Otro Mexico

Wind tugging at my sleeve
feet sinking into the sand
I stand at the edge where earth touches ocean
where the two overlap
a gentle coming together
at other times and places a violent clash.

Across the border in Mexico
stark silhouette of houses gutted by waves
cliffs crumbling into the sea,
silver waves marbled with spume
gashing a hole under the border
fence.

*Miro el mar atacar
la cerca en Border Field Park
con sus buchones de agua,¹¹
an Easter Sunday resurrection*

¹¹ I watch the sea attack the fence in Border Field Park with her waves of water

of the brown blood in my veins.

*Oigo el llorido del mar, el respiro del aire,*¹²
my heart surges to the beat of the sea.

In the gray haze of the sun
the gulls' shrill cry of hunger,
the tangy smell of the sea seeping into
me.

I walk through the hole in the fence
to the other side.
Under my fingers I feel the gritty wire
rusted by 139 years
of the salty breath of the sea.

Beneath the iron sky
Mexican children kick their soccer ball across,
run after it, entering the U.S.

I press my hand to the steel curtain—
chainlink fence crowned with rolled barbed
wire—
rippling from the sea where Tijuana touches San
Diego
unrolling over mountains
and plains
and deserts,
this "Tortilla Curtain" turning into *el rio Grande*
flowing down to the flatlands
of the Magic Valley of South Texas
its mouth emptying into the Gulf.

1,950 mile-long open wound
dividing a *pueblo*, a culture,
running down the length of my body
staking fence rods in my flesh
splits me splits me
*mi raza mi raza*¹³

This is her home
this thin edge of
barbwire

But the skin of the earth is seamless.
The sea cannot be fenced,

¹² I hear the cry of the sea, the breath of her air

¹³ my people

el mar does not stop at borders.
To show the white man what she thought of his
arrogance,
Yemaya blew that wire fence down.

This land was Mexican once,
was Indian always
and is
And will be again

*Yo soy puente tendido
del mundo gabacho al del mojado,
lo pasado me estirá pa' 'trás
y lo presente pa' 'delante
Que la Virgen de Guadalupe me cuide
Ay ay ay, soy Mexican de este lado.*¹⁴

In "From *El Otro Mexico*" Anzaldúa maps the borderland onto her body and finds its correlate in her soul. Her body, in fact her whole being, marks the disease caused by the split in the land and in her people. As *mestiza* she is subsequently a bridge across the differences of both blood and land. Her ability to identify and live with the various heritages in her bloodlines speaks of a hope for the transcendence of racial discriminations.

The effect of the border is not merely associated with racism and the wounds of the colonized. To Anzaldúa's mind, the Anglo-American is not attuned to the depth of the connection between spirit and nature.

White America has only attended to the body of the earth in order to exploit it, never to succor it or to be nurtured in it. Instead of surreptitiously ripping off the vital energy of people of color and putting it to commercial use, whites could allow themselves to share and exchange and learn from us in a respectful way. By taking up *curanderismo*¹⁵, Santeria, shamanism, Taoism, Zen and otherwise delving into the spiritual life and ceremonies of multi-colored people, Anglos would perhaps lose the white sterility they have in their kitchens, bathrooms, hospitals, mortuaries and missile bases. Though in the conscious mind, black

¹⁴ I am the bridge/ spanning from white world to the wetback's/ the past stretches me from behind/ and the present from in front/ May the Virgin of Guadalupe watch over me./ Ayayoy, I am a Mexican of this side.

¹⁵ A kind of medical practice in the southwest United States which includes herbal medication as well as spiritual healing.

and dark may be associated with death, evil and destruction, in the subconscious mind and in our dreams, white is associated with disease, death and hopelessness. Let up hope that the left hand, that of darkness, and femaleness, of "primitiveness," can divert the indifferent, right-handed, "rational" suicidal drive that, unchecked, could blow us into acid rain in a fraction of a millisecond (68).

Anzaldúa correlates colonization, environmental exploitation, racism and excessive scientism with the lack of care for the body. The body is human nature. "Body" includes the mind and the soul. Without nature, the human body will die. To care for the body is to care for the soul is to care for the species. Care of the body requires a recognition and a negotiation with nature. To ignore this is to create oppression. The Anglo orientation to nature is an oppression and cannot deliver "freedom" because it denies spirit.

Anzaldúa argues that all the concoctions of the modern world--Christianity, scientific method, capital, gender and racial splits--conspire against a recognition of the connection between nature, the soul and socio-political practices. She comments that images in the head must change before practices change. To this end she writes and in the writing, creates herself as a bridge between the ancient and the present; between Anglo and Chicano; between man and woman; between differences. The role of the bridge is to span difference--to live "*sin fronteras*."

Re-naturalizing Politics

As a pastoral kind of critic, Anzaldúa offers a moral position that directs attention toward a kind of politics. While Thoreau's wanders toward an independent, albeit more or less de-sexed, conscience that perpetrates the distinction between the rational and the sensual man, Anzaldúa's consciousness is primarily sexed. By drawing her discursive space around a women's legitimate sexuality and connecting it to a history of political oppression she re-genders politics. That is, she turns the nature of a human being into a political question. In the process she breaks down the continual bifurcation in Anglo thinking and politics. She represents what in Bhabha's terms is politics of negotiation drawn under the metaphor of the "bridge."

In The Location of Culture, Homi Bhabha develops the concept of living “in between” spaces. According to Bhabha, the migrant has the best perspective and might see the join that defines the in-between spaces “beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities...those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences” (1, 2). Bhabha calls these “interstitial spaces.” The migrant is displaced and distanced from the contingencies of the colonized world so s/he is distanced from the political expediencies of ideology. S/he is also displaced in the “metropole.” S/he is “unhomely.” By virtue of this displacement, the unhomely author may “negotiate the powers of cultural difference in a range of transhistorical sites.” Bhabha’s unhomely writer does not write to transmit national identities or reinvent traditions but re-inscribes a “borderline existence which inhabits a stillness of time and a strangeness of framing that creates the discursive 'image' at the crossroads of history and literature, bridging the home and the world” (13, 17). The discursive practices involved in this bridging are the site of politics.

Anzaldúa and her writing represent this kind of bridge. “It is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions... At some point on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once” (Anzaldúa 1987, 78). The “new mestiza” consciousness requires an acceptance of contradiction and a tolerance for ambiguity. The new mestiza understands herself to be the crossroads rather than the occupant of the borderland. The new consciousness must go through and over her and not around her. She is an aggressive roadblock but one that is negotiable if one is willing to confront the realities of one's own ideas. She is the bridge, a third element, a middle ground that infiltrates the binary splits of the modern world and legitimates a more complex ethical matrix for the upcoming world. Before she can serve this public purpose, she must first take stock of herself and the historical oppressions she is resisting. She must consciously rupture her traditional “small I” from the things she has been led to believe. She must transform herself from

“the small ‘I’ into the total Self” (Anzaldúa 1987, 83) When the soul is healed, the world can be healed.

Anzaldúa does not attempt to heal the whole world, just her own. As a “Mexican of this side,” that world includes the United States. By her inclusion in the category she offers a critique and a resistance to the images of the national narrative from the interstitial perspectives of race and gender. She resists the homogenization of nationalism in favor of a hybrid negotiation of difference that does not seek to re-draw boundaries but to permeate them.

Thoreau projects himself as an example that is appropriate to a vision of self-reliant individuals. Anzaldúa is the product of a communal culture and she does not avoid preaching. One of her lessons is the reinvestment of respect among members of the community. Respect is a two-way street and it is insufficient for the oppressed to come to an alternative source of authority if the oppressor will not listen. The potential of “American”-ness depends upon participation by both sides. If the Anglo does not know what is needed, she must be told.

Respect and reciprocity characterize Anzaldúa’s vision of the new direction:

We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different, to acknowledge your rejection and negation of us. We need you to own the fact that you looked upon us as less than human, that you stole our lands, our personhood, our self-respect. We need you to make public restitution: to say that, to compensate for your own sense of defectiveness, you strive for power over us, you erase our history and our experience because it makes you feel guilty--you’d rather forget your brutish acts. To say you’ve split yourself from minority groups, that you disown us, that your dual consciousness splits off parts of yourself, transferring the ‘negative’ parts only us. To say that you are afraid of us, that to put distance between us, you wear the mask of contempt. Admit that Mexico is your double, that she exists in the shadow of this country, that we are irrevocably tied to her. Gringo, accept the doppelganger in your psyche. By taking back your collective shadow the intercultural split will heal. And finally, tell us what you need from us (86).

This kind of reciprocity between cultures and aspects of single cultures argues for a certain kind of politics. Despite its religious and spiritual focus, Anzaldúa’s “new mestiza consciousness” argues for a process of disintegration and re-integration on multiple levels. This is an ongoing process of connection and disconnection. This is a politics of localized discursive practice between competent subjects exercising individual judgments in an attempt to negotiate a

particular situation. Unlike the “nation” that is omnipresent, abstract and ideologically fixed, this politics is local, discursive, immediate and chthonic. It is a politics of discourse and argument that occurs constantly around disputes between racial/class/gender differences in the everyday. This is where the clash of cultures occurs and it is in the immediate and local setting that the necessary reciprocity must occur. This is the politics of the “in between.”

This is different than the traditional ideal of Anglo-American politics that motivates the construction of permanent institutions as the systems necessary for the synthesis of information (“what the voter wants”) and the production of “good” policy. This is applicable to the negotiations of the boardroom as well as to annual discussion over *acequia* repair, the care of the environmental resources or the name of a child. Where modern theory would split politics away from business or family, the politics of the “in between” puts the process of negotiation between subjects back into these structures. It isn't so much that politics is everything, but that politics happens anywhere at any time. To exclude nature from politics is to create a categorical wound in the community.

Anzaldúa's project would seem to result in precisely the condition she seeks to avoid. When everyone is equally human, then specificity would seem to cease to exist. Difference would not be authorized but completely lost. Ironically, the project of understanding one's own humanity is only achievable through the recognition of difference, because the ideology of nationalism insists on sameness. A recognition of difference and a recognition of the failure of pluralistic politics to reconcile those differences upsets the standard. At the same time, authorizing difference within the boundaries of the United States may free those who exhibit difference to express them. However, the logical problem remains. When the border of the definition of the standard is effectively permeated, then there is no point from which “difference” can be identified.

This problem can be overcome if we absolve ourselves of the task of assigning a defined “American” standard from which ethnic and other groups are seen to differ. The category

“difference” relies upon a standard and that standard remains the Anglo version of “American”. Anzaldúa offers a bridge of respect and sharing. In conveying these values she places herself in the same tradition with Ulibarri and Anaya. In one moment this differentiates her in terms of her history, traditions and political experience from a New Englander with ancestors who came over on the Mayflower. At the same time, Anzaldúa, Ulibarri and Anaya are Americans and rightly see themselves as a vital part of the polity despite attempts to relegate them to a secondary status. Their views of the relationship between people and between people and the earth have a significant share in the American social and historical landscape. The existence of often competing frames of reference is a problem only under conditions that enforce reconciliation into a single definition.

Perhaps this is why I find these particular authors and their shared culture to be adequate alternative structures for a critical journey in American political thought. They bring a concept of respect and sharing to their ideas. That is, within the ideas expressed here lies a potential release for “nature” from its prison as an “other” in “American” political thought.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In traditional “American” political thought, politics is isolated from philosophical questions in favor of a more pragmatic approach. Questions of human nature, including questions about the body, about our relationship to nature and about intimate relations with one another are “philosophical” and private and therefore outside the political. The reasons for the choice are firmly grounded in experience and experiential reasoning. The inception and continuation of a monolithic nation-state requires agreement on an abstract frame of reference. Martin Diamond, among others, argues that the ethos of the “American Way” is settled. The philosophical questions are read and answered. I set out in this dissertation to unsettle it, to permeate the boundaries that surround it. I wanted to bring the philosophical problem of “nature” into Anglo-American political thought by illustrating the narrowness of traditional “American” political thought and existence of real difference in the ethical framework of the community from a non-Anglo source.

Following in the traditions of modern European thinking, traditional Anglo-American political thought operates with concepts of “man as the measure of all things.” The notion of a superior humanity, that found expression in the scientific revolution, in the Reformation and in modern Liberal political theories, isolates human beings in such a way that our social conventions do not consider other beings except as they relate to us. The notion also leads to an arrogance about the meaning and value of nature as a whole. The modern world denies the authority of kinds of knowledge that does not fit within certain categorical boundaries.¹ The arrogance of the

¹ The second chapter of Charlene Spretnak’s Resurgence of the Real offers a good analysis of the denial of nature in the contemporary world.

modern position vis-à-vis nature blinds us to faults in those categories while obscuring many other alternative positions.

The definition of “nature” as an exterior “other” is a part of the frame of reference upon which the Anglo-American identity is built. Anglo-American political thought uses metaphors of nature to distinguish between human and non-human; between members and non-members and between political and non-political. The defining dichotomy produces a denaturalized “self” and a politics that excludes material and human nature from political language.

While “American” political thought tries to isolate itself from discussing fundamental ethical questions, such questions arise regularly. The desire to ignore them is a denial of reality that results in corruption, exploitation and morally indifferent governance. At some point, even the most isolated governing theory must either take stock of its ethical frame of reference or fail. I have gone back to the roots of traditional “American” political thought to expose the concepts of nature embedded in our everyday practice.

In Chapter 2 I wrote of the use of “nature” in the construction of the national narrative. That narrative isolates a white, technological, dominating and acquisitive national character against a series of “others.” Nature, as well as ethnic minorities, are included in the category “other.” In Chapter 4, I pointed to the use of land to generate a sense of place that served to ground an ethic of freedom for U.S. citizens. This ethic has been undercut by an increasing urbanization and a loss of connection between the form of freedom and its content. The modern situation is one of self-serving greed couched within a rhetoric of freedom and a politics that encourages environmental degradation. In Chapter 6, I write of the use of “nature” as a critical site in the works of Thoreau. I argue that Thoreau is a useful tool for instruction in the use of “nature” as a critical site but that the attempt to journey into nature in order to find one’s self does not effectively address the critical questions of “American” political thought at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Each of these implications is countered, in Chapters 3, 5 and 7, with a discussion of Hispano and Chicano/a culture. The alternative structures are intended to puncture the arrogance of the national narrative by (1) exposing the non-universality of the narrative; (2) illustrating the still existent potential for local structures within a global network and thereby retaining a practical reality for self-conscious political decision making, and (3) identifying critical questions in “American” thought as the inability of political thought to address issues of the personal.

In every case I have raised the point of inclusivity. The national narrative excludes the Hispano and Chicano voices but they are American voices and deserve equal valuation in the construction of our political identity. In reality, the American is more expansive than the restrictive, imagined community would have it. The “imagined community” must come to new terms with the reality of social and political difference. Those new terms need to be inclusive and accepting rather than exclusive and discriminatory. We need to re-interpret or re-negotiate our understanding of belonging - to our community and to our environment - if we are to address the criticisms from the borderlands.

I argue that the definition of “American” as used traditionally in the U.S. demands sameness and, as it is currently practiced, must deny difference. I argue that this definition is possible because of the epistemologies that exist in the frame of reference for “American” in traditional Anglo-American categories. These categories are abstracted into universal terms that hide a fundamental sense of racial/ethnic superiority. Compliance with traditional terms requires an erasure of racial or ethnic differences. In traditional “American” political thought, nature is relegated to a resource, utility or metaphoric apolitical place and joins non-Anglo elements of “American” life as an “other.” I argue that the logic that supports these definitions stem, in part, from religious and political applications of the modern mind that segregates man from nature. Any attempt to re-negotiate the conception of nature in traditional Anglo-American thought will

induce fundamental changes in the political thought that structures our political decision making process and the ensuing policies.

If the understanding of “nature” is embedded so deeply into the history and character of the nation, how can it be altered and still have a sense of being American remain? The answer I believe lies in giving up the desire to define “American” in terms that categorically tie the character of the individual self to the citizen. If we are to expand the understanding of “citizen” to include those who do not meet the criteria of the “common imagination” then the frame of reference that underscores the latter will have to be examined on a regular and conscious basis.

Any condition of social re-negotiation incites a period of instability. Any reactionary turn that argues for an imposition of “American” values at a national level will be more of the ill as it will exacerbate a feelings of disaffection and encourage the violent acting out of hate toward others. Rather, “American” political thought needs to grasp hold of the unstable categories and direct them toward inclusive concepts.

There is a body of theoretical work being developed in other fields. Rosaldo’s “cultural citizenship” is one alternative theoretical approach. However, to accept Rosaldo’s idea, the traditional, mainstream “American” will have to unlearn that the quality of his citizenship is measured by his level of agreement with national narrative. Such a re-education requires a critical analysis that can place new ideas in old words and communicate an alternative set of complex relations in terms that people will hear and use. However, it is insufficient to merely redefine the political concept of citizen. Politics and the legitimation of political practices are derived in accordance with values. In other words, it is more important to develop the ethical categories. Politics will follow.

Charlene Spretnak and Carolyn Merchant have both recently published texts that reinvest nature into our political and historical thinking with ideas of nature (Spretnak, 1997; Merchant, 1996). These two works concentrate on the place of women and feminist thinking in a new environmental ethic. In many ways, they build on the criticism found in the work of Chicanas

like Gloria Anzaldúa as they join the subjugation of women and nature as similar effects of the contemporary ethic.

The ethical category at issue here is our understanding of the relationship of the human being to nature. It is necessary to reinvest nature into man and to begin to think of ourselves in local, material terms. The relationship between human beings and the earth, perhaps the universe, is interactive and our ethical categories should reflect the equal importance of the other factors in that environment. When our approach to our surroundings and those things that inhabit the environment is one of shared belonging, then arrogance towards others is not a logical possibility. It is replaced with a humility that comes from understanding the condition of being one among many where “the many” are not like us but share the same space.

It is important to note that concepts of freedom and an individual self should not be discarded. Nor can they be completely liberated from the bond of Anglo-American history and political thinking. Concepts of self-determination are the core of any forward-thinking political theory of difference. Without it, no single person has any authority or power with which to resist authoritarian forces, be they states, corporations or highly persuasive charismatic personalities.

Self-determination does not imply the relativist position that “anything goes.” “Selves” are determined in reference to some frame held to be transcendental or sacred. If we can divorce our “selves” from our sense of national identity then “selves” will not be at risk in the process of political debate. An integrative understanding of human beings in nature is not amenable to acquisitiveness or to the abstract common imagination. Rather, such a cosmological approach suggests a more constrained, local politics; one that is bounded by natural limitations rather than geo-political mapping. In this scenario we do not need to define our “selves” and our citizenship in the same terms but can actually see ourselves as members of multiple political arrangements on various scales often using different elements of our “selves” at once.

If the need to define is voided, then the need to retain “nature” and “race” as categories of other will also be voided. The notion of the earth as a system as well as kinds of knowledge

that are not scientific can achieve legitimacy in mainstream decision making. However, the inclusion of a number of policy alternatives opens a horizon for innovative policy decisions. In opening the horizon we can permanently permeate the lines around "American." We can concentrate on a language of community and locality, of individual potential and of value and spirit in the land. These too are American words and we can use them to instill inclusive concepts. We must listen to those who have experience in sharing spaces with others. Listening does not require a wholesale appropriation of that way of being. It does however, open a horizon to an argument that was heretofore unheard. Such a theory may not stop rivers from being dammed or aquifers mined, but it may disrupt the arrogance of the modern way of thinking, free "nature" as well as non-Anglos from the condition of "other" and give direction to the next generation of political thought in and about the United States.

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