CRITIQUING THE REPRESENTATION OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN SELECTED NARRATIVES OF LOUIS L'AMOUR AND LARRY MCMURTRY

ALEXANDER LALRINZAMA

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

CRITIQUING THE REPRESENTATION OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN SELECTED NARRATIVES OF LOUIS L'AMOUR AND LARRY MCMURTRY

BY

ALEXANDER LALRINZAMA

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English of Mizoram University, Aizawl

Department of English

Mizoram University

April, 2019

DECLARATION

I, Alexander Lalrinzama, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the result of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis for the award of any previous degree to me, or to anybody else to the best of my knowledge, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University or Institute.

This is being submitted to Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

(Alexander Lalrinzama)

(Prof. Margaret L. Pachuau)
Head
Department of English
Mizoram University

(Prof. Sarangadhar Baral)
Supervisor
Department of English
Mizoram University

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"Critiquing the Representation of Native Americans in Selected Narratives of Louis L'Amour and Larry McMurtry"** written by **Alexander Lalrinzama** has been written under my supervision.

He has fulfilled all the required norms laid down within the Ph.D. regulations of Mizoram University. The thesis is the result of his own investigation. Neither the thesis as a whole nor any part of it was ever submitted by any other University for any research degree.

(PROF. SARANGADHAR BARAL)

Supervisor

Department of English

Mizoram University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by giving thanks to God for enabling me to both undertake and complete this monumental task.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Prof. Sarangadhar Baral for taking the time to meticulously go through my work in a timely manner and sharing his vast storehouse of knowledge with me.

Thanks are also due to the Head and the other faculty members of the Department of English, Mizoram University for their unstinting support and guidance. And also to all my friends and colleagues who encouraged me in every step of the way and made me believe that this was possible.

A special word of thanks to John D. Nesbitt, author and teacher at Eastern Wyoming College, who was more than willing to help when I requested him for some of his essays on the Western genre. Mr. Nesbitt even went to the extent of mailing me some of his published essays from the other side of the world! And though the package has not reached me yet, as at the time of this writing, I am nevertheless grateful for help so willingly given. I am sure that when the package does reach me, it will still prove tremendously helpful in the future.

And lastly, I would like to thank my grandfather for his support, understanding and love. I could never have done this without him.

Alexander Lalrinzama
Department of English
Mizoram University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION i

CERTIFICATE ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

1. CHAPTER ONE:
   Introduction 1-37
2. CHAPTER TWO:
   Critiquing the Representation of the Indian in McMurtry's Novels 38-91
3. CHAPTER THREE:
   The Heroes of the Western Novel 92-141
4. CHAPTER FOUR:
   The Missing Indian in Louis L'Amour's Landscape 142-190
5. CHAPTER FIVE:
   Conclusion 191-217
6. PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY 218-232
8. BIO DATA
9. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The word "Native American", or more common term "Indian" invariably brings to mind an image of half-naked savages brandishing murderous looking weapons. This is the popular image of the Native American that has been engendered down through the ages, ever since the first White men set foot on American soil. The construction of such an image was understandable in those times, given the explorer's propensity to think of himself as being at the apex of civilization, and all natives as being in need of the civilizing influence which would be graciously bequeathed by him. This image persists in the popular imagination even today. The novels about the "Wild West" or the Western novels, as this genre of literature is now called, have contributed in large part to this image of the Indian that persists to this very day. The generic term "Indian" is one which is used to collectively refer to all the native inhabitants of the United States and includes tribes as diverse as the Apache and Navaho tribes in the South, the Iroquois and Delaware tribes in the East and the well-known Plains tribes like Comanche, Cheyenne and the Sioux, to name a few. The very term represents an attempt to subsume all the differences between these diverse peoples and conveniently locate them under one rubric.

At the very outset it would be useful to point out the difference between the terms "Indian" and "Native American" for they are both terms used to refer to the native inhabitants of America. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., in his *The White Man's Indian* (1978) points out that "the distinction between Native Americans and Indians . . . in scientific terms can be designated as the ethnographic as opposed to the ideological image of the first Americans" (196). Since this study deals with the ideological image

of the natives in the Western novels, the term "Indian" has been employed in referring to them. It may also be noted that the term "Indian" – as opposed to the politically incorrect and objectionable "Red Indian" – is one which is often used by the indigenous people in referring to themselves as a people. Dennis Gaffney in "'American Indian' or 'Native American'?" (2006) points out that "the word *Indian* [did not] fall out of favor with the people it described. A 1995 Census Bureau survey that asked indigenous Americans their preferences for names (the last such survey done by the bureau) found that 49 percent preferred the term *Indian*, 37 percent *Native American*, and 3.6 percent 'some other name.' About 5 percent expressed no preference". In addition, notable Native American authors like Leslie Marmon Silko, Vine Deloria, Jr., and Pulitzer Prize-winning writer N. Scott Momaday use the term "Indian" to refer to the native people in their works, which demonstrates that the use of the term is not considered to be derogatory, even by those who are effectively the purveyors of their culture to the outside world. However, as indicated by the 1995 census referred to above, it needs to be emphasized that naming, with regard to the indigenous tribes of North America, is a hotly contested issue with no real consensus even among the natives themselves. Even the term "Native American" has been objected to, on political grounds, by some native people like Russell Means, a Lakota activist and founder of the American Indian Movement, who feels that the term "is a generic government term used to describe all the indigenous prisoners of the United States" (qtd. in Gaffney). In the face of such confusion and uncertainty, it might prove helpful to keep in mind the Cherokee writer, Christina Berry's observation that "[w]hat matters in the long run is not which term is used but the intention with which it is used" (qtd. in Gaffney).

This thesis is an attempt to examine the representation of the Native American subject in the Western novels. The authors Louis L'Amour and Larry McMurtry have been chosen since they are the most well-known writers in this genre. For the purposes of this thesis, Louis L'Amour's novels *Hondo* (1953), *Bendigo Shafter* (1979), and *The Walking Drum* (1984), as well as Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* saga, which includes *Lonesome Dove* (1985), *Streets of Laredo* (1993), *Dead Man's Walk* (1995), and *Comanche Moon* (1997) will be studied.

Hondo and *Bendigo Shafter* have been selected because they were published towards the beginning and end, respectively, of L'Amour's career as a novelist and "not only illustrate the major ingredients of his western stories, [but] they also epitomize the varieties of story formats he utilized" (Etulain 104). *Hondo* narrates the adventures of its hero Hondo, an army scout who chances across Angie Lowe and her young son Johnny who are living on a ranch in Apache territory. At the time in which the novel is set, the Apaches are on the warpath. Married to an errant husband, Angie and the young Johnny are left to fend for themselves alone on a ranch during the midst of an outbreak of an Indian war – until the arrival of Hondo who looks after them and gradually falls in love with Angie. *Bendigo Shafter* narrates the story of how Bendigo Shafter and the other settlers along with him found a town in the South Pass area of Wyoming. It is mostly about the trials and tribulations faced by Bendigo and the other inhabitants of the town as they try to keep their little settlement and themselves from forces that threaten their existence. The narrative portrays the growth of both the town and Bendigo. It may also be noted that *The Walking Drum* is not a Western but is one of the few "historical" non-Westerns written by an author who is chiefly known as a Western author. It has nevertheless been included despite not being a Western as it

may provide additional perspectives on the other traditional Western narratives of L'Amour. If nothing else, it will still prove the versatility of L'Amour as a writer – his ability to switch from one genre to another and still produce a bestseller.

McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* has been selected since the Pulitzer Prize for fiction awarded to it in 1986 makes it stand out in a genre which has traditionally been dismissed by critics as literature not worthy of serious consideration. The other three books written by McMurtry have also been included as they form part of the *Lonesome Dove* saga. *Dead Man's Walk* and *Comanche Moon*, though published later, predate the events of *Lonesome Dove*. These two novels trace the careers of Woodrow Call and Augustus (Gus) McRae from the time they start out as raw recruits in the Texas Rangers to the time just before they settle down to form the Hat Creek Outfit in the border town of Lonesome Dove. *Streets of Laredo* deals with events which take place after the events of *Lonesome Dove*, and follows the adventures of a battered and alarmingly aged Call as he sets out in pursuit of a young Mexican bandit named Joey Garza.

Louis Dearborn L'Amour was born on March 22, 1908. He lived a highly interesting and varied life. At the age of fifteen he left home and tried his hand at a variety of trades including skinning cattle in West Texas, baling hay in New Mexico, working in the mines of Arizona, Nevada, and California, and also working in the saw mills and lumber yards of Oregon and Washington. He also boxed professionally in order to earn extra money and won fifty-one out of fifty-nine professional fights. During the Second World War he served in the army and became a second lieutenant in the transportation corps, commanding a platoon of gas tankers. These varied

experiences enabled him to come into contact with people of various types and dispositions, many of whom served as types in his fiction.

L'Amour initially tried his hand at poetry and published a collection of his poems titled *Smoke from this Altar* in 1939. However, he gave up trying to make a living through poetry when he realized that he there was not much money to be made through it. He published his first full-length novel *Hondo* in 1953 and it became an instant success. It was followed by numerous other novels and "[i]n 1975, L'Amour surpassed John Steinbeck as Bantam's best-selling author with over forty-one million copies of his books in print" (Weinberg 51).

L'Amour won the Western Writers of America's Golden Saddleman Award in 1981. In 1983 he became the first ever novelist to be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the United States Congress. He was also awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Reagan in 1984.

L'Amour died in 1988. He still continues to be read widely and a section titled "About Louis L'Amour" appended to every L'Amour novel claims that "there are more than 300 million copies of his books in print worldwide, making him one of the bestselling authors in modern literary history" (L'Amour 210).

Larry Jeff McMurtry was born on June 3, 1936 in Archer City, Texas. He is best known for his novel *Lonesome Dove* (1985) which received the Pulitzer Prize in 1986, and was adapted for a TV miniseries starring Tommy Lee Jones and Robert Duvall. In 2006 he, along with Diana Ossana, was the co-winner of both the Best Screenplay Golden Globe and the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for *Brokeback Mountain*. As a writer in the genre of Western fiction, McMurtry occupies a unique position. Though he "speaks in the native language of setting, a language

which generates characters who are functions of their setting, he avoids sentimentality" (Lich 4). In the *Lonesome Dove* series of novels he retains the settings traditional to Western novels. Smoky saloons, wide open spaces stretching to the horizon, long cattle drives, and pursuit of fugitives across waterless wastelands all figure in these novels: however, he refuses to romanticize as so many other writers of Westerns have done. This is what sets him apart from the mass of other writers of traditional Western novels.

These two very different writers, albeit writing within the same genre, have been chosen for they are both outstanding figures in their own right. It might perhaps prove useful to employ the distinction made by Berkhofer between the elite and the popular artist in order to delineate the difference between McMurtry and L'Amour as writers:

> If the elite artist appeals to the few, the popular artist entertains the many. The elite artist presumes a rather exclusive audience with high critical standards searching for new ways of interpreting experience, while the popular artist seeks as large an audience as possible, using the predictable, familiar ways of looking at things. If the elite artist is expected to create new visions and aesthetics, the popular artist generally reverts to formulas that have been successful before. (96)

The fact that *Lonesome Dove* won a Pulitzer Prize establishes McMurtry as a "serious" writer in a genre which has traditionally not been taken too seriously by critics. In *Lonesome Dove* McMurtry was seeking "new ways of interpreting experience" by attempting to break out of the mould of traditional Westerns in refusing to romanticize the figure of the cowboy. L'Amour, on the other hand, is the popular writer as is evidenced by his incredible sales figures. L'Amour, the popular writer catering to

popular tastes, writes within the tradition of well-established formulas that have worked in the past. This thesis will examine the representation of the Indian in the selected novels by these two very different writers and attempt to analyse the extent to which the popular narrative tradition influences the portrayal of the Indian subject in these two authors who, to all intents and purposes, employ completely different approaches in their treatment of their works.

As a prelude to an examination of the treatment of the image of the Indian, it would be well worth examining the idea of the Wild West – a concept that is central to the Westerns and of which the Indian is an inextricable part. The Wild West is the American frontier of popular imagination and myth, and it serves as the setting of the traditional Western. And this setting, as Berkhofer has pointed out, is "[w]hat distinguishes a Western from other types of adventure literature . . ." However, the Wild West is not just a location but it references a specific time – a time in "the history of westward expansion of White society. . . . when social order and anarchy meet, when civilization encounters savagery, on the frontier of White expansion . . ." (97).

The Wild West, as it is represented in the movies and in novels has exerted a tremendous influence over the popular imagination. Moreover it has a universal appeal that transcends borders and cultures. The novels of Louis L'Amour have been translated into twenty languages which is testament enough to the popularity of the Western. However, what needs to be made clear at the outset is that the West of popular culture is not an accurate representation reflecting reality but a myth. C.L. Sonnichsen in *From Hopalong to Hud* (1978) refers to this West as "the West That Wasn't" (9). This West of violent gunfights and encounters with hostile Indians is not a complete fabrication. In the words of Sonnichsen: "It was real enough; it just wasn't real all the

time" (11). Sonnichsen further points out that instead of dramatic life-and-death struggles "[m]ost of the troubles of the pioneer Westerners were nonviolent: isolation, loneliness, boredom, back-breaking toil, mortgages, grasshoppers, blizzards, drouths [*sic*], sickness, and old age and death. Only a small percentage of them died of lead poisoning."(11-12).

An examination of the works of other writers who wrote during and about the same time period reveals the extent to which the myth differed from reality. To read the works of Mary Hallock Foote is to step into an entirely different world – and yet she was writing in and about the same period that the other popular Western novelists were. Foote's works like her first novel *The Led-Horse Claim* (1883) present us with a picture of a "domestic West" which bears little resemblance to the "Wild West" of writers like Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian* (1902). As Richard W. Etulain in his *Telling Western Stories* (1999) points out, Foote's works provide us with "a notable alternative to the story of a Wild West" (33). Rather than the heroic cowboys and wild Indians who invariably peopled the narratives of her contemporaries who wrote about the West, her stories portrayed "engineers, miners, farmers, and families" (33). Yet, despite its greater claim to authenticity this domestic version of the Wild West was completely dwarfed in popularity by the other narratives which dealt with the more popular version of the West, and the works of Foote are rarely mentioned in connection with the fiction spawned about the West of the late 1800s. Similarly, the appearance of Native American warrior narratives, told from their perspective, in the 1920's and 30's did little to alter the already popular Wild West narrative which had ossified into a set formula in which "Indians play the role of opponents, the Other, against whom masculine white heroes test their courage and endurance" (Etulain 32).

Stephen McVeigh in his *The American Western* (2007) has pointed out that this mythology of the West "was constructed by a small group of interconnected men, among them Theodore Roosevelt, Frederick Jackson Turner, William F. Cody, Frederic Remington and Owen Wister" (13).

Theodore Roosevelt, who is remembered most famously as an American President, is one of those who laid the foundations for what would develop into the Wild West of myth. A series of articles written by him and collected under the title *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1899) presented such an enchanting picture of the West that many wealthy Eastern readers were influenced into travelling to the plains as tourists. Roosevelt described the West as "the lonely lands where mighty rivers twist in long reaches between the barren bluffs; where the prairies stretch out into billowy plains of waving grass, girt only by the blue horizon" (100). In these seemingly limitless lands, a man might "steer his course for days and weeks and see neither man to speak to nor hill to break the level" (100). McVeigh also adds that Roosevelt's presidential persona was largely based on qualities that were associated with the American West. Evidently this must have been the case, for Senator Thomas Platt, on hearing that Roosevelt had come into power as the President of the United States, is reported to have remarked: "Oh, God, now that damned cowboy is president of the United States" (Kempton).

Frederic Jackson Turner in his 1893 essay titled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" argued that the origins of the unique American identity did not have their cradle in Europe but rather to the conditions of the American frontier. In effect, he argued that the frontier, which he described as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" was what led to the formation of a "new product" – the

unique American identity (3). Turner's oft quoted phrase that "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession and the advance of American settlement Westward explain American development" neatly sums up what has come to be called his "frontier thesis" (1). This tracing of origins back to a frontier inevitably set the stage for a romanticization of this same frontier. The frontier no longer became simply a geographical area but, became in the words of McVeigh "the embodiment of all that was good about America, presenting it as a place of tradition, inspiration, and heroism, the arena in which the American character was forged in the past, and the repository of these values which could heal America's ills in the present" (13). The West of fictions ceased to be a fiction; for many people it has become the actual West of history.

A figure who has become almost synonymous with the West is William F. Cody. Cody's exploits as a scout in the Union Army first earned him recognition in the public eye. However, what brought him into the limelight and made him a national folk hero was the character of Buffalo Bill, which was created by Ned Buntline, a writer who was looking for a dime novel hero. Buntline was in search of a real life character on whom he could model his hero and he found it when he met Cody in the summer of 1869. At the time Cody was a scout serving under Colonel Mackenzie. The character became enormously popular – what added to the appeal of the Buffalo Bill character was Buntline's insistence that his stories were authentic. This popularity was not just a passing fad – the first story titled *Buffalo Bill, the King of the Border Men* was still in print in 1928. Buffalo Bill became a myth and the process of how the myth came to replace the reality is put succinctly by McVeigh: "Buffalo Bill, the character, was first a fiction constructed to cash in on the nation's fascination with the Wild West

but subsequently came to symbolize it" (32). So much aura did the character of Buffalo Bill exude that Cody himself seems to have subscribed to this myth as much as his credulous readers, trying to live up to the image of the fictional Buffalo Bill. As Henry Nash Smith in his *Virgin Land* (1950) points out, "the *persona* created by the writers of popular fiction was so accurate an expression of the demands of the popular imagination that it proved powerful enough to shape an actual man in its own image" (103).

Taking advantage of the popularity of Buffalo Bill, Cody then tried his hand at acting. Though not a born actor and not immune to stage fright, his performances were quite well received, considering that he had no professional training or experience on the stage. He ultimately came up with a unique concept for a show that came to be known as the Wild West show. This show claimed to enact, on a huge stage, famous scenes from the history of the West. These dramatic enactments, which were only thinly based on fact – aggrandizing as they did the character and the exploits of Cody – became immensely popular and codified many of the conventions of the Western. Yet, despite Cody's claims to authenticity, the Wild West show "was not history, but rather like Cody himself, an exaggeration of history" (McVeigh 32).

The present study contends that the supposed authenticity of the shows should be viewed with a healthy amount of skepticism, taking its cue from the reaction of Wild Bill Hickok, another legendary figure of the Wild West. Cody had persuaded Hickok to take part in *Scouts of the Plains* in 1873 – 74. Hickok acquiesced but soon left because he felt that these performances were nothing but "foolish … play acting" which had no real resemblance to the frontier that he knew (Etulain 7). It may have been an exaggeration of history but the public believed it readily enough. What lent

credence to the shows was the active participation of larger-than-life figures like the 6'4" Buck Taylor who later came to be known as the "King of the Cowboys," renowned sharp shooter Annie Oakley, real Indians – including some who had been present at the Battle of the Little Bighorn (1876) – and for a brief period, even the famed Sioux chief, Sitting Bull. Lest the American public of those times be labeled as too credulous for believing in the veracity of Cody's shows, it is to be remembered that the Wild West show met with as great success when it performed overseas. When the show participated in the American Exhibition as part of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee it became an instant success. The English public, much like the American public, sincerely believed that the Wild West show was "a magnificent, riveting demonstration of what they already believed about the history and character types of a faraway, magic frontier" (Etulain 14). One of the acts in the shows titled "The Attack on the Settler's Cabin" was described by a Boston newspaper as "intensely dramatic and exciting, and conveyed a vivid and realistic idea of the perils of border life" (qtd. in Etulain 13). Such was the power of Cody's Wild West myth. In this connection, Etulain writes that "Cody formulated a mythic story of adventure, drama, and competition that a century later remains a notable Creation Story of American history" (Etulain 16). The Wild West shows created the blueprint for a mythical West – a blueprint which novelists were to enthusiastically adopt.

Contiguous with this evolving myth of the Wild West was a mythification of some of the well-known characters who lived in the West. Cody was not the only one to become a legend in the popular imagination. Characters such as Wyatt Earp, Billy the Kid, and John Wesley Hardin have come to be considered as heroic figures. That such romaticization is quite far from the truth is evident from the reaction of historians

who are in the know and in possession of well researched and documented facts. The character of Wyatt Earp is a perfect case-in-point of how the myth has made heroes of less-than-heroic characters of the West. Stuart Lake's *Wyatt Earp: Frontier Marshal* (1931) lionized Earp and transformed him from "a frontier character who was not very brave and not very efficient and not very truthful" into "Sir Galahad on a mustang" (Sonnichsen 19). What irked historians was the insistence of the publishers that this account of Earp was true. One such writer of histories who tried to set the record straight with respect to the character of Earp was Frank Waters who labeled the book as "the most assiduously concocted blood-and-thunder piece of fiction ever written about the West, and a disgraceful indictment of the thousands of true Arizonians whose lives and written protests refute every discoloured incident of it." (qtd. in Sonnichsen 20).

Another historical character of the Wild West whose reputation has been benefitted by this trend towards mythification is Billy the Kid, who is seen by popular culture as a lovably picaresque type of hero. Mrs. Sophie Poe who claimed to have known Billy the Kid protested at his heroic portrayal in the movies and referred to him as "that little buck-toothed killer" (Sonnichsen 19). Similar is the case with John Wesley Hardin, an outlaw of the Wild West. Though he was a proven killer, claiming to have killed 42 men – one of them for snoring – the myth still makes a folk icon of him, albeit a controversial one. The popular folk singer and songwriter Bob Dylan even composed a song about him titled "John Wesley Harding" in which Hardin is described as "a friend to the poor" who "was never known to hurt an honest man."

That the West of popular imagination is a myth and that there have been historians like Waters who have convincingly disproved it, has in no way detracted

from the popularity or the endurance of the myth. Indeed, as has been pointed out by Jenni Calder, the Western "retains its vitality" despite its demise being announced "[a]t regular intervals" (qtd. in Sonnichsen 16). The question then arises as to why the myth persists. One of the earliest attempts to explain the importance of the myth came in an essay published in Time magazine in 1959. The essay titled "The American Morality Play" suggested that the Western is an allegory of human life in which the forces of good do battle with the forces of evil and eventually emerge victorious (Sonnichsen 13). Thus, according to this analysis, the Western is so important because it reaffirms the reader's faith in the existence of a moral order in the universe.

However, to merely see things in these terms would amount to an oversimplification of the complex nature of the Western. To attempt to assess the true significance of the Western we need to briefly delve into the history of the American people (and by American people here we mean White Americans who constitute a majority of the population). Independence, for Americans, meant not only political independence from the mother country but also implied intellectual independence from Europe. Americans wanted a complete break from their European antecedents and thus do not subscribe to the European origin myths – what they needed was a national myth of their own. Given the relatively recent origins of their nation, Americans are in search of this national myth – one that will legitimate their conception of themselves as unique and give them a sense of belonging and rootedness to the land. For despite the fact that America constantly trumpets its greatness as a nation, it still conspicuously lacks something. And that something is a "heroic past" – a past which traces the descent of the people from some divine or quasi-divine heroic figure, which any ancient myth invariably projects. Being a relatively young nation, it

does not have a mythical heroic age where heroes battle fierce demons and monsters. It is this lack of a heroic past, Sonnichsen argues, that prevents Americans from having a sense of "pride of family" and "pride of race" (Sonnichsen 16-17). The Wild West may not be historically authentic but it does not need to be so. What is more important is that it serve the function it is meant to fulfill. That function is to be the heroic age that America needs it to be – to heroize a relatively nascent race on a "New World".

In a similar manner, this thesis would argue that the Western novel, as a genre dealing with this heroic age, serves a purpose – that purpose being to be for the American people what the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are for the Greeks; in short, a national myth which helps Americans "understand the nature of the universe and [their] place in it" (Sonnichsen 18). This is important because not only does America lack a heroic past, but the little past that it does have is decidedly not heroic as has been borne out by the New Western historians. The New Western History, a movement which emerged among professional historians, took another look at American frontier history focusing on race, class, gender, and environment in the trans-Mississippi West and "returned with unheard tales from a landscape, not of heroic endeavor, progress and civilization, but racism, oppression and violent conquest" (McVeigh viii). Thus, the findings of the New Historians were completely at variance with the traditional American narrative of progress and civilization, and seemed to view with cynicism what had in the past been blindly accepted as American achievements.

Having established that the Western is in fact a narrative which seeks to fulfill the role of an epic, one is led to enquire as to whether the Western, as a genre, possesses a work which is worthy of being called an epic. Are there any works which actually share any of those features which characterize and identify an epic? This study shall

take Larry McMurtry's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Lonesome Dove* as an example of a Western novel par excellence to see whether it can qualify as an epic. As a novel, *Lonesome Dove* is highly complex for it subverts most of the conventions of the Western tradition even while establishing itself firmly within that very tradition. M.H. Abrams in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1999) lists some of the features of the literary epic. To begin with, the hero of an epic is "a figure of great national or even cosmic importance" (Abrams 77). In *Lonesome Dove* we have two heroes: Woodrow F. Call and Augustus (Gus) McRae, two retired Texas Rangers. They are famed throughout the border, having engaged in many battles with hostile Comanches and Mexican bandits. They may not be divine or even quasi divine figures – and McMurtry presents them with all their human failings – but they may as well be gods in the milieu that they live in and to the men they serve under. Their actions and their decisiveness in times of crisis make them appear like gods to those who are aware of their prowess in battle. That they are of great importance to the nation is stressed, for it seems to be the common belief that they are the main reason for the Mexicans' not invading and taking back Texas. This belief is articulated by Jasper Fant, a cowboy looking to hire on to the Hat Creek Cattle Company, when he learns that Captain Call has left the area temporarily: "If the Mexicans knew the Captain was gone they'd come and take back Texas" (ch. 15).

Another feature of the epic is that the setting is "ample in scale, and may be worldwide, or even larger" (Abrams 77). In *Lonesome Dove,* Call and Gus decide to gather a herd of cattle and drive it all the way to Montana – a territory which has not yet been settled and is still peopled by hostile Indians. This thesis would argue that this proposed cattle drive is the equivalent of the "long arduous journey" which is such an

integral part of the epics. It may be argued by some, particularly by those who would deny to Western fiction any status as canonical text, that this cattle drive from Lonesome Dove in Texas to Montana is hardly ample in scale, nor does it cover any appreciable portion of the known world, as the epic is supposed to. Yet, this relatively short journey is indeed a long and harrowing journey in the true epic tradition. Though the proposed cattle drive may not even cross the actual geographical boundaries of the United States it might as well be a journey to a different world as far as the characters in the novel are concerned. The character who suggests the idea of the cattle drive is Jake Spoon who claims to have scouted for the Army in Montana – but aside from assuring the others that Montana is a "cattleman's paradise," he is not very forthcoming with the details, and one suspects that his reticence in this regard has something to do with a lack of familiarity with this new and relatively unexplored territory. For the character Pea Eye, the prospect of entering this mysterious new land resurrects an old fear that he has always had of a big Indian who haunts his dreams. As for Newt, the farthest that he has been is San Antonio, so Montana which is far off to the north might as well be a different continent for him:

> But even the sight of the ocean had not stirred him so much as the thought of the north. All his life he had heard talk of the plains that had no end, and of the Indians and buffalo and all the creatures that lived on them. Mr. Gus had even talked of great bears, so thick that bullets couldn't kill them, and deerlike creatures called elk, twice the size of ordinary deer. (McMurtry 200)

Even the normally stoic Deets is filled with a sense of foreboding, "a sense that they were starting on a hard journey to a far place" (McMurtry 203-4).

That this cattle drive is long and arduous is made clear enough by McMurtry who lifts the romantic veneer from off one aspect of the Western narrative that has always been romanticized – the trail drive. Westerns usually portray the cattle drive as a carefree journey on horseback across vast endless spaces where the cowboys are at one with the beauty of nature. The hardships of such drives are never stressed. However, as McVeigh points out, "[i]n reality the drive was an extremely inefficient means of bringing produce to the marketplace and had the capacity to adversely affect both the cattle and the cowboy; the quality of the meat was often damaged by the arduous and stressful trip while herds moving through lands belonging to Indians or farmers were sometimes shot at" (5). The drive with all its hardships is what McMurtry presents to us in *Lonesome Dove*. The image of the trail drive that has been implanted in the popular imagination is best articulated by the lyrics of a song by popular country and western singer Dan Seals in his song titled "God must be a Cowboy at Heart":

A campfire, some coffee
From a tin cup in my hand
Sure warms the fingers when it's cold
aplayin' an old guitar
A friend I understand
Sure smoothes the wrinkles in my soul

Asleepin' in the moonlight
A blanket for my bed
Leaves a peaceful feelin' in my mind
Wakin' up in the mornin'

With an eagle overhead

Makes me want to fly away before my time

And I think God must be a cowboy at heart

He made wide open spaces from the start

He made grass and trees and mountains

And a horse to be a friend

And trails to lead old cowboys home a-gain

Night life and big cities

Is alright for awhile

Sure makes you feel good when you're there

But the country's so pretty

It goes on and on for miles takes away my troubles and my cares

The cowboys of *Lonesome Dove* experience a very different sort of journey. A guitar would be the last thing that anyone of them would have thought of bringing on the cattle drive and even if they had it is doubtful whether they would have had the time to play it, seeing as they are so busy with work that they often fall asleep while on horseback. The cold that they feel, when a blizzard strikes them, is not of the sort that can be simply ameliorated by a tin cup of warm coffee. The frequent thunderstorms accompanied by lightning make the drive truly hazardous. The wide open spaces are often filled with thorny mesquite and the dust raised by the enormous herd is so thick that Newt and the other young boys who are stationed at the rear can hardly see a few feet in front of them. That the drive is dangerous is stressed through

the death of Sean O'Brien who is killed when he stumbles across a nest of venomous cottonmouth snakes while crossing a small river. He is not the only character who dies before the drive is over.

A distinguishing feature of any epic is the action which "involves superhuman deeds in battle" (Abrams 77). In *Lonesome Dove*, as has already been pointed out, McMurtry emphasizes the fact that his characters are human with human failings but one respect in which they are without flaws is in their ability to act when the situation calls for it. Gus may appear to be a "talker" who likes to avoid anything resembling hard work, but he readily springs into action when there is any sign of trouble. He follows the bandit Blue Duck across the waterless wastes of the Llano Estacado when the latter abducts Lorena and has no hesitation in riding into a camp of outlaws to rescue her. During this particular encounter Gus is accompanied by a sheriff from Arkansas named July Johnson, but the sheriff might as well have not been there for all the difference he makes during the fight:

> July had never felt so inadequate. He was not even sure he could find his way back to where they had left the others. He was a sheriff, paid to fight when necessary, but nothing in his experience had prepared him for the slaughter he had just witnessed. Captain McCrae had killed six men, whereas he had not even fired his gun when the old bandit was aiming at him. (503-4)

Gus' feats in this battle come very close to approximating what Jane Tompkins in her *West of Everything* (1992) has half-jokingly said about the ability of L'Amour's heroes, viz. their ability to "kill ten bandits with six bullets" (15).

This analysis of these qualities of *Lonesome Dove* should make it quite clear that the novel possesses both epic scope and grandeur. Thus it would not be too

presumptuous to state that *Lonesome Dove* is an epic in its own right – an epic of the American frontier or the Wild West. This attempt to showcase the epic qualities of *Lonesome Dove* is not an idle academic exercise. By showing that *Lonesome Dove* is an epic this thesis would argue that the Western genre, as a whole, deserves more serious academic consideration. Westerns, as a genre, have never been considered as "serious" literature. For instance, Barry Lewis in his 2006 essay "Postmodernism and Fiction" referred to the Western as a "bastardized form" (Sim 115). Whatever he may have meant by the term and whatever context he may have used it in, his choice of words is indicative of the general disdain with which the Western has been viewed in academic circles.

That the Western is capable of producing a modern epic should go a long way towards revising the low estimation in which it is generally held. Possibly a reason for the Western's not being considered serious literature is a perception that the concerns raised by it have nothing to do with the real world. Etulain has postulated that the Western became popular when it did because of an increasing industrialization which in turn led to a nostalgia for a lost past. The suggestion seems to be that the Western is escapist in inviting the reader to live in a bygone era. However, as Tompkins' analysis shows, the Western is anything but escapist. According to her the Western is "a serious representation of life . . . People think of Westerns as light entertainment, adolescent and escapist, but there is nothing trivial about the needs they answer, the desires they arouse, or the vision of life they portray." (10). Speaking in particular about the novels of L'Amour and of the Western novel in general, Tompkins says that what the Westerns celebrate are "qualities required to complete an excruciatingly difficult task: self-discipline, unswerving purpose; the exercise of knowledge, skill,

ingenuity, and excellent judgment; and a capacity to continue in the face of overwhelming odds" (12). The Western never presents "an escape from the psychological demands of work". The novels of L'Amour "rather than offering an alternative from work … make work their subject" (12). The hero of the Western, in as much as he is presented as an ideal to be emulated, is a character who never fritters away his time. Also contradicting the popular conception of the Western as light, escapist literature is its preoccupation with death. Tompkins asserts that "[d]eath is everywhere in this genre" (24). A Western narrative, argues Tompkins, is a narrative of "life lived at the edge of death" (Tompkins 24). Though other types of novels like the spy thriller and detective novels also deal with death, what distinguishes Westerns from these other types of narratives with regard to death, is that, for the Western, the concern with death is almost philosophical: "Death as represented in Westerns is death under the aspect of nature, of beauty, and of some kind of spiritual transcendence" (Tompkins 24).

Having established that the Western needs to be given more serious consideration as literature, what also needs to be considered is the Western's power to influence, especially its power to influence attitudes and establish patterns of behaviour. Tompkins asserts that the unwillingness of men to speak about their feelings and freely express themselves is a direct result of the influence of the Western's attitude towards language. She argues that "Westerns distrust language in part because language tends to be wielded most skillfully by people who possess a certain kind of power: class privilege, political clout, financial strength" (51). For the Western, action is everything; a mere declaration of intent to perform an action is meaningless in the world of the Western; which is possibly why the Western dismisses

braggarts so readily and summarily. Thus the speech of the Western hero is characterized by an economy of words – the hero speaks only when he has to; when he does speak he uses the bare minimum of words sufficient to get his meaning through. This insistence on saying as little as possible seems to be endorsed by the narrative in L*onesome Dove* though it must be admitted that one of the two heroes Gus is portrayed as so extremely talkative that he would talk to a stump if he found nobody to converse with. However, even in this case, this talkativeness is only superficial and in no way surfaces when Gus is called on to take action. Though he may love to talk he never talks about his inner feelings or of anything remotely serious. The talkativeness of Gus is only one of many characteristics that go into making an extremely complex character – one who both embodies and refutes characteristics of the Western hero in his character. Call, on the other hand, is the typical Western hero in his refusal to speak except when absolutely necessary. In Chapter 16 of *Lonesome Dove*, Call goes to hire two boys as cowhands from the impoverished Spettle family. The family is in dire circumstances as is evident from the fact that "there was evidently not a shoe in the family – even the mother was barefoot" (177). Mr. Spettle has been dead for the past two years leaving Mrs. Spettle to fend for eight children, the oldest of whom is still in his teens. It is evident that the two young boys who are going with Call will be much missed by the rest of the family. The leave taking is described thus:

> They stood in the hot yard, with a scrawny hen or two scratching around their bare feet, watching the boys and crying. The mother, who had scarcely touched her sons before they left, stood straight up and cried. Three of the children were girls, but the other three were boys in their early teens, old enough, at least, to be of use to their mother. (McMurtry 177)

Such a pathetic scene seems to move even the normally taciturn Call who is prompted to put in a few words, which are no doubt meant to serve as words of comfort. Yet even these words, meager as they are, are seen by the narrative, and possibly even Call, as extraneous – a wastage of time and words: "'We'll take good care of them,' Call said, wasting words" (177). A little later on in the same chapter we are told that trying to make conversation was for Call "an unfamiliar labor" (179). For the man of action, conversation is not only a wastage of time but an unnecessary labor which might prevent him from accomplishing what really needs to be done.

A similar disdain for long, drawn out conversations is displayed by the heroes of L'Amour. In *Hondo*, the hero Hondo Lane is about to break-in a wild mustang who has never been ridden before. Young Johnny Lowe is intently watching Hondo going about his business. The manner in which the narrative portrays the resulting interaction between Hondo and Johnny is significant: "[Hondo] glanced at the boy. 'Gets him used to it,' he said. 'He'll learn it's nothin' to be scared of. First thing they've got to know: not to be scared. After that, if they find out the man in the saddle is boss, then they'll do to ride.'" (16). Using such minimalist language to explain to a young boy the basics of something as dangerous as breaking-in a horse, suggests an extreme distrust of language. Hondo is also accompanied by a ferocious dog called Sam who does not like to be petted. On first meeting Johnny, he tells him of Sam's dislike of being petted. A little later, Johnny who is overcome by childish enthusiasm asks Hondo if he can pet the dog. Hondo noncommittally replies "You do what you want to, young one" (19). Johnny reaches out to pet the dog and nearly gets bitten in the process. When his mother remonstrates, Hondo replies: "I told the boy earlier not to touch the dog, but still he wanted to pet him. People learn by getting' bit. The youngster

learned" (20). What these lines suggest is not only the Western hero's desire to say as little as possible but also demonstrates the Western's privileging of action over the spoken word.

We have seen the manner in which the Western's distrust of language is borne out by *Lonesome Dove* and *Hondo*, two important texts of the Western genre. Their attitude towards language is representative of the general attitude of Westerns towards language. Tompkins declares that the Western hero's distrust of language and his reticence has established a pattern of behavior for male movie goers who try to emulate the hero in this respect. She claims that the American male's reluctance to speak and his inability to communicate effectively with women is a direct result of the Western hero's influence:

> . . . the Western's hatred of language has codified and sanctioned the way several generations of men have behaved verbally toward women in American society. Young boys sitting in the Saturday afternoon darkness could not ride horses or shoot guns, but they could talk. Or rather, they could learn how to keep silent. The Western man's silence functions as a script for behavior; it expresses and authorizes a power relation that reaches into the furthest corners of domestic and social life. (Tompkins 59)

That the Western is not merely a fictional narrative taking its readers on a nostalgic trip down memory lane should be clear at this point. Its highly complex nature can be seen in the manner and variety of the responses which it has evoked over the years. For Dr. Kenneth J. Numden, a psychologist, the enmity in a Western is "a classic symptom of the Oedipus conflict." (qtd. in Sonnichsen 15). For some critics the Western is "an expression of the reader's or viewer's sexual drives and [they] have

viewed the six-shooter as a phallic symbol" (Sonnichsen 15). For University of Texas professor, Philip French, "most western films since 1950 are social and political commentaries in disguise" (Sonnichsen 14). And though many have predicted its demise over the years, it has always made a resurgence.

The role played by the Western in American society has shown how important it is to this same society: it gives them a sense of identity and a "heroic past". For Jack Nachbar, a critic and reviewer, Westerns "define for all classes of white Americans their traditional ethics, values and sources of national pride" (qtd. in Sonnichsen 14). Tompkins' analysis has also demonstrated the kind of influence the Western has in shaping attitudes and behavior patterns. It has, as this thesis has argued, the status of an epic for the American people. Which is what makes its representation of Native Americans so problematic and troubling. For it is beyond doubt that the stereotyped image of the Indian as warlike savage is one perpetuated by the Western, both through novels and through movies. By analyzing selected novels of Larry McMurtry and Louis L'Amour, this thesis shall attempt to show how the image of the Indian as warlike savage is perpetuated by the Western.

It would be incorrect to assume that the Indian is always demonized in the Western. Images of idealized Indians figure as prominently in the pages of popular Westerns. As S.C. Gwynne in his *Empire of the Summer Moon* (2010) has pointed out, "Americans like to think of their native aboriginals as in some ways heroic or noble" (ch. 4). But such an idealized portrayal is equally misleading since there is no real attempt to present the Indian of actual experience and the Indian simply becomes an abstraction or an idea rather than a representation of a human being. To borrow the words of Tompkins, such Indians are "ethnographically incorrect" (9). Such narratives

which idealize the Indian may best be described in Gwynne's words as "weirdly incongruous attempt[s] to graft European romantic ideals onto Stone Age culture[s]" (Gwynne ch. 8). Narratives of this sort may seem harmless enough, but in the final analysis, they "amount to a denial that there was any such thing as Indian culture" (ch. 8). Despite this idealization of the Indian in some of the narratives, the abiding image that the Western novels, as a whole, leave us with is a sense of the Indian as warlike savage.

The present study argues that if the Wild West and the legendary figures said to have inhabited it is largely a myth then the image of the Indian that has developed along with it is equally false – a fact that becomes manifest if we examine works which view the Indians' situation from a less ethnocentric perspective. Two such prominent works are Helen Hunt Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) and Dee Brown's *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970). Though separated by nearly a century, these two works have in common their outlining of the injustice done to the Indian. To read these two works is to look at the history of the settlement of the West from a totally different perspective – the perspective of those who have been unjustly ousted from their lands by invaders whose greed knew no bounds and who had no qualms about making and breaking treaties at their own convenience.

Jackson's *A Century of Dishonor* "portray[s] the dissolution of Indian nations beneath a tide of white expansion" (Ellis 55). In the course of the narrative Jackson outlines in vivid detail the suffering endured by tribes like the Delawares, the Cheyennes, the Nez Perces, the Sioux, the Poncas, the Winnebagoes, and the Cherokees at the hands of unscrupulous Whites who had no qualms about ousting these tribes from their native homelands and then reneging on treaties entered into with these

same tribes. “Jackson’s premise was that the American Indians had proved repeatedly their ability to honor treaties, to stay on their own land, and to support themselves economically. It was the encroachment of white settlers that consistently put Indians into hopeless and disastrous situations” (Ellis 55). Chapter IX of the book titled “Massacres of Indians by Whites” is especially significant for it narrates the events leading up to the Conestoga Massacre and the Gnadenhutten Massacre – events which give the lie to the dominant White narrative of the Indians as murderous savages under whose depredations helpless Whites cowered in terror.

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee by Dee Brown is a diligently researched historical account of the story of the Native Americans beginning from the time of Columbus’ arrival in 1492 to the fateful massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890, which marked the last armed encounter between the Native Americans and the United States army. The book’s nineteen chapters tell the story of what happened to the various Native American tribes after Columbus’ expedition. Though the book deals with the story of different tribes, what is common in these historical accounts is the manner in which the tribes were defrauded by the white man of the right to live and hunt on the land. The Navajos, Santee Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahos, Plains Indians, Kiowas and Apaches, though belonging to different tribes, are all ultimately victims of the White man’s greed and treachery. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* is an important tool in deconstructing the myth of the savage Indian perpetuated by the Western novel. Where the Western novel seeks to lay stress on the savagery of the Indian, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* tells us of the amiability of these peaceful tribes. The book’s first chapter quotes from Columbus’ letter to the King and Queen of Spain: “So tractable, so peaceable are these people that I swear to your Majesties there is not in the world a

better nation. They love their neighbors as themselves, and their discourse is ever sweet and gentle, and accompanied with a smile; and though it is true that they are naked, yet their manners are decorous and praiseworthy" (qtd. in Brown 2).

Where the White narrative claims the settling of the American continent as an inexorable onward march of civilization, Brown's book tells of the destruction it caused to a once pristine landscape:

> Already the once sweet-watered streams, most of which bore Indian names, were clouded with silt and the wastes of man; the very earth was being ravaged and squandered. To the Indians it seemed that these Europeans hated everything in nature – the living forests and their birds and beasts, the grassy glades, the water, the soil, and the air itself. (6)

The book goes on to tell of the various broken promises, of treaties made and broken by the white man at his whim, and of the wanton slaughter of the great buffalo herds by the White hunters. This enables us to look at things from an entirely different perspective since the Western novels rarely dwell on the reasons that force the Indian to become the belligerent foe that they portray him to be. In the final analysis, the book helps us to put the Western novel's claims about the savagery of the Indian into proper perspective.

One way in which the Western novels seek to perpetuate the stereotype of the savage Indian is by references to scalping. In these Western novels much has been made of the practice of scalping, where the scalp of a vanquished enemy was cut off as a war trophy. The White dominated narratives seem to be at pains to associate scalping with Indians. In *Lonesome Dove*, for instance, any mention of Indians has the cowhands fearing for their scalps. In fact, once they start heading north and the

prospect of encountering Indians seems ever more probable, the thought of scalping is never far from the minds of the cowhands. As the narrative progresses, scalping becomes synonymous with Indians. The novels of L'Amour too have constant references to scalping and the afterword to every L'Amour novel tells us that his great-grandfather was scalped by Sioux warriors. While the Western novels seem to encourage the suggestion that scalping was exclusively practiced by the Indians, Brown's well-researched narrative tells us that the White soldiers were equally guilty of the practice. In fact, it is probable that the White colonists, in establishing bounties for enemy hair, introduced scalping to Indian tribes innocent of the practice. The Western novels also contain multiple references to the way in which Indians dismembered their slain enemies, but the truth is that this kind of brutality was also practiced by the White men, though the Western novels seem to imply that the Indians alone were guilty of the practice. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* tells of how the great Apache war chief, Mangas Colorado's body was dismembered by the soldiers: "When Mangas fell back, the guards emptied their pistols into his body. A soldier took his scalp, another cut off his head and boiled the flesh away so that he could sell the skull to a phrenologist in the East. They dumped the headless body in a ditch" (Brown 161).

While the Wild West narrative invariably sees the Indian as "the dark menace of the myths" (Brown xi), Brown's narrative views them as "perhaps the most heroic of all Americans" (11). Such contrasting images of the Indian afforded by writers like Jackson and Brown demands that this stereotyped image of the Indian in the Westerns be re-assessed in order to expose the manner in which such images have become so standardized. This thesis will also attempt to identify the ways in which the Indian has

been represented in White discourse through the ages in order to show how such representational techniques continue to shape modern narratives.

Patricia Nelson Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest* (1987) is a groundbreaking work which, like "the writings of Frederick Jackson Turner, Walter Prescott Webb, Henry Nash Smith, and Earl Pomeroy . . . broke from previous interpretations and provided a new story for those interested in the history of the American West" (Etulain 120). Limerick's re-visioning of the history of the American West inaugurated the movement which came to be known as the New Western History. The history of the American West had traditionally been viewed from a very narrow ethnocentric perspective – an Anglo-American one. Central to this view was the "frontier hypothesis" advanced by the historian Frederick Jackson Turner. Turner's thesis rested on the assumption that the closing of the frontier in 1890 was a watershed moment in Western history, neatly dividing the history of the West into Old "frontier" West and Modern West. Turner concluded his epochal 1893 essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" with the observation that "four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history" (38). Limerick rejected the Turnerian view of history – "the idea of a great discontinuity between the frontier and the Western present" (Limerick 31) – and stressed the continuity between the Old West and the emergent New West. In her analysis, there is no radical break between the Old and the New Wests. Talking about the New West, Limerick asserts that "[i]n the region's dependence on federal money, instability in business cycles, and inconsistent enforcement of laws, the twentieth-century West bore a strong family resemblance to that theoretically dead past" (134-

5). The so-called closing of the frontier has not really altered anything, for "[i]n the second half of the twentieth century, every major issue from 'frontier' history reappeared in the courts or in Congress" (Limerick 31).

It is not the case that narratives by Native Americans attempting to tell their side of the story did not exist. It was just that Native Americans trying to publish a work prior to the 1930s had to surmount many difficulties. In *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Brown writes of the difficulties faced by Indians in this regard: "Only occasionally was the voice of an Indian heard, and then more often than not it was recorded by the pen of a white man. The Indian was the dark menace of the myths, and even if he had known how to write in English, where would he have found a printer or a publisher?" (xi).

Geronimo's autobiography titled *Geronimo's Story of His Life* (1906) and "taken down and edited by S.M. Barrett" stands out as a prime example of a narrative by a Native American telling their side of the story. However, this particular narrative also illustrates the problems posed by these early works by Native Americans. The issue is one of authenticity for the question arises as to whether such works – which were invariably recorded or translated by a White man – can truly represent authentic Native American voices. Geronimo's autobiography, though supposedly being an authentic account of his life, falls within the "told to" category of Native American autobiographies (Etulain 55). The accounts of his life as set down in the book, were orally narrated by Geronimo who spoke limited English. Geronimo's words were then translated into English by his second cousin Daklugie, and this translated version was written down by S.M. Barrett. What compounded the difficulty was that Geronimo refused to speak when a transcriber was around (Etulain 52). All this makes it very

difficult to "sort out the roles of Geronimo, the interpreter Daklugie, and the editor Barrett in the formation of the book. Since Geronimo would not allow extensive transcription at the time of the interviews, how much of the collaborative interview belongs to Geronimo, how much to Barrett?" (Etulain 55)

In any case, these Native American voices did not find their way into the Western narrative, for by "the 1920s and 1930s . . . the western story had hardened into a clearly recognized, predictable narrative" (Etulain 51). Narratives like the autobiography of Geronimo form part of what Etulain refers to as the "untold stories" of the West.

Later generations of Native American writers like Leslie Marmon Silko and N. Scott Momaday would receive critical acclaim and widespread recognition for their works. In fact, Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1969. Works like these are important for they allow Native American voices to articulate Native American concerns. For instance, Silko's *Ceremony* (1977) enables us to examine the idea of the Native American hero and the kind of role he fulfills in society. This hero is markedly different from the hero of the Western novel. For the protagonist of *Ceremony* it is not about being "heroic" and righting injustices. It is more about freeing himself from the mind forged manacles; about being able to see through the White man's lies and being able to assert his individuality in a society dominated by White people. However, it needs to be noted that such works, not being set in the old frontier West do not belong to the category of the Western genre and, as such, do not directly contest the representation of Native Americans within this genre.

For this study, the methodology used is mainly binary in paradigm and multicultural in approach. Thus support would be garnered from the critical premises of Edward Said, Berkhofer and Limerick. Edward Said's analysis of the ways in which the Oriental is represented by the dominant West will prove particularly relevant in a thesis which seeks to analyze the representation of the Indian in narratives by White writers. Even though Said was writing of a specific geographical location – the Orient – both the Indian and the Oriental are, in the final analysis, cultural "Others" who are forced into a specific cultural role in the discourse perpetuated by the dominant Whites.

The point made by Said in *Orientalism* (1978) that "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" (1) proves particularly useful in explaining why the Indian is often demonized in the Western novels. He is that Other through whose contrasting image the White man defines himself. He is often forced to assume the role of this negative and inferior Other to act as a foil to the White man in order to establish the latter as a member of a heroic race, in accordance with the dominant narrative which views him as a bringer of civilization. The kind of thinking which underlies the demonization of the Indian is the imperialistic assumption that "there are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power" (Said 36).

In order to deconstruct the myth of the savage Indian, Berkhofer's seminal work *The White Man's Indian* (1978) will be used to provide a framework of analysis, for his detailed analysis of the White man's representation of the Indian, as it

developed through the ages, is crucial to an understanding of the image of the Indian as it stands today.

The thesis undertakes to explore the topic through the course of five chapters. The present chapter has already shown how the Western, as a genre, is worthy of more serious consideration despite frequently being dismissed by critics for its formulaic plots and its inability to plumb the depths of human experience.

Chapter II shall deal with the manner in which the Indian has traditionally been represented in literature, with particular emphasis on the novels of Larry McMurtry.

Chapter III will attempt an analysis of the typical Western novel's hero and examine the extent to which the heroes of L'Amour and McMurtry conform to this heroic template.

Chapter IV will attempt to deconstruct L'Amour's claim to authenticity in his novels – particularly with regard to the landscape and his Indians, which is to be the focus of major critical interest.

Chapter V shall conclude the thesis by summarizing the findings arrived at in the preceding chapters. Based on the findings in the thesis, it will also attempt to provide any concluding remarks or suggestions with regard to the representation of the Indian in Westerns.

Works Cited

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Heinle & Heinle, 1999.

Berkhofer, Robert F., Jr. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1978.

Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. Pan Books, 1972.

Dylan, Bob. "John Wesley Harding." *John Wesley Harding*, Columbia Records, 1967, track 1. *Bob Dylan*, www.bobdylan.com/songs/john-wesley-harding/.

Ellis, Millen. "Recommended: Helen Hunt Jackson." *The English Journal*, vol. 71, no. 8, Dec. 1982, pp. 55-56. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/816447.

Etulain, Richard W. *Telling Western Stories: From Buffalo Bill to Larry McMurtry*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1999.

Gaffney, Dennis. "'American Indian' or 'Native American'?" *PBS Online*, 24 Apr. 2006, www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/fts/bismarck_200504A16.html.

Gotsch, Connie. "Following in his footsteps: Author documents locations in L'Amour's novels." *Four Corners Free Press,* Mar. 2007, www.fourcornersfreepress.com/news/2007/030702.htm.

Gwynne, S.C. *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*. Kobo ed., Scribner, 2010.

Kempton, Murray. "That Damned Cowboy." *The Spectator Archive*, The Spectator, archive.spectator.co.uk/article/27th-april-1962/5/that-damned-cowboy.

L'Amour, Louis. *Hondo*. New York: Bantam Books, 1953.

Lich, Lera Patrick Tyler. *Larry McMurtry's Texas: Evolution of a Myth*. Eakin Pr., 1988.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. W.W. Norton, 1987.

McMurtry, Larry. *Lonesome Dove*. Pocket Books, 1985.

McVeigh, Stephen. *The American Western.* Edinburgh UP, 2007.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail.* New York: The Century, 1899.

Seals, Dan. "God Must Be a Cowboy." *Rebel Heart*, Liberty Records, 1983, track 7. *Azlyrics*, www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/danseals/godmustbeacowboyatheart.html.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. Penguin, 1977.

Sim, Stuart, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*. Routledge, 2011.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Harvard UP, 1950.

Sonnichsen, C.L. *From Hopalong to Hud: Thoughts on Western Fiction.* Texas A&M UP, 1978.

Tompkins, Jane. *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*. Oxford UP, 1992.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. Henry Holt, 1920.

Weinberg, Robert. *The Louis L'Amour Companion*. Bantam Books, 1992.

CHAPTER TWO

CRITIQUING THE REPRESENTATION OF THE INDIAN IN MCMURTRY'S NOVELS

CHAPTER II

CRITIQUING THE REPRESENTATION OF THE INDIAN IN MCMURTRY'S NOVELS

The image of the Indian is a White construct which has been perpetuated by Whites down the ages. Christopher Columbus, the explorer who is credited with having "discovered" America was the first to use the term "Indian" to refer to the native inhabitants of the Americas. Patricia Nelson Limerick in *The Legacy of Conquest* (1987) points out that "[t]he very word 'Indian' rests on an act of the mind and not on pre-Columbian actuality" (215). Erroneously believing himself to have landed in the islands off Asia, Columbus referred to the people he encountered as "los Indios" and the name Indian has stuck ever since, even though this collective term was used to describe a people who displayed a lot of diversity with regard to language, culture and economy. This misleading term gives the impression that the people so referred to are "a single, homogenous group" of people (Limerick 215). Nothing could be further from the truth. To comprehend the diversity which the term "Indian" seeks to unify under one rubric, one need only look at Limerick's analysis of the diversity prevailing among the original inhabitants of the United States:

> Anthropologists have divided America north of the Rio Grande into at least twelve cultural regions, and even those are units of meaning far narrower than the diversity they attempt to embrace. In the Pacific Northwest, the coastal people benefited from an abundance of food from the ocean, did not farm, prized wealth, practiced a variety of slavery, and had a clearly hierarchical society; in the Northeastern woodlands, groups raised corn and squash, hunted

> seasonally, and gave their loyalty to social units ranging from the band to the intertribal league of the Iroquois. In the Southwest, some of the people were nomadic hunters, while others farmed and lived in villages hundreds of years old, practicing a complex religion. None of these ways of life matched the Plains Indian model enshrined in novels and movies as the "real Indian" way of life. Within some culture regions, there was considerable linguistic diversity; California alone had representatives of all the major language groups. Moreover, cultural similarity cannot be mistaken for political solidarity. Neighbouring tribes, with what would appear to outsiders as utterly similar ways of life, still directed their loyalties to different leaders and different ethnicities. (216)

Notwithstanding the diversity embraced by the term "Indian," the diverse group of people collectively referred to by this term are generally represented as being either one of two extremes – the good Indian or the bad Indian. It is also perhaps fitting that Columbus was the first to establish the stereotype of the good Indian and the bad Indian. He used the image of the good Indian to describe the Arawaks emphasizing their "handsome stature," their generosity in "refus[ing] nothing that they possess, if it be asked of them," and their disregard of private ownership (qtd. in Berkhofer 6). It is perhaps ironic that while Columbus considered the Arawaks' disregard of private ownership as a virtue, neither he nor the successive generations of explorers and settlers were able or even tried to emulate the natives in this regard – rather, taking advantage of this disregard of private ownership and dispossessing the natives of their very lands.

Columbus also established the image of the bad Indian when he described the cannibalistic "Carib" Indians – in this regard he could also be said to have laid down a marker for the manner of description of the bad Indian, for like other such negative portrayals, his was based entirely on hearsay – although, in this particular case, the description proved to be largely accurate.

Columbus may have been the first but he was definitely not the last to employ this dual imagery in writing of the Indians. Amerigo Vespucci's *Mundus Novus* (1503) which contained a description of the Indians he encountered was among the early depictions, both good and bad, of the Indian. In a passage from *Mundus Novus* we see how he begins by praising the "well formed and proportioned" physique of the Indians before proceeding to enumerate their vices, among which were lechery among the womenfolk who carried out a custom:

> very shameful and beyond all human belief. For their women, being very lustful, cause the private parts of their husbands to swell up to such a huge size that they appear deformed and disgusting; and this is accomplished by a certain device of theirs, the biting of certain poisonous animals. And in consequence of this many lose their organs which break through lack of attention, and they remain eunuchs. (5-6)

Another vice pointed out by Vespucci was also of a sexual nature – that of incest. The tract pointed out that "son cohabits with mother, brother with sister, male cousin with female, and any man with the first woman he meets" (6). But among the vices mentioned by Vespucci, perhaps most damning of all was "the vice most sensational and horrifying in European eyes" – cannibalism (Berkhofer 9).

Even though Vespucci's writing contains both descriptions of good and bad qualities in the Indians, it seems that the good qualities are merely glossed over while the writer seems to take a perverse pleasure in dwelling at length on the negative aspects – a trend which has continued to be replicated down the ages.

Indeed, what becomes clear even at this early juncture, is that the image of the Indian, as it developed, portrays the native as deficient in comparison to the European. This was largely because the Spanish, and other later Europeans judged the Indian according to the twin criteria of civilization and Christianity. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., in his *The White Man's Indian* (1978) points out that Columbus' idealistic description "of the Arawak tribespeople was the first in a long succession of such images of the Indian as lacking in European accomplishments but pleasant withal" (6). Even as the good Indian, he lacked the accomplishments of the European. So well-entrenched was this idea of Indian deficiency that "[k]nowledge of Aztec and Inca achievements in art and agriculture and in social and political organization … did not transform the overall conception of the *Indian*" (11).

The Spanish accounts of the Indians were the earliest accounts on the native inhabitants of this region by any Europeans, and they undoubtedly influenced the outlook of other Europeans, namely the English and the French, who arrived later on the scene. To what extent they influenced the later Europeans is not precisely known. Even if the widely publicized accounts of these natives by Columbus and Vespucci had not reached their ears, the French and English would probably not have made a very different account of the Indians since their criteria of judgment would also, like the Spanish, have been that of Christianity and civilization. The fact that the Indian

tribes encountered by the English and the French did not possess any of the sophistication and advancements of Latin American tribes like the Aztecs and the Incas virtually guaranteed that the image of the Indian as deficient in comparison to the European would prevail. Indeed, since the French and the English encountered a more "wilder" species of natives in the respective lands that they occupied, they often used the word *savage* or *sauvage* to describe the Indians. The English also used other terminology to refer to the Indian, among which were "infidel", "heathen", and "barbarian" – all of which had negative connotations and implied that the person so referred to was an inferior Other.

Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1599) gave to English readers some idea of what the native inhabitants of the newly discovered lands were like. Like the writings of the Spanish explorers, this collection provided a picture of both the good Indian as well as the bad Indian. The account of Dionyse Settle, contained in Hakluyt's book, describes what he sees as the disgusting eating habits of the Innuik Eskimos, and states his belief that they were cannibalistic in nature: ". . . I thinke them rather Anthropophagi, or devourers of mans flesh than other wise . . ." (qtd. in Berkhofer 16-17). However, Hakluyt's book also contains a positive account of the Indian in the form of Arthur Barlowe's account of the natives of Roanoke Island, where he describes them as "gentle, loving, and faithful, void of all guile, and treason, and such as lived after the manner of the golden age" (qtd. in Berkhofer 17). This dual imagery in the description of the Indian can also be seen in the writings of Captain John Smith.

Despite the prevalence of this dual imagery of the Indian, the image of the bad Indian began to predominate, especially after conflicts between the English and the Indians over land and power broke out. For instance, the massacre of 1622 under the chieftainship of Opechancanough, which resulted in the deaths of 347 English settlers prompted Samuel Purchas, in his *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625) to describe the natives of the region as "more brutish than the beasts they hunt, more wild and unmanly then that unmanned wild Countrey, which they range rather than inhabite; captivated also to Satans tyranny in foolish pieties, mad impieties, wicked idlenesse, busie and bloudv wickednesse" (231).

This does not imply that the negative image of the Indian as irredeemable savage was used exclusively in representations of the Indian. The image of the good Indian also came to be used extensively. It was, in time, incorporated into the Noble Savage convention, in which capacity the Indian was used to critique the institutions of what was seen by detractors as a decadent and over-civilized Europe. This idea began with Montaigne (1533-1592) who in the essay "Of Cannibals" (c. 1580) employed "the Brazilian cannibals to criticize French poverty and social inequality" (Berkhofer 75). This trend of using the "virtuous, childlike savage whose natural goodness and good sense contrasted with the corruption and folly of courts and with the civilized abuse of power" was continued in the eighteenth century by writers like Rousseau (1712-1778) and Diderot (1713-1784), among others (Carr 24). In the United States, this convention was also carried on by George Catlin (1796-1872), the famous painter who used the idealised image of the Indian to critique the vices of civilization. As Limerick points out "Catlin was actually saying more about his

discontent with American society. He handled Indian virtues like darts thrown to deflate American pretensions" (183).

With regard to American literature, James Fenimore Cooper was to make extensive use of the Noble Savage tradition in the depiction of the more notable Indian characters like Chingachgook and Uncas in his narratives. Testifying to the influential nature of Cooper's depiction of Native Americans in American literature, Roy Harvey Pearce in his *Savagism and Civilization* (1953) asserts that "Cooper set the pattern for writers who would treat of the Indian" (197). It is to be noted here that Cooper did not exclusively fashion his Indian characters in the image of the Noble Savage as can be seen from his demonization of Magua and the other Hurons in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826).

The idea of the Noble Savage had been extensively employed during the era of the American Revolution by colonists who wished to stress the similarities between the Indians and themselves. Helen Carr in her *Inventing the American Primitive* (1996) has pointed out that "[t]he idea that the American colonist was, like the Indian, natural and virtuous by contrast with the corrupt, over-civilized European court was a constant motif in independence rhetoric" (24). In the years leading up to Independence, the Indian characteristic which was stressed and which was very much in keeping with the political sentiment of the times was the Indian's love for liberty.

However, by the end of the American and French Revolutions the use of the Noble Savage as a political device for change had about run its course. Even during its heyday, the idea of the Noble Savage did not find universal acceptance in all parts of America. On the frontier, the idea of the Indian as hostile savage continued to hold

sway. Contributing to this antipathy against the Indian were "[t]he Indian warfare during the Anglo-French struggles of the mid-1740s to 1760, Pontiac's uprising in 1763 and continuing border disputes . . . " (Carr 36). Those who wholeheartedly subscribed to the idea of the Indian as Noble Savage were usually those who were not in any real proximity to the Indian, or who were, at any event, geographically distant enough from Indian settlements to not feel the repercussions of the conflicts with the Indians over territories. The matter can best be described in the words of Berkhofer who points out that "[j]ust as it has been said that the Europeans could easily ennoble the Indian because of their remoteness from savage warfare, so commentators have argued that American authors and artists of the Eastern United States only conceived of the Indian as noble after that section of the country had eliminated its Indian problem" (88).

In the newly independent America, after the former colonists had freed themselves from the oppressive yoke of the English king, the idea of the Noble Savage slowly became supplanted by that of the ignoble or bad Indian as the emphasis was now on expanding territory, which meant the taking of the Indian's lands from him. Carr explains that "if the Americans intended to establish an empire, and to legitimize the movement across the continent by which that empire could be achieved, they would have to re-invoke all the European assumptions of Indian otherness and savagery, their inferiority and deficiencies, which had earlier been used to justify colonisation" (Carr 24).

Despite the fact that knowledge about the Indian accumulated over time "the basic images of the good and bad Indian persist from the era of Columbus up to the

present without substantial modification or variation" (Berkhofer 96). This is due in no small part to the fact that such images were used extensively in the popular Western narratives. In fact, there is what we might term a symbiotic relationship between the Western and the stereotype of the Indian, in the sense that the latter supplied the Western with a ready stock of character traits to ascribe to the Indian characters while at the same time the Western's use of such stereotypes served to perpetuate them.

It is against the backdrop of this history of the representation of the Indian that any analysis of Indians in modern narratives should be made. The question to be asked in this chapter is whether the *Lonesome Dove* series of novels selected for the purposes of this research, conform to the age old traditions in their representation of the Indian. For, as Berkhofer so aptly points out, "[a]lthough modern artists and writers assume their own imagery to be more in line with 'reality' than that of their predecessors, they employ the imagery for much the same reasons and often with the same results as those persons of the past they so often scorn as uninformed, fanciful, or hypocritical" (71).

In all of the *Lonesome Dove* series of novels there is an attempt at verisimilitude. In true post-modernist tradition, Larry McMurtry weaves his narrative into historical events – so seamlessly that it is at times difficult for the reader to delineate where the fiction ends and where the history begins. This technique reinforces the narratives' rejection of conventions in favour of a more realistic approach. A pertinent question that arises here is whether this attempt at realism extends to the portrayal of the Indian. To answer this question, this study will begin by analysing McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* (1985).

Not surprisingly, McMurtry's 1986 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Lonesome Dove* has received largely positive responses from all quarters with the *Los Angeles Times Book Review* describing the novel as McMurtry's "loftiest novel" and *USA Today* hailing the novel thus: "If you read only one Western novel in your life, read *Lonesome Dove* . . ." (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove*). Being the most critically acclaimed of the texts selected for the purposes of this study, this chapter will place more emphasis on the analysis of *Lonesome Dove* than on McMurtry's other novels.

Lonesome Dove begins with a description of life in the frontier town of Lonesome Dove. Life here is anything but peaceful, situated as it is on the border with Mexico. However, Mexican bandits do not seem to hold much dread for the hardy citizens of this town. The initial chapter makes it clear that there are an abundance of fearsome creatures that are capable of causing severe harm to human beings – among them are "black widows, yellow jackets and centipedes" not to mention the ubiquitous snakes (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 4).

Dangerous as these creatures might be, they do not seem to intimidate the hardened residents of the town, who seem to regard these creatures with a casual indifference. For Gus' partner Call, snakes seem to be a minor irritant, which should be disposed of as quickly as possible: "Call had no respect whatsoever for snakes, or for anyone who stood aside for snakes. He treated rattlers like gnats, disposing of them with one stroke of whatever tool he had in hand" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 4).

It is not that snakes and the other creatures found in Lonesome Dove are not dangerous – the harm they are capable of causing to humans is amply demonstrated

through the fate of the local white barber, Dillard Brawley, who is bitten by a centipede and loses a leg as a result.

The fact is that the dangers posed by these creatures, dangerous as they are, is rendered insignificant, by comparison to a much greater threat – that posed by the Comanche. Like the other residents of Lonesome Dove, Corporal Pea Eye Parker, an employee of the Hat Creek Cattle Company, has no fear of Mexican bandits but has a healthy respect, bordering on irrational fear, of Indians. We are told that "Pea was an exceptionally hard man to stimulate, being insensitive to most fears. Pea had just sense enough to fear Comanches – that didn't require an abundance of sense. Mexican bandits did not impress him" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 12). Despite his fearlessness in most other respects, Pea is plagued by dreams of a big Indian who stalks him with a big knife.

The opening of the narrative thus builds up a sense of menace around the Indian. The Comanches seem to be a dangerous foe indeed. The novel is set at a time after the end of the Civil War, when Indian resistance had been all but broken. But the narrative seems to insist that even though subdued, a single armed free Indian is not something to be underestimated: "Whipped they might be, but as long as there was one free Comanche with a horse and a gun it would be foolish to take them lightly" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 19).

All other dangers pale in significance when compared to the dangers posed by the Indian. Not just Indians, but by mere association, even animals which once belonged to Indians are dangerous. A case in point is Captain Call's mare, nicknamed by Pea Eye as the Hell Bitch. "Pea Eye and Newt were both anxious to see her sold.

They had to work around her every day and suffered accordingly. She had once kicked Newt all the way into the blacksmith shop and nearly into the forge. Pea Eye was at least as scared of her as he was of Comanches" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 10). The narrative then claims that "[h]er disposition did suggest some time spent with Indians" (10). Her "disposition", in this instance clearly refers to her aggressive and unpredictable temperament.

Yet despite these constant allusions to the dangerous nature of the Indian and having built up an aura of menace around him, the narrative does not actually portray the Indian of lived experience as the danger that he is made out to be. That there is a clear disconnect between the savage Indian of popular imagination and the Indian of lived experience, is suggested early on in Chapter 2 of *Lonesome Dove* when we are told that despite Pea's recurring fears of a "huge Indian getting ready to poke him with something sharp [m]ost of the Indians he had actually seen had all been scrawny little men" (25). Indeed, with the exception of Blue Duck who is a renegade (more outlaw than Indian) and not a true-blooded Indian (we are told in *Comanche Moon* [1997] that he is the result of a union between the Comanche chief Buffalo Hump and a Mexican captive), most of the Indians who actually appear in the course of the narrative seem to conform to the "scrawny little men" image. It is as if McMurtry dredges up all the negative traits traditionally associated with the image of the bad or savage Indian only to disprove it within the course of the narrative. For the Indians, when they do actually figure in the narrative, seem to be a point by point refutation of everything that the novel's White characters know, or thought they knew, about Indians.

If Newt imagines Indians to be hostile and constantly worries about them, the first Indians he sees are more in the mould of the "scrawny little men" alluded to in Chapter 2. They are not remarkable in appearance and Newt mistakes them for cowboys from another herd until they draw close:

> By the time it registered that they were really Indians, they had already cut off the steer and were driving it away, as the Captain sat and watched. Newt was almost afraid to look at them, but when he did he was surprised at how thin and poor they looked. The old man who was their leader was just skin and bones. He rode near enough for Newt to see that one of his eyes was milky white. The other Indians were young. Their ponies were as thin as they were. They had no saddles, just saddle blankets, and only one had a gun, an old carbine. (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 560-61)

This incident clearly demonstrates that the bloodthirsty Indian of popular imagination is very different from the actual Indian of lived experience. The very next chapter deals with the actions of the evil Suggs brothers as if to emphasize that White men can be just as bad, in actuality, as the bad Indian supposedly is.

The diminishing herds of buffalo which are mentioned from time to time during the course of the narrative, suggest that the Indians do have a legitimate cause for grievance. For the narrative repeatedly draws our attention to the fact that what were once teeming herds of buffalo have been reduced to a few buffalo thinly speckled across the vast and empty plains – remnants of the once massive herds whose hoof beats caused the plains to tremble. In Chapter 50, July and Joe come across a buffalo herd, but this is only a small bunch comprising eight animals. At the sight of the

buffalo, July is moved to comment, "I'm glad there's some left. I know the hide hunters have about killed them off" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 427). The term "hide hunter" used by July refers to the White buffalo hunters who "carr[ied] deadly accurate .50-calibre Sharps rifles that could kill effectively at extreme range – grim, violent, opportunistic men blessed now by both a market in the east for buffalo leather and the means of getting it there" (Gwynne ch. 1). What the hunters were after was just the skins of the animals. They often killed the animals in the thousands only to skin them and leave their carcasses rotting on the plains. S.C. Gwynne in his *Empire of the Summer Moon* (2010) has referred to the slaughter of these buffalo herds as "the greatest mass destruction of warm-blooded animals in human history" (ch. 1). The Indians who depended mainly on the buffalo for subsistence found their major food source dwindling. In Chapter 53, we see the manner in which the trade in buffalo skins works. Elmira's two buffalo hunter escorts manage to kill and skin twenty buffalo in a single day. They skin them and then pile the hides into the wagon and then ride off. The narrative has accurately depicted the manner in which the buffalo were hunted almost to extinction. Twenty of these animals killed by two men in the course of one day brings home the magnitude of the problem being faced by the Indians. The narrative gives a glimpse, in microcosm, of the manner in which the buffalo were hunted almost to extinction which is what irked the Indians and was a major cause of their grievances against the White man.

Blue Duck, and his band of renegades, are however an exception to the general rule. It is in Blue Duck that McMurtry infuses all the negative characteristics that the characters in the novel attribute to the savage Indian. He wears a bone necklace made of human fingers – he claims that it is easier to take rings off of his victims by breaking

off the fingers (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 421). He is big just like the Indian of Pea Eye's dreams and carries a big knife. "He was a big man, riding a bay stallion. . . . He had long, tangled black hair and wore no hat – just a bandana tied around his head. His leather leggings were greasy and his boots old, though he wore a pair of silver spurs with big rowels. He had a large knife strapped to one leg and carried a rifle lightly across the pommel of his saddle" (381). Augustus describes him as "a Comanchero. He's got a greasy bunch of murderers and child-stealers. He used to work the Red River country from New Mexico all the way across to Arkansas, hitting settlers. They'd butcher the grownups and take the horses and kids" (383). The next chapter adds a little more to what we already know about Blue Duck's nefarious activities: "Blue Duck stole white children and gave them to the Comanches for presents. He took scalps, abused women, cut up men. What he didn't steal he burned, always fleeing west onto the waterless reaches of the *llano estacado* … Stories of his crimes trickled as far down as Lonesome Dove" (388). He also seems to have refined the art of torture as can be seen through his warning to Lorena after abducting her: "I got a treatment for women that try to run away. I cut a little hole in their stomachs and pull out a gut and wrap it around a limb. Then I drag them thirty or forty feet and tie them down. That way they can watch the coyotes come and eat their guts" (419). The old Mexican cook Po Campo says of him: "There is no worse man. Only the devil is worse and the devil won't bother us on this trip" (510). This emphasizes Blue Duck's fiendish nature which is in accordance with the traditional image of the bad Indian.

However, the narrative distances Blue Duck and the Kiowas from the majority of the other Indians. They are renegades – outcasts from their own tribe, and thus are in no way representative of their respective tribes. Their evil has nothing to do with

their identity as Indians. They are no more representative of the mass of Indians than the White outlaws are of White people in general. To equate the renegades with all Indians would, within the scheme of the novel, be tantamount to equating the White outlaws like the Suggs brothers, or Blue Duck's lackeys, Monkey John and Dog Face, with all White folks – a completely untenable proposition.

Indeed the Indians are not the only dangerous people stalking the plains. The outlaws that Jake Spoon partners up with are more dangerous than many of the Indians are reputed to be. The outlaws in question are the Suggs brothers – Dan Suggs the eldest, his younger brother Roy Suggs and the youngest of the Suggs brothers, Eddie Suggs. They are also accompanied by a tall black man they call Frog Lip. Their depredations put to shame even the most shocking reports of Indian brutality. Jake Spoon almost instantly regrets partnering up with them. Despite the fact that he is an ex-Texas Ranger who has seen his fair share of killers, the Suggs seem to be in a league of their own in this regard. "Their talk, it seemed, was mostly of killing. Even little Eddie, the youngest, claimed to have killed three men, two nesters and a Mexican. The rest of the outfit didn't mention numbers, but Jake had no doubt that he was riding with accomplished killers" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 572). The Suggs brothers are guilty of many of the deeds which are traditionally laid at the doorstep of the bad Indian of myth. The location of this part of the narrative is significant: it takes place right after the chapter which details how the supposedly hostile Indians help Newt with his cattle, thereby underscoring the falsity of the representation of the bad Indian. Through its strategic arranging of episodes the narrative seems to suggest that there are much greater evils to worry about than poorly armed natives who are struggling to make ends meet.

McMurtry has created his White outlaws in the image of the bad Indian and this has the effect of highlighting the falsity of the representation of the Indian as savage. If we examine the White outlaws and the nature of their crimes, what is striking is that they collectively possess most of the attributes said to be possessed by the bad Indian of popular imagination. Berkhofer has catalogued some of the traits said to be characteristic of the bad Indian. Among such vices are "lechery, passion and vanity [which] led to lives of polygamy and sexual promiscuity among themselves and constant warfare and fiendish revenge against their enemies"(28). Their sins also included:

> cruelty to captives and incessant warfare. . . . Filthy surroundings, inadequate cooking, and certain items of diet repulsive to white taste . . . Indolence rather than industry, improvidence in the face of scarcity, thievery and treachery . . . . Concluding the bad version of the Indian were the power of superstition represented by the "conjurers" and "medicine men," the hard slavery of women and the laziness of men . . . (Berkhofer 28)

While the Suggs brothers seem to be free of the sin of lechery and all that that entails, they are definitely not industrious. Their initial plan is to become "regulators" – which, according to them, involves forcing drivers of cattle herds to pay for moving cattle across the wide open spaces; in essence, it is just another way of saying that they are going to engage in extortion at gun-point. As to warfare, they seem to be constantly at war with society in general when they are not at war among themselves. They are also vengeful to a fault, particularly Dan Suggs. "Dan Suggs seemed to hate everybody he knew – he spoke in the vilest language of everyone, but his particular hatred was

cowboys. He had trailed a herd once and not done well with it, and it had left him resentful of those with better luck" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 572).

The other White outlaws in *Lonesome Dove* are Monkey John and Dog Face. They are lecherous as can be seen in their treatment of Lorena. What sets their villainy apart is their cruelty towards the captive Lorena. They are even more cruel to Lorena than the Kiowas are:

> [Monkey John] was the worst man she had ever known, worse even than Ermoke and the Kiowas, though they were bad enough . . . Monkey John was old and short. His hair was a dirty white and he was under five feet, but that didn't keep him from being mean. Twice he had grabbed sticks out of the fire and beat her with them. There was nothing she could do but curl up as tight as she could. Her back and legs were soon burned and bruised and she knew Monkey John would do worse than that if he ever got her alone long enough . . . " (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 475)

As to talk of torture, this supposedly civilized White man is on the same level as Blue Duck: "Monkey John told her several times what he would do to her if she tried to run away – terrible things, on the order of what Blue Duck had threatened, on the morning after he kidnapped her, only worse if possible. He said he would sew her up with rawhide threads so tight she couldn't make water, and then would watch her till she burst." (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 476). Admittedly, Dog Face does not like it when Monkey John beats Lorena but this is not out of any sympathy or humanitarian considerations for her well-being but rather to ensure that "his investment didn't get

too damaged" (476). They are filthy as are their surroundings. "They camped not far from a creek but none of the men ever washed" (476).

In the final analysis, *Lonesome Dove* is peopled by a motley of characters of various races engaged in crime of varying degrees; some like Jake Spoon who seem more victims of circumstances than anything else. What the narrative seems to suggest is that criminality or savagery is not characteristic of any particular race – it has more to do with a character's personal disposition and his circumstances. Whites, and even Blacks for that matter, are as capable of perpetrating the evils traditionally laid at the doorstep of Indians.

At any event, the narrative's intent seems to be to show the pitfalls present in trying to stereotype people, whether the stereotypes be positive or negative. In portraying the presence of evil White men, McMurtry's narrative shows that the broad category denoted by the term "'white people' . . . was not a monolith at all but a complex swirl of people as adept at preying on each other as at preying on Indians" (Limerick 51). Thus, insofar as McMurtry portrayed evil White characters present alongside the good ones, he was faithful in his portrayal of the realistic West of history which was peopled by all manner and varieties of people, be they White or otherwise.

In this regard, the implicit contrast between Deets and Frog Lip suggests that the same is true of Black people as well. The friendly Deets who is killed as a result of his reluctance to shoot an Indian youth who charges him with a lance, presents a strong contrast to Frog Lip who drives cows onto the sod roofs of poor settlers out of mere spite and shows that this random distribution of good and evil is prevalent across all races. And just because the novel refutes the myth of the bad Indian does not mean

that it intends to revert to the image of the Noble Savage – in itself a patently false representation of the Indian – either. It is clear that McMurtry does not subscribe to the tradition of the Noble Savage at all. None of the Indians in *Lonesome Dove* are noble in any sense of the word. The closest thing approaching to the Noble Savage are the Indians who help Newt escort his cattle back to the main herd, and they do not conform to the stereotype of the good Indian at all. For one, they too are "as skinny as the first bunch of Indians" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 569) Newt had seen earlier while the good Indian of popular imagination supposedly possessed a "handsomeness of physique and physiognomy" (Berkhofer 47). Then too, to Newt, "they were rather smelly . . . . They smelled like the lard Bolivar had used on his hair" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 568). Contrast this depiction with that of the description of the quintessential Noble Savage, Uncas in James Fennimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). This "unblemished specimen of the noblest proportions of man" (53) has an:

> upright, flexible figure … graceful and unrestrained in the attitudes and movements of nature . . . there was no concealment to his dark, glancing, fearless eye, alike terrible and calm; the bold outline of his high, haughty features, pure in their native red; or to the dignified elevation of his receding forehead, together with all the finest proportions of a noble head … (Cooper 52)

The comparison should make abundantly clear McMurtry's complete rejection of the Noble Savage tradition. In the final analysis, what we have is a picture of the Indian

shorn of abject demonization while steering away from romanticization, ultimately leaving us with an honest attempt to provide an unbiased portrait of the Indian.

D.L. Birchfield in "Lonesome Duck: The Blueing of a Texas-American Myth" (1995) questions what he sees as McMurtry's glorification of his two ex-Ranger heroes and accuses him of being "callous where the sensitivities of Native American people are concerned" (55). Temporarily reserving judgment, prior to analysis, on whether this observation holds true for the other books in the *Lonesome Dove* saga, it would be unfair to apply this label to *Lonesome Dove* which actively works to disprove popular stereotypes.

While the narrative of *Lonesome Dove* does appear to disprove the stereotype of the bad Indian, Birchfield nevertheless contests the negative representation of Blue Duck and his band of renegades. He invites the reader to "step outside the ethnocentricity of [Anglo-American] culture" and view the narrative against the backdrop of the history of Indians and Texas Rangers (62). Briefly recounting the heinous actions of the Texas Rangers against the mostly innocent and hapless Indians that they attacked, Birchfield contends that Blue Duck and the other renegades who are portrayed as thoroughly evil characters whose villainy is unmitigated by even an iota of goodness, are victims and not perpetrators of evil. The renegade, explains Birchfield, has come into being as a result of "the sweeping away of organized Indian life" (59). These renegades are "young men estranged from their people, from their culture, from their way of life. They will not perpetuate themselves, will not propagate and see themselves recreated in their children. They will be outlaws for a time, a unique creation of Texas and American Indian policy, and then they will die violent deaths

and be gone" (59). Birchfield also defends what is arguably Blue Duck's most heinous crime – the murder of the deputy sheriff Roscoe Brown and the two children with him – by pointing out that this murder is a reversal of the actions of Texas Rangers on helpless Indian women and children when their menfolk were away – "a sick sort of poetic justice, of how the Texans 'whipped' the Indians" (61).

There appears to be a good deal of truth to Birchfield's critique of certain aspects of *Lonesome Dove*. The findings of the New Western historians, as well as analysis by Dee Brown and Helen Hunt Jackson have shown that Indians were often at the receiving end of arbitrary and ill-considered actions of White people. However, it has already been demonstrated that McMurtry does not single out or demonize the Indians, as a race, in his narrative. The presence of the narrative's few bad Indians is offset by the presence of bad White men who rival the Indians in their villainy. To insist that McMurtry was being unfair towards Native American people by his representation of a few bad Indians is tantamount to suggesting that McMurtry was unfair towards White people by representing bad White men. Also, it needs to be acknowledged that the author was writing a work of fiction and his portrayal of a few bad Indians can be put down to the demands of the plot. To insist that *Lonesome Dove* needs to provide a rationale for the actions of its few bad Indians is to place on fiction the burdens of history. Additionally, Birchfield's claim that that *Lonesome Dove* is "a novel glorifying two mid-nineteenth century ex-Rangers," will be examined in depth in the next chapter (55).

Nevertheless, Birchfield's analysis is helpful in demonstrating the ethnocentric – in this case, a White Anglo-American – bias underlying *Lonesome Dove*. *Lonesome*

Dove, as do most Westerns, has as its main theme the meeting between civilization and savagery, and as Limerick has shown, this manner of viewing the history of the American West is an outmoded view based on Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier hypothesis. Turner, in his seminal paper delivered before the American Historical Association in 1893, had described the frontier as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (3). Turner's conceptualization of the frontier was accepted unequivocally by historians in the next few decades following his pronouncement. This emphasis on the frontier must have been quite enticing for the nationalistic American historian, since the frontier, according to Turner, was what accounted for that most celebrated of American characteristics: American exceptionalism. It was the frontier which transformed the individual from a European into an American. According to Turner:

> [t]he frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in the log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. . . . The fact is, that here is a new product that is American. (3-4)

This emphasis on the frontier, and the resultant effort to categorize the history of the West in simplistic terms of a contest between civilization and savagery is to adopt a very narrow Anglo-American perspective. As Limerick has shown, to view the history of the American West solely in these narrow terms is, aside from its narrow

ethnocentric bias, to ignore the experiences of other equally prominent minority groups who played a significant role in the history of the development of this same region – groups like the Hispanics, African-Americans, the Chinese and the Japanese.

Moreover, this concept of "civilization versus savagery" invites further analysis. The term "civilization" is a highly unstable concept whose meaning is ultimately determined by the conquerors whose power is founded in violence. In his telling critique of civilization in *Heart of Darkness* (1899) Joseph Conrad, through the mouth of the character Marlowe, refers to the conquerors of ages past and states that:

> They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force- nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind – as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to . . . (7)

Civilization is the "idea" that redeems this avarice and violence underlying the victory of the conqueror. What the term "civilization" implies – along with the question of what is "civilized" and what "savage" – is decided not by reference to any objective standards but by the conquerors wielding power. And such power is always founded

in violence. The "civilizational" production works to mystify its own foundational violence by a binary and hierarchical valuation – denigrating the indigenous, non-White Other as "savage" while at the same time aestheticizing the conqueror and his values through its valorisation of the concept of "civilization". Thus, civilization is nothing but a thinly disguised veneer that aesthetically cloaks the true exploitative and violent nature of conquest.

Despite the fact that McMurtry seems to have avoided ethnic stereotyping, it remains to be seen whether he was able to completely break free of the pervasive narrative tradition in his representation of the Indian in *Lonesome Dove*. A helpful way to view the White-dominated narrative which purports to tell the story of the frontier West as a contest between civilization and savagery is to see it as a discourse in the Foucauldian sense – a discourse which structures the manner in which we see the conquest of the American West and provide a justification of sorts for the violence and deceit underlying this conquest. To put it in slightly different terms, the demonization of the Indian Other can be seen as a conscious strategy to glorify the White conqueror. This White-dominated American narrative also stressed the Indian's deficiency, if not always his savagery, in order to drive home the necessity and even inevitability of White occupation of Indian lands. The manner in which this White-dominated narrative represents the Indian has remarkable similarities with the way that the West represented the native Other to justify its domination of the Orient – a manner of representation that has been analyzed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978).

Said has cautioned against assuming that the West's construct of the Orient "is nothing more than a structure of lies or of myths which, were the truth about them to

be told, would simply blow away" (6). On the contrary, the West's idea of what constitutes the Orient "has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West" (5). The West's idea of the Orient is upheld by a wide body of interests in the form of "academies, books, congresses, universities, foreign service institutes" (6). In like manner, we should not assume that the White-dominated narrative about the American West is an airy fantasy concocted out of the imagination of overzealous writers. If we think of the White-dominated narrative as a discourse we may choose to view the Western as one of the structures that legitimizes the discourse.

A lot of what Said wrote about the representation of the Oriental by the West in *Orientalism* can be applied to the representation of the Native American by the Whites. For though Said's writings are made in the context of a specific geographical location he was also referring, in the final analysis, to the representation of a marginalized group by a dominant group.

Aside from its demonization of the Indian, a distinguishing feature of the Western's representation of the Indian is the tendency to stress the latter's inferiority: what Berkhofer refers to as the deficiency image. So prevalent is the image of the deficient Indian in popular representations that even the Indians themselves often accepted this image, as can be seen in their referring to the President of the United States as "the Great White father" and their stylizing themselves as his "children". Berkhofer too identifies a "fundamental imagery" underlying all Whites' assumptions in their dealings with the Indians and "[t]he primary premise of that imagery is the deficiency of the Indian as compared to the White" (113).

The origins of the idea of the Indian as deficient can be traced back early to the initial settlement of the New World, when the invading European powers used this idea of deficiency to assert their claim over native lands. Berkhofer states that "[t]he assertion of title against native claims . . . rested upon the image of the Indian as deficient" (120). This basic premise of Indian deficiency also underlies the representation of the Indian in *Lonesome Dove*, whether those Indians be good or bad. This proves the accuracy of Berkhofer's observation that "[b]eneath both the good and bad images used by explorer, settler, missionary, and policy maker alike lay the idea of Indian deficiency . . ." (119). Most of the Indians that the cowboys come across on their trail drive to Montana are starving. On more than one occasion, even the normally parsimonious Call is moved to give starving bedraggled groups of Indians a cow or two out of pity. The Indians are facing starvation because, unlike the cowboys, they are unable to adapt to changing circumstances, thus underscoring their deficiency. The cowboys, on the other hand, are depicted by the narrative as being able to adapt to every adversity that comes their way. The very fact that the cowboys are able to make it to Montana, a strange new world to them, and establish a ranch there is a comment on the inability of the Indians to make the best of their situation. The cowboys are ultimately able to overcome or adapt to every obstacle faced by them even though they have lost many of their crew members on the way to Montana. Despite the other failings of the members of the Hat Creek Outfit, the narrative emphasizes the qualities of determination and adaptability possessed by them – qualities that the Indians in the novel conspicuously lack. By forcing us to recognize these admirable qualities possessed by the cowboys the narrative also highlights the lack of these same qualities in the Indians.

All the Indians presented in *Lonesome Dove* are not demonic savages. Some of the Indians are merely poor people who are on the point of starvation presumably because of the thinning of the buffalo herds on which they depended for food. Despite having free use of all that land which up to that point has been uninhabited, the Indian, as portrayed in the novel, is unable to eke out a living and has to beg the cowboys for food. This happens on more than one occasion. The narrative seems to suggest that the innate deficiency of the Indian makes him unable to make the land productive for himself, while at the same time implying that the Whites' ability to thrive on this same land makes them inherently the superior race.

It may thus be concluded that even though McMurtry steered clear of racial stereotyping in *Lonesome Dove*, his portrayal of Indians still draws on a tradition which saw the Indian as inferior to the White man. In this sense, *Lonesome Dove* still appears to have a rather ethnocentric bias.

This image of the resourceful White man establishing a settlement and conquering the wilderness through establishment of thriving farms is an ideal that forms part of the White narrative about the conquest of the West. In actuality, the White man's intervention in what he saw as a barren and unoccupied landscape, often failed to live up to the ideal of the prosperous yeoman farmer which portrays the White man as being the torchbearer of civilization and progress into an inhospitable wilderness. Limerick points out that "[t]o the planners of the American Republic . . . [i]ndependent and hardworking farmers provided the ideal citizenry, at once anchored and supported by their property" (58). Such ownership of property often failed to provide a subsistence for the farmers, who had to suffer the vagaries of nature and

were often unable to make ends meet on the land – in this respect, they were not very dissimilar to the Indians in the narrative of *Lonesome Dove.* Lured by promises of a life of light toil amidst sylvan settings many people arrived at their destination only to find that they were as helpless to eke out a living on the land as the Indians whom they accused of being improvident. The only difference was that in the case of the farmers, they often had aid from the federal government to bail them out. Even then, despite the formulation of favourable laws like the Homestead Act, nature and the landscape did not seem to want to cooperate in the realization of the ideal, for "much of the land made available to [homesteaders] was beyond the line of semi-aridity, in regions where the 160-acre farm and the methods of conventional farming could produce little except frustration" (Limerick 62).

In *Orientalism*, Said identified a strategy by which the superiority of the Westerner *vis-à-vis* the Oriental was asserted – this was done by putting "the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand" (7). In *Lonesome Dove*, too, a similar strategy can be discerned to be at play, for the narrative portrays the White man in a whole series of relationships with regard to the Indian; in all of such relationships the White man is always shown to be in a position of relative superiority when compared to the Indian.

Whether presented as dangerous foe or as more peaceful native, the Indian is always shown to be inferior to the White man. The dangers posed by Indians may be stressed by the various characters throughout the narrative but an actual encounter between White man and Indian shows the superiority of the former should he choose to indulge in violence. Chapter 56 of *Lonesome Dove* describes just such an encounter

between Gus and the renegade Kiowas accompanied by Dog Face and Monkey John. The renegades have been lying in wait for Gus who is caught completely unprepared. In the ensuing pursuit the Indians fire many bullets at Gus, none of which find their mark. In fact, the Indians, not being as well versed in the arts of warfare as Gus, seem to be firing rather haphazardly. "The Indians were shooting, though still far out of effective range" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 485). By contrast, when Gus starts shooting, Indians immediately start falling down around him. "The Indians were dismayed; they flailed at the horses with their rifles, but the horses were spooked. Two stopped dead and Augustus immediately shot their riders. He could have asked for no better target than an Indian stopped fifty yards away on a horse that wouldn't move. The two men dropped and lay still" (485). They are not the only casualties of Gus's deadly accuracy. "Five Indians were dead, and the battle not five minutes old. Augustus replaced his cartridges and killed a sixth as the Indians were retreating. He might have got one or two more, but decided against risking long shots when his situation was so chancy . . . . Probably they had charged with all they had – in which case he had killed half of them" (McMurtry 486). What becomes apparent through this implicit comparison between the White man and the Indian is the latter's deficiency when directly confronted with the former's superiority. Even when the White man is outnumbered and at a disadvantage, the Indian's inherent deficiency makes him incapable of getting the better of the beleaguered White man.

Despite its effort to steer clear of, and even, to a certain extent, disprove negative racial stereotyping, it becomes evident that *Lonesome Dove* is unable to completely break away from popular narrative traditions with regard to its representation of the Indian. It bears mentioning here that McMurtry did not initiate

this tradition but was simply following a long established tradition in the representation of the Indian – a tradition which, as has been pointed out earlier, began with Columbus. The important contribution of Cooper with regard to the literary representation of the Indian has already been mentioned. The pervasiveness of this tradition can be seen from the fact that even so celebrated an American literary figure like Mark Twain was influenced by it in his portrayal of Indians. Twain seems to have been particularly drawn to the negative stereotype of the Indian as can be seen in his *The Noble Red Man* (1870) which is an attack on Cooper's portrayal of his Indians as Noble Savages. *Roughing It* (1872) is another of Twain's narratives which provide a thoroughly unflattering portrayal of the Indian. Even when he later tried to ameliorate his earlier negative portrayal of Indians, "this tone is largely ambivalent, and is always tinged with a fatalistic note that reminds the reader that all aboriginals are destined to pass away as the Darwinian advance of civilization routes them out" (Twain's Indians).

Having closely examined *Lonesome Dove's* portrayal of Indians, this study also proposes to analyse the other novels that make up the saga in this regard. It can be asserted right at the very outset that just like in *Lonesome Dove*, McMurtry does not subscribe to the Noble Indian image in any of the other books.

Comanche Moon (1997) and *Dead Man's Walk* (1995) follow the convention of the representation of the Indian as savage. One of the features which makes *Comanche Moon* so inimical to the Indian in its representation is that it includes a captivity narrative. The inclusion of a captivity narrative itself places the novel within a long-established narrative tradition which seeks to demonize the Indian by emphasizing his cruelty. The first captivity narrative was that published in 1682 by

Mary Rowlandson bearing the rather long title: *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together, with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by Her, to All that Desire to Know the Lords Doings to, and Dealings with Her*. Like other literary works which originated in the then Puritan dominated New England, her tale saw events in terms of the greater scheme of God and his plans for mankind. The Indians were thus seen as instruments of the Lord sent to show, in the case of the captivity narrative, His wrath towards His people who had strayed from off the path of righteousness. Berkhofer points out that Rowlandson "resorted to the bad image of the Indian" in order "[t]o impress upon her readers the horrors of her ordeal" (84). She described them as "atheisticall [*sic*] proud, wild, cruel, barbarous; bruitish [*sic*] (in one word) diabolicall [*sic*] creatures . . . the worst of the heathen" (Rowlandson A4).This particular narrative form was very popular and "Charles Brocken Brown was shortly to develop the form into some of the most successful novels of the young republic" (Carr 37). As Berkhofer points out, the captivity narrative "led directly to the dime novels and the later cowboy and Indian movies of popular culture" (85).

Comanche Moon's detailed account of the cruelties inflicted by the Indians on their captives demonizes the Indian captors. The words Rowlandson uses to describe her Indian captors could just as well be used to describe the captors of Maudy Clark in *Comanche Moon*: "Tana led the horse she was tied to himself; sometimes, even as they rode, he would drop back to pull her hair or beat her with a mesquite switch. Those torments were minor compared to what Tana and the other three Comanches did to her in camp. She never expected to have to bear such abuse from men . . ." (McMurtry,

Comanche Moon 140). It is not just Maudy who is subjected to Indian cruelty; her children also bear the full force of the Comanches' cruelty:

> The babe at her breast, little Sal, they had killed immediately by dashing her head against a log. Eddie, her oldest boy, hurt his leg in the first scuffle – the pain was such that he couldn't stop whimpering at night. Maudy would hear him crying even as she endured her torments. On the sixth day the Comanches lost patience with his crying and smashed his head in with a gun butt. Eddie was still breathing when they rode on . . . (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 140)

Lest we get the impression that the Comanches' cruelty in this particular instance is more an exception than the rule, *Dead Man's Walk* also shows Buffalo Hump doing a similar thing to his captives. Describing Buffalo Hump's raid into Mexico, we are told that "with the shivering, terrified children tied on one horse, he struck east, taking only those children that were old enough to be useful slaves. The others he killed, along with their parents. At one hacienda he tied the whole family, threw them on their own haystack, and burned them" (McMurtry, *Dead Man's Walk* 445).

While *Lonesome Dove* also contains a captivity narrative within it, the novel does not demonize the Indian since White men are included among the captors. In the case of *Comanche Moon* there is no attempt to distance the captors from the Comanche tribe. We are told that all of Maudy Clark's captors are from Buffalo Hump's camp and are on the way back from a raid.

In keeping with the tradition of the Western, *Comanche Moon* thus portrays the West as a borderline of conflict between "savage" men on one hand and "civilized"

men on the other. However, it needs to be acknowledged here that even though McMurtry was drawing on well-established narrative patterns with regard to the portrayal of the Indian, his narrative does allow dissonant voices which contest this popular stereotype. For *Comanche Moon's* detailing of the horrors of captivity at the hands of Indians and its aftermath also functions as an implied critique of the "civilized" White society. The narrative more than once makes it a point to mention the lot of women who have been rescued after capture by Comanches: "All of [the Rangers] had seen what happened when captive white women were returned to white society. Grief was what happened, and the longer the captivity the less likely it was that the women could accept what they would have to face, or be accepted even by the families who had wanted them back. Most of the returned captives soon died" (556). Lines like these reveal the gender marginalization and exploitation of White women in this "civilized" society. Moreover, it casts doubt on the very notion of civilization-as-benevolent, for "civilization" cannot claim virtue in abandoning women who have suffered abuse through no fault of their own.

Comanche Moon's description of the raid by the Texas Rangers on a Comanche encampment where they "rescue" a captive also acts as a poignant counter narrative to the story of the abduction of Maudy Clark by the Comanches. This particular episode, though brief, adds a layer of complexity to a narrative which, to all intents and purposes, seems to endorse the traditional image of the Indian as savage. The woman that the Rangers are rescuing is a White woman who has lived among the Comanches for so long and has become so acculturated to the Comanche lifestyle that she actually resists the attempt at "rescue" by the Rangers. This rescue of a White woman living as a Comanche among them is based on the true life story of Cynthia Ann Parker who

had been abducted by the Comanches while only nine years old. Cynthia, known among the Comanches as "Nautdah," assimilated into the Comanche society so well that she ended up marrying Peta Nocona, a chief. She was the mother of one of the most famous Comanche chiefs, Quanah Parker. Cynthia was "rescued", 24 years after her captivity, during a raid by Texas Rangers on a Comanche encampment. Her attempts to escape and re-join her Comanche companions is well-documented by history. "She did learn or recall some English, but she continued to speak and sing in Comanche. She seemed not to think of herself as Cynthia Ann but as Nautdah. Worse, she seemed not to see herself as 'rescued' or 'saved' but as 'captured' and 'lost,' so much so that she had to be closely watched or locked up to prevent her from running away" (Holwerda).

What this episode, with its reference to the true life story of Cynthia Ann Parker, makes clear is that captivity at the hands of Indians did not necessarily mean death, rape, torture or any of the other horrible things that were often cooked up by the overly imaginative writers of captivity narratives. In this sense it can be seen as a counter-narrative to the traditional captivity story. History also records that not all of the children captured by Indians received the treatment accorded to the fictional Maudy Clark's children. Dee Brown in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970) tells of the story of some White children taken captive by Indians. "The four captives, all children, appeared to be unharmed; in fact, when a soldier asked eight-year-old Ambrose Archer how the Indians had treated him, the boy replied that he 'would just as life stay with the Indians as not'" (Brown 64).

Richard Etulain in *Telling Western Stories* (1999) points out that "[f]or nearly a century after Buffalo Bill's Wild West, white authors (usually male) viewed the West through the eyes of Europeans or Anglo Americans. These stories, often leading from contact to conflict, cast Native Americans in the position of the Other, the opponent" (132). It becomes apparent that in *Comanche Moon* and *Dead Man's Walk* McMurtry was writing the narrative through the lens of the Anglo-American perspective on the events of the West. There is no real attempt to present the Indian side of the story. The two narratives in question simply portray warlike Indians – who have apparently, the narrative seems to suggest, always been so – terrorizing innocent White victims. Except for the brief episode which deals with the rescue of Cynthia Ann Parker, *Comanche Moon* does not really provide any significant alternative perspective on the Indians. Helen Hunt Jackson, in *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) quotes some of the findings of the commission appointed by President Grant in 1869 to visit and study different Indian reservations. Especially telling is the observation, made as early as 1869, that:

> "The testimony of some of the highest military officers of the United States is on record to the effect that, in our Indian wars, almost without exception, the first aggressions have been made by the white man; and the assertion is supported by every civilian of reputation who has studied the subject. . . . Every crime committed by a white man against an Indian is concealed or palliated. Every offence committed by an Indian against a white man is borne on the wings of the post or the telegraph to the remotest corner of the land, clothed with all the horrors which the reality or imagination can throw around it." (qtd. in Jackson 339 - 40)

Narratives like *Comanche Moon* and *Dead Man's Walk* are only portraying part of the story in showing warlike Indians terrorizing hapless Whites. As indicated by the report of the commission appointed by President Grant in 1869, it was often the other way round in most cases. The Salt Creek Massacre in which the Colorado Volunteers – mostly made up of "Coloradans who wanted to avoid the military draft of 1864 by serving un uniform against a few poorly armed Indians rather than against the Confederates farther east" (Brown 65) – under Colonel Chivington attacked and almost completely annihilated a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians under the leadership of the chiefs White Antelope and Black Kettle is a glaring example of a historical incident which directly counters the popular Western's narrative of Indian belligerence and cruelty. The atrocities committed by Chivington's soldiers in this particular massacre are on official record and rival those traditionally laid at the doorstep of Indians in the Westerns. According to the testimony given by Major Wynkoop, the commanding officer at Fort Lyon, "[w]omen and children were killed and scalped, children shot at their mothers' breasts, and all the bodies mutilated in the most horrible manner" (Jackson 344). If the fictional Indians of the Westerns are often portrayed as glorying in their grisly trophies of scalps and other human body parts, the soldiers who actually took part in the massacre at Sand Creek rivalled them in savagery. Major Wynkoop's testimony also mentions that "[t]he dead bodies of females [were] profaned in such a manner that the recital is sickening . . ." (Jackson 344). Lieutenant James Connor, an unwilling participant in the massacre, also gives a vivid description of the horrors that he witnessed:

> In going over the battleground the next day I did not see a body of man, woman, or child but was scalped, and in many instances their bodies were mutilated in

> the most horrible manner – men, women, and children's privates cut out, &c; I heard one man say that he had cut out a woman's private parts and had them for exhibition on a stick; I heard another man say that he had cut the fingers off an Indian to get the rings on the hand . . . I also heard of numerous instances in which men had cut out the private parts of females and stretched them over the saddle-bows and wore them over their hats while riding in the ranks. (Brown 73)

If the Indians, in taking captives displayed unnatural cruelty, history has shown that the Whites were equally guilty of the practice of taking captives – a fact which the Westerns do not seem keen to acknowledge. In fact, the whole Spanish empire in the Americas was based on the taking of natives as captives and forcing them to labour in the plantations. This has come to be known in history as "La Leyenda Negra," translated as the Black Legend – a reference to Spanish cruelty towards the natives. It was not just the Spanish though, for the English colonists were equally guilty in this regard. As Jack D. Forbes in "The Historian and the Indian: Racial Bias in American History" points out, "Indian slavery was very important in the colonies, especially prior to 1700 and in South Carolina, Virginia, and New England" (354).

The one-sided narratives offered by traditional Western fiction have been challenged by the writings of authors belonging to minority communities of the American West. One of the more prominent among such writers is Leslie Marmon Silko whose *Ceremony* (1977) "illustrates the flood of new novels, by non-Indians and Indians alike, that appeared after the 1960s and that told their stories from the viewpoint of Native Americans" (Etulain 132). Though illustrative of such narratives,

Ceremony is unique in that it "avoids much of the angry, anti-white tone that characterized many works published by Native American authors after 1970" (132). Foregoing the temptation to simply "reverse the white hats and black hats," Silko, in *Ceremony,* "focuses almost as much on the destructive elements among the Pueblos as on white racism toward Indians" (Etulain 136, 132). In so doing, she deemphasizes the traditional tendency to focus on the relations between the White and Indian races as one of contestatory violence and instead stresses "the interconnectedness of all humans and their close links to the land and animals with which they exist" (136). This is significant, for instead of choosing to simply reverse the stereotype, Silko seems to counsel understanding and co-operation which is what the White narrative, which ostensibly celebrates the triumph of "civilization", conspicuously does not do.

Unlike in *Lonesome* Dove, the Indians, as they are portrayed in *Comanche Moon* and *Dead Man's Walk* often conform to the White characters' expectations and preconceptions of them. In *Lonesome Dove,* we dismiss much of the negative images of the Indian because they come from the mouths or perspectives of Whites and the narrative proves much of the negativity to be unfounded. In the case of *Comanche Moon* much of the negative traits attributed to Indians come from the mouths of the Indians themselves even when the narrative shifts to an Indian perspective – within the scheme of the novel, Indians seem to endorse those same negative stereotypes which are attributed to them by the Whites. Marion Tangum in "Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove*: 'This is What We Call Home'" (1991) points out that "Bakhtin's definition of the novel – an orchestration of disparate narrative voices which engage in dialogue as they present conflicting ideologies – seems particularly appropriate to apply to *Lonesome Dove* . . ." (61). Indeed, there are multiple narrative perspectives in

Lonesome Dove and Tangum's insightful analysis shows how multiple meanings are produced through such layering.

This same presence of multiple narrative perspectives is present in *Comanche Moon* which allows McMurtry to present parts of the narrative from an ostensibly Indian perspective – and this is a narrative which sees a constant shifting of narrative perspective. For instance, where Chapter 1 of *Comanche Moon* is told from the perspective of the Texas Rangers, Chapter 2 shifts to the Indian encampment and the narrative adopts the viewpoint of the Indian characters – namely that of Blue Duck and Buffalo Hump. However, this shifting of perspective only serves to perpetuate stereotypes about the Indians. In other words, McMurtry passes up the opportunity to present a more unbiased portrait of the Indian and still draws on popular stereotypes when he shifts to the Indian perspective. Thus, *Comanche Moon's* adoption of the Indian "viewpoint" only confirms the age old stereotype of the Indian as bad or deficient.

In this regard, Birchfield's contention that McMurtry in *Lonesome Dove* was "callous where the sensitivities of Native American people are concerned" could be more accurately applied to *Comanche Moon.* The negative stereotype of the Indian as lecherous seems to be endorsed by the Indian characters themselves. We have Buffalo Hump thinking to himself that he does not want his young wife Lark to tend to his son Blue Duck's wounds because"[h]e had seen many unfortunate things happen, in his years as a chief. Sometimes young women, married to old men, could not resist coupling with the young men's sons, a thing that made bitter blood" (*Comanche Moon* 73). Then we are told that Buffalo Hump enjoys the company of his not so attractive

wife Hair on the Lip because he loves hearing her tell him stories "about the animal people, but not just the animal people. She knew some old Comanche women who were lustful and full of wickedness. The old women hid in the bushes, looking for young men" (76). In fact, coupling, or at least talking about it, seems to be all that Indian women in the novel do. In Chapter 28 of Book III of *Comanche Moon* we are told that:

> [t]he women were always talking some ribaldry or other. Last Horse didn't understand why they talked about coupling so much since most of them, including his two wives, were rarely eager to couple with him – but such was the talk of women, year in and year out. He had only been half listening until one of them mentioned Buffalo Hump. Even though Buffalo Hump was old now some of the women still speculated about coupling with him . . . (605)

Dead Man's Walk, in particular, echoes many of the popular White prejudices against the Indian which are uttered by various characters in the course of the narrative. For instance, Bigfoot Wallace claims to be able to smell Indians. It is, in fact, by smelling the scalps taken by Kirker and Glanton that he is able to tell that they are not Comanche scalps. Caleb Cobb thinks that "Comanches did what they were expected to, which was kill whites" (McMurtry, *Dead Man's Walk* 235). In like manner Call refuses to claim the scalp of the Indian boy he has killed claiming that "[s]calping's the Indian way. It ain't my way" (154).

It is not just Texans who have preconceived notions about Indians, for the Mexicans in the narrative too have their own stereotyped notions about Indians. Talking about the Apache Bes-Das's theft, Captain Salazar makes a generalized

observation and claims that "[a]ll Indians are thieves" (McMurtry, *Dead Man's Walk* 272). On another occasion he asserts that Gomez, being Apache, "is not like us. He only kills" (320).

Where the narrative of *Lonesome Dove* disproves the popular prejudices voiced by the characters against Indians, the narrative of *Dead Man's Walk* actually shows the Indians conforming to the popular stereotype. Bigfoot Wallace's claim of being able to smell Indians is validated by the narrative when Call, Gus, Bigfoot Wallace and Bes-Das go out to parley with Buffalo Hump: "They had entered the air of the wild men – even the smell of the Indian horses was different" (McMurtry, *Dead Man's Walk* 174). If some of the characters, like Bigfoot Wallace, tell stories of Indian torture practices the narrative bears it out by a detailed description of the tortures inflicted on Kirker. And if Captain Salazer claims that all Indians are thieves then Kicking Wolf's expertise at horse theft and Bes-Das's execution for stealing the Governor's wife's ring seem to bear out the truth of Captain Salazer's observation. If Call explicitly states that scalping is "the Indian way," the Indians in the narrative, whether Comanche or Apache, seem to revel in the practice (154). Those Whites in the narrative who do practice it, like Kirker and his partner Glanton, are, the narrative seems to imply, not representative of White ways since they are renegades from White society hated even by the Whites themselves. Those White characters who seem to be representative of White ways and are the upholders of "civilization," like Call and Gus, do not indulge in the practice at all, even when presented with the opportunity.

What demonizes the Indians in the popular imagination is, more than anything else, the tortures allegedly inflicted by them on their victims. The Westerns often

stressed horrendous tortures practised by the Indians. In this connection, C.L. Sonnichsen's observations in his *From Hopalong to Hud* (1978) with regard to the representation of the Apaches by White writers holds true of other Indian tribes in general. Sonnichsen observes that the writers of Westerns "seem to be more ingenious in inventing tortures than the Apaches themselves" (74). In fact, the detailed description of tortures seems to be the highlight of highly popular Westerns like Edward S. Ellis' *Seth Jones; or, The Captive of the Frontier* (1861) in which "[t]he author has the hero captured by the Indians [and] tortured in vivid detail" (Berkhofer 99). True to the tradition of such Westerns, *Comanche Moon* and *Dead Man's Walk* detail a fair amount of tortures allegedly practised by Indians. Captain Scull refers to the Comanches as "torturing fiends" and the narrative seems to endorse this description (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 68). In *Comanche Moon*, Slow Tree threatens to torture Famous Shoes in the following manner: "If you came into my camp I would hang you upside down and put a scorpion in your nose. When the scorpion stung you it would kill your brain. Then you could wander around eating weeds, for all I care" (McMurtry 94).

Sonnichsen also observes that "[i]t is accepted as truth in the paperback novels that the Apache women are the keenest and most resourceful torturers" (75). McMurtry's *Comanche Moon* also seems to affirm this "truth" for the narrative suggests that Comanche women not only take part in tortures but are experts at it. Seeing that Tana wants to torture Maudy Clark to death before they reach their main camp, Quick Antelope tells him to desist until the captives have been presented to their chief, Buffalo Hump: "Then if he says you can have the woman, you can have her. The women will help you with what you want to do" (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon*

145). Another warrior in their party named Satay, though, does not object to Tana's torturing Maudy Clark to death. Although he does not take part in the argument, it is his opinion that the woman "would only last a few hours at most. Even if she did survive until they reached the big camp, the women would make short work of her. They made short work of white women stronger than this one" (145).

Comanche Moon gives a detailed description of one of the horrendous tortures supposedly practised by the Comanches:

> Two half-naked prisoners, both skinny old men, lay securely tied not far from the women. Both had been severely beaten and one had had the soles of his feet sliced off, a torment the Comanches sometimes inflicted on their captives. Usually a captive who had the soles of his feet sliced off was made to rum over rocks for a while, or cactus, on his bloody feet; . . . (563)

These tortures are taking place in the camp of Blue Duck who is now a renegade, having been expelled from the tribe by his father Buffalo Hump. Nonetheless, the torture is still being identified explicitly as a Comanche torture technique.

Like *Comanche Moon*, McMurtry's *Dead Man's Walk* contains a lot of vivid descriptions of tortures allegedly practised by Indians. And like in *Comanche Moon* the narrative seems to take a perverse delight in describing these tortures in painstaking detail. Bigfoot Wallace, the scout in *Dead Man's Walk*, tells the other less experienced Rangers about some of the tortures practised by Comanches. Like in *Comanche Moon* the narrative here implies that Indian women take active part in the torture of victims. Telling the other men about how suicide is preferable to death by torture at the hands of the Comanches, Bigfoot Wallace tells them where best it will be to shoot themselves

in the event that capture by Comanches becomes imminent: “Shove the barrel of the gun up against an eyeball and pull – that’s sure. Your brains will get blown out the back of your head then if some squaw comes along and chews off your balls and your pecker, you won’t know the difference.” (McMurtry, *Dead Man’s Walk* 20).

These accounts of Indian torture are, however, merely reported, and the Indians in the course of the novel do not actually carry these particular tortures out. But there are tortures carried out by Indians in the novel and the most graphic of these are the tortures visited by Kicking Wolf on the White bounty hunter, Kirker. After Kirker is captured, Kicking Wolf is so eager for the torture to begin that:

> [e]ven before they got Kirker back to camp, Kicking Wolf, who could not be restrained when he was angry, poled a sharp stick in Kirker’s ear, destroying his eardrum and causing much blood to run out of his head. Kirker snarled and howled, like a tied wolf. He spat at the Comanches so many times that Buffalo Hump took a needle and a thread and sewed his lips together; after that he could not scream loudly, though he rolled and writhed and made gurgling sounds as he was being burnt and cut by Kicking Wolf, who insisted on doing most of the torturing himself. (McMurtry, *Dead Man’s Walk* 438)

Where *Comanche Moon* merely suggests that Indian women take active part in torturing the victims, *Dead Man’s Walk* is more explicit in specifying the tortures carried out by Comanche women: “Some of the braves were in favour of saving Kirker; they wanted to send him back to the main camp, so the squaws could torture him. One squaw named Three Seed was better at torture than any man. She could bite off a man’s

fingers or toes as neatly as if she were merely biting a willow twig" (McMurtry, *Dead Man's Walk* 438).

Dead Man's Walk has instances of tortures carried out not only by Comanches but also by other tribes like the Apaches. Torture, the narrative seems to imply, is a widespread practice among all Indian tribes and is not merely confined to the Comanches alone. The Apaches closely rival the Comanches when it comes to torturing their victims. The novel details the nature of the tortures inflicted on General Dimasio by Gomez, the Apache: "The General's chest cavity had been opened and hot coals had been scooped into it" (McMurtry, *Dead Man's Walk* 319). Caleb Cobb, who was with the General at the time of the attack has also been blinded with thorns and hamstrung.

This constant allusion to Indian tortures suggests that the narrative is drawing on the long established negative stereotype of the Indian as inhuman savage totally "lacking in human feelings. The pain and terror of his victims must mean nothing to him" (Sonnichsen 74). To suggest, as these two narratives do, that torture is a practice exclusively practised by Indians is to overlook the fact that Whites were equally guilty of the practice, though the White narratives would suggest otherwise. A notable instance is the torture of the Apache chief Mangas Colorado by White soldiers before being shot dead. Daniel Connor, a miner travelling with the California Volunteers:

> noticed that the soldiers guarding Mangas were annoying the old chief so that he kept drawing his feet up restlessly under his blanket. Curious as to what the soldiers were doing, Connor stood just outside the firelight and watched them. They were heating their bayonets in the fire and touching them to Mangas' feet

> and legs. After the chief had endured this torture several times, he raised up and "began to expostulate in a vigorous way by telling the sentinels in Spanish that he was no child to be playing with. But his expostulations were cut short, for he had hardly begun his exclamations when both sentinels promptly brought down their minie muskets to bear on him and fired, nearly at the same time, through his body." (Brown 161)

The image of the deficient Indian is also employed in *Comanche Moon*. Not all of the Indians in *Comanche Moon* are evil or lecherous. One of the more endearing of McMurtry's Indian characters is the eccentric scout Famous Shoes. Yet, even he displays the deficient traits often ascribed to the Other. Said, in *Orientalism*, points out that in order to drive home the point of the Oriental's inferiority, he is often portrayed as being incapable of rational thought processes. He quotes Cromer, who, quoting Sir Alfred Lyall in turn "puts down a sort of personal canon of Orientalist wisdom" which states that "accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental mind" (38). This inability to be accurate – which is apparently an Oriental trait – is also a character trait possessed by Famous Shoes who is unable to give a direct answer to any question asked of him: "Sometimes he responded to questions and sometimes he didn't – but even if he chose to answer a given question, the answer would usually lay a little sideways to the question as it had been phrased" (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 23). Much later, Call puts a direct question to Famous Shoes despite knowing that "it was probably unwise to put a direct question to the tracker. Famous Shoes had never ceased to madden and frustrate him. Sometimes he would *speak as plainly as a white man* [emphasis added], but, at other times, no amount of questioning would produce any but the most elliptical replies" (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 617). The language used here suggests that the

ability to speak plainly and to answer logically to any direct questioning, is a quality that is exclusive to White men – an ability that the Indian is only able to attain to occasionally.

Lest we think that the eccentric Famous Shoes is an exception, this same quality of not being able to respond logically to questions is also seen in other Comanches like the medicine man Worm who "rarely answered a direct question directly" (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 276). In the case of Famous Shoes, an inability to give a straight answer to a direct question is not the only notable thing about this eccentric Indian. Besides being a superlative tracker this seemingly harmless Indian is also an accomplished killer. Despite Pea Eye's fears about being scalped by Famous Shoes being unfounded, the narrative shows us that Famous Shoes can kill as well as any of the other Indians when he needs to. When a skinny renegade decides to pursue Famous Shoes we are told that the latter:

> saw no reason not to kill his pursuer, which he did with dispatch. He had a bow and a few arrows with him which he used to provide himself with game. When the renegade loped up behind him Famous Shoes turned and put three arrows in him before the man could catch his breath again. He opened his mouth to yell for help, but before he could yell Famous Shoes pulled him off the horse and cut his throat – then he grabbed the horse's bridle and cut the horse's throat too. The horse was as skinny as the rider; Famous Shoes left them together, their lifeblood ebbing into the prairie. (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 590)

The precise, methodical manner in which he kills his pursuer, not even sparing the horse, suggests that Famous Shoes is no stranger to killing. By portraying the violence

immanent in this seemingly mild Indian the narrative seems to suggest that all Indians, no matter how docile, are inherent killers with an inborn propensity to commit murder.

The narrative then further suggests that the only thing which holds Famous Shoes back from giving rein to his natural bloodlust is not any humanitarian regard for the sanctity of human life but his superstitious fears: "In general he preferred to avoid killing men, even rude, ignorant, dangerous men, for it meant setting a spirt loose that might become his enemy and conspire against him with witches" (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 591). Thus, a closer examination reveals the extent to which even an endearing Indian character like Famous Shoes is plagued by the negative stereotypes generally ascribed to Indians. What the narrative seems to suggest is that no Indian, no matter how seemingly harmless, can really be good.

Indians do not have a significant presence in *Streets of Laredo* (1993), the last book in the saga. In *Streets of Laredo*, Call is hired by the railroad to hunt down a Mexican bandit by the name of Joey Garza who plies his trade in the areas along the United States and Mexico border. With the exception of the scout Famous Shoes, the narrative does not feature any Indians. With the only Indian being a seemingly harmless scout, it may be thought that this novel would be able to break free of the negative Indian stereotype. But as if to emphasize the centrality of such negative stereotypes to Westerns, the novel still continues to draw on them. For, the narrative clearly suggests that Joey Garza's instincts as a robber and a killer have been imbibed as a result of the time spent by him in captivity among the Apaches. The young Joey appears to be an innocent and lovable child until his stepfather sells him to the Apaches. After his time in captivity with the Apaches, Joey's behaviour undergoes a

sea change. Joey himself "claimed that it was his years with the Apaches that enabled him to rob gringo trains so easily. The Apaches held a hard school, but they knew much. Joey learned what they knew, and he had not forgotten it" (McMurtry, *Streets of Laredo* 47).

McMurtry's avoidance of the conventions of the Noble Savage tradition shows that he did, to an extent, break away from tradition where representation of the Indian was concerned. *Lonesome Dove* manages to also refute the Indian-as-savage stereotype though it is unable to sever itself completely from the narrative tradition which has traditionally represented the Indian as an inferior Other, as can be seen by the manner in which the deficient Indian stereotype still underlies the portrayal of the Indian. Perhaps the discursive strategies at play in the Western genre, which dictate what can and cannot be written within this paradigm, forced McMurtry to conform to some of the time honoured conventions that have been used in the representation of the Indian. While *Lonesome Dove* represents a genuine attempt to provide an ethnographically sound and unbiased portrayal of the Indian as he might have been during the times that the novel is set in, McMurtry has succumbed to the demands of the popular narrative tradition in his portrayal of Indians in *Comanche Moon* and *Dead Man's Walk*. Though these two novels, which were written after *Lonesome Dove*, have a much larger Indian presence in them than *Lonesome Dove* does, McMurtry does not persist with his attempt to realistically portray the Indian as he does in *Lonesome Dove*; choosing instead to adhere to the popular formula which portrays Indians as savages running amok in a wild frontier. This can perhaps be seen as an example of a writer acceding to the demands of the marketplace – in any case it shows the continuing

popularity and persistence of the centuries old negative stereotypes and also demonstrates how our attitudes and expectations continue to be informed by them.

Works Cited

Berkhofer, Robert F., Jr. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1978.

Birchfield, D.L. "Lonesome Duck: The Blueing of a Texas-American Myth." *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* Series 2, vol. 7, no. 2, Summer 1995, pp. 45-64. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20736848.

Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. Pan Books, 1970.

Carr, Helen. *Inventing the American Primitive: Politics, Gender and the Representation of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789-1936*. Cork UP, 1996.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness,* edited by Sumanyu Satpathy, Worldview Publications, 2002.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Last of the Mohicans.* London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1826.

Etulain, Richard w. *Telling Western Stories: From Buffalo Bill to Larry McMurtry*. The U of New Mexico P, 1999.

Forbes, Jack D. "The Historian and the Indian: Racial Bias in American History." *The Americas*, vol. 19, no. 4, Apr., 1963, pp. 349-362. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/979504.

Gwynne, S.C. *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*. Kobo ed., Scribner, 2010.

Holwerda, Jane. "Nautdah or Cynthia." *Hppr*, 8 Mar. 2016, www.hppr.org/post/nautdah-or-cynthia.

Jackson, Helen Hunt. *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings With Some of the Indian Tribes.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. W.W. Norton, 1987.

McMurtry, Larry. *Comanche Moon*. Picador, 2015.

---. *Dead Man's Walk*. Simon & Schuster, 1995.

---. *Lonesome Dove*. Pocket Books, 1985.

---. *Streets of Laredo*. Pocket Books, 1993.

Pearce, Roy Harvey. *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind*. U of California P, 1988.

Purchas, Samuel. *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*. Vol. XIX. Robert MacLehose and Sons, 1906.

Rowlandson, Mary. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together, with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative of the Captivity*

and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by Her, to All that Desire to Know the Lords Doings to, and Dealings with Her. Cambridge: Samuel Green, 1682.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, 1978.

Sonnichsen, C.L. *From Hopalong to Hud: Thoughts on Western Fiction.* Texas A&M UP, 1978.

Tangum, Marion. "Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove*: 'This Is What We Call Home.'" *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, vol. 45, no. 1/2, 1991, pp. 61-73. *JSTOR,* www.jstor.org/stable/1346924.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. Henry Holt, 1920.

"Twain's Indians." *Xroads*, University of Virginia, xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/indians/twain3.html.

Vespucci, Amerigo. *Mundus Novus.* Translated by George Tyler Northup, Princeton UP, 1916.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HEROES OF THE WESTERN NOVEL

CHAPTER III

THE HEROES OF THE WESTERN NOVEL

J.H. Plumb's announcement of the death of the mythic hero in "Disappearing Heroes" in 1974 was perhaps a tad premature. Speaking of the mythic hero, he says that "they are dying, particularly in the Western world, where nature has become benign" (qtd. in Lawrence and Jewett 21). Ironically enough, as John Shelton Lawrence and Robert Jewett point out in *The Myth of the American Superhero* (2002), such an announcement of the mythic hero's decline was made during "the heyday of superheroic dramas in popular culture. Thousands of images of heroes and heroines larger than life, with powers every bit as magical as those exercised in classical mythology, were floating about in the American entertainment system, yet they appear to have been unrecognizable to sophisticated minds" (21). Casting about for the reasons for the announcement of the mythic hero's death, Lawrence and Jewett reason that perhaps the replacement of the traditional classical mythology with a new story form could not be grasped by these "sophisticated minds". What is even more probable is that "the seedy products of pop culture," not being "hallowed by centuries of serious scholarship" were summarily rejected out of hand as not being worthy of consideration as mythic material (Lawrence and Jewett 21, 22). Thus, Lawrence and Jewett conclude that "mythology's death notices were greatly exaggerated" (22). The mythic hero lives on in the modern world albeit in a slightly different garb to suit modern times.

The pantheon of American mythic heroes includes such iconic popular culture figures as the Lone Ranger and Superman, to name a few. Within this collection of American mythic heroes is a group of figures who may collectively be referred to as

Western heroes by virtue of the fact that they belong within the tradition of the Western – a genre whose importance has already been discussed in Chapter I. Larry McMurtry's heroes of the *Lonesome Dove* saga, Augustus McRae and Woodrow Call (who shall hereafter be referred to as Gus and Call – their monikers in the narrative) and Louis L'Amour's Hondo Lane and Bendigo Shafter too belong to this tradition of mythic American heroes.

The origins of the Western hero can be traced to the influence of characters like Buffalo Bill, the writings of Theodore Roosevelt and Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902) among others. Buffalo Bill is a highly popular semi-fictional character who was loosely based on the exploits of well-known scout and frontiersman, William F. Cody, as narrated by Ned Buntline, the pseudonym used by Edward Zane Carroll Judson, Sr., who was a journalist, writer, publisher and publicist. As pointed out by Stephen McVeigh in his *The American Western* (2007), Buffalo Bill, whose real name was William F. Cody, was "the model, the archetype for Western heroism and frontier values which endured and resonated throughout the twentieth century" (27).

Cody was born in 1846 in Scott County, Iowa. It needs to be stated at the outset that though Buffalo Bill and Cody are two separate entities – the Buffalo Bill character having "only the most fleeting basis in fact" – the character of Cody was uniquely suited for fictionalization (McVeigh 30). By the age of fourteen he had already established his credentials as a frontiersman, having worked as a mounted messenger and wrangler as well as a Pony Express rider. He also later served as a scout during the Civil War – in which capacity he first came into the public limelight. McVeigh

claims that "Cody was present for and, usually, involved in every key moment in the process of Westward expansion" (28).

Thus it comes as no surprise that Ned Buntline, looking for "a figure he could turn into a dime-novel hero," ultimately settled on Cody (McVeigh 29). Cody accepted Buntline's offer and the result was Buntline's *Buffalo Bill, the King of the Border Men*, the first of many stories on Buffalo Bill. So powerful did this image of Buffalo Bill become that in time Cody himself fell victim to it and tried to live up to his fictional image. As Henry Nash Smith in his *Virgin Land* (1950) so aptly puts it, "the *persona* created by the writers of popular fiction was so accurate an expression of the demands of the popular imagination that it proved powerful enough to shape an actual man in its own image" (103).

Given the popularity of the Buffalo Bill character, it was not long before Cody tried his hand at theatre. However, Cody suffered from stage fright and himself acknowledged that he was a poor actor. Yet, despite his limitations in this regard, Cody's plays still attracted large crowds. For what drew the crowds was not his acting abilities but the fact that he was a living embodiment of a frontier, which, for many, held the allure and enchantment of far away exotic lands. At the same time, he was also giving birth to the idea of a Western hero which was based on his legendary exploits as Buffalo Bill. And, his poor acting skills notwithstanding, he was a great performer who knew how to play to the gallery – a talent that would stand him in good stead in his later venture that was even then beginning to take shape in his head.

Cody wanted to move beyond these "footlight fantasies", which were not his forte anyway, to stage "a travelling, big-arena spectacle" that would allow him "to

present his idea of the Wild West" (Etulain 9). Cody's dream became reality on 19th May 1883 when the first Wild West show was held.

The show was an instant success and helped to promote an idea of the Wild West in the minds of the spectators. Cody's idea of the Wild West became the real Wild West in the minds of the spectators who thronged to his shows. In effect, the idea of the Western hero and his qualities were largely based on the figure of Buffalo Bill. Sell and Weybright point out that based on this drama "[t]he pattern of latter-day Western movies was emerging . . . [Buffalo Bill] was the original; his imitators were stereotypes" (qtd. in McVeigh 31).

The influence of the Wild West show in shaping public perception about the American West cannot be overestimated; this extravaganza's avowed aim was "to educate audiences in the ways of the West" (McVeigh 32). Needless to say, this Wild West show became immensely popular and "codified many of the conventions of the Western" (McVeigh 32). More importantly, the Wild West shows helped to establish the myth of the cowboy. McVeigh observes that "[i]n terms of the creation of stereotypes, Buffalo Bill's Wild West was the point of origin for the premier Western character, the cowboy. Cody's version of the cowboy was not based on the real cowboy of the range or ranch" (33). It becomes evident that the idealized, heavily romanticized figure of the cowboy that emerged was largely influenced by the character of Buffalo Bill and the traits that are associated with him – traits such as "an independence from society, impressive skill, an affinity with nature, and an attractive self-confidence" (McVeigh 34).

The figure of the idealized cowboy also owes much to the influence of Theodore Roosevelt, who did much to legitimize this figure that had heretofore been "generally considered less than wholesome figures, at best foul-mouthed, drunken delinquents, at worst, criminals capable of any amount of violent excess" (McVeigh 33). Roosevelt provided a defense of the cowboy in his *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1888). He referred to the cowboy "as hardy and self-reliant as any men who ever breathed – with bronzed, set faces and keen eyes that look all the world straight in the face without flinching as they flash out from under the broad-brimmed hats" (9). Moreover, he appropriated the cowboy myth and associated it with the Presidency when he took over the office in 1901, thus conferring respectability to a figure which may, by many, still not have been considered as "wholesome" enough. As McVeigh points out, "his presidential persona was constructed from his connection to a full assortment of frontier characteristics, allusions, imagery and history" (14). The extent to which Roosevelt had adopted the cowboy persona can be seen from the reference to him as "that damned cowboy in the White House" by Marcus Alonzo "Mark" Hanna, the Senator from Ohio (qtd. in McVeigh 18).

The figure of the fictionalized cowboy was also largely due to the influence of writers, particularly the dime novelists, who were constantly on the look-out for subjects to feature in their fiction. It is worth noting here that the figure of the cowboy, as he was represented in fiction, was a heavily romanticized one. Richard W. Etulain in his *Telling Western Stories* (1999) points out that because cowboys:

> had gained undeserved reputations as ne'er do well wanderers and sometimes as antisocial misfits of violent temperaments, dime novelists were hard put to

> turn them immediately into positive protagonists. Still, their lives as horsemen on the vast, open western plains were inviting material for romantic yarns for popular novelists searching for new material. (22)

What the writers did was to romanticize the cowboy and his lifestyle, filtering them through the lens of romantic imagination. The dime novelists, especially, "emphasized the externals of cowboy life. The dress, the horse riding, and the ranch settings are major ingredients of cowboy dime novels, rather than the specifics of branding , dehorning, and cutting" (Etulain 22).

Owen Wister's *The Virginian* may not, strictly speaking, be the first Western story but it is a "pathbreaking novel [which] helped to solidify the western story" (Etulain 67). Speaking of the influence of Wister's novel upon subsequent novels that followed it, Etulain declares that "[w]hat Frederick Jackson Turner's essays were to frontier historians, what Frederic Remington and Charlie Russell were to later artists, and what Broncho Billy, William S. Hart, and Tom Mix were to cinematic storytellers, Wister's novel was to later western novelists" (67). Indeed, by the end of the very first year of its publication, "several reviewers were hailing it as the best novel of the year and the premier literary interpretation of the American West" (Etulain 68).

Equally influential was the unnamed hero of Wister's path-breaking novel. Drawing on the qualities of former frontier heroes like Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking, and the heroes of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows, Wister's hero "also opened the trail for hundreds of sagebrush heroes who followed after him" (Etulain 68). Thus Wister's unnamed hero served as an archetype of Western heroism for the heroes of succeeding Western novels. This thesis proposes

to examine the extent of L'Amour's and McMurtry's indebtedness to Wister in their characterization of the heroes in their narratives.

The narrator of *The Virginian* admiringly, with just a hint of homosexual overtones, describes the hero of Wister's novel thus:

> Lounging there at ease against the wall was a slim young giant, more beautiful than pictures. His broad, soft hat was pushed back; a loose-knotted, dull-scarlet handkerchief sagged from his throat; and one casual thumb was hooked in the cartridge-belt that sagged across his hips. He had plainly come many miles from somewhere across the vast horizon, as the dust upon him showed. His boots were white with it. His overalls were gray with it. . . . Had I been the bride, I should have taken the giant, dust and all. (4)

Keeping this image of the "slim young giant" in mind, this thesis proposes to examine the description of Hondo in the opening of L'Amour's novel of that name. It is worth noting that Hondo seems to be the mould from which all of L'Amour's heroes are crafted:

> He rolled the cigarette in his lips, liking the taste of the tobacco, squinting his eyes against the sun glare. His buckskin shirt, seasoned by sun, rain, and sweat, smelled stale and old. His jeans had long since faded to a neutral color that lost itself against the desert.
>
> He was a big man, wide-shouldered, with the lean, hard boned face of the desert rider. There was no softness in him. His toughness was ingrained

> and deep, without cruelty, yet quick hard and dangerous. Whatever wells of gentleness might lie within him were guarded and deep. (L'Amour, *Hondo* 1)

The similarities between the descriptions of the two heroes are remarkable. Just like Wister's hero who "had plainly come many miles from somewhere across the vast horizon," the dust upon Hondo indicates that he too has travelled quite a distance. Unlike the Virginian, Hondo may not exactly be lounging at ease – he has reason to suspect that a band of warlike Apaches are in the near vicinity – but the fact that he takes time off to smoke suggests that he is still calm and in control of the situation. When he finds himself in less threatening situations Hondo movements are described thus: "Always casually, always lazily, and yet with a conservation of movement and a watchfulness that belied his easy manner" (L'Amour, *Hondo* 14). And echoing the undisguised admiration of the narrator of *The Virginian*, the novel's heroine Angie Lowe appears to have fallen in love with Hondo long before she finds out about her husband's death. In Chapter 3 when Hondo impulsively kisses her, Angie does not display the outrage that any respectable married woman in similar circumstances would be expected to:

> He looked at her and their eyes met. He took the cigarette from his lips and took the front of her dress in his left hand and drew her to him and their lips met. There was nothing forceful about it, and she neither resisted nor helped, yet she was far from merely acquiescent, and when they parted her face was a little pale. She stepped back, not frightened, but not sure of what it meant. (L'Amour, *Hondo* 44-45)

Bendigo Shafter too is cast in the same mould as Hondo. The narrator in *Bendigo Shafter* (1979) is Bendigo himself and he unashamedly describes himself as "a narrow-waisted man, with wide shoulders" (182). On another occasion he readily provides additional details as to his physique: "I was two inches taller than six feet and weighed right at one hundred and ninety" (242-3). Like Hondo and indeed like Kerbouchard of *The Walking Drum* Bendigo is also irresistible to women.

By contrast, McMurtry's heroes are completely different, both temperamentally and physically. In order to understand why McMurtry's heroes are so different – breaking away from the established norm of the "slim young giant" image as they do – one needs to take into account developments than had taken place in the literary space by the time McMurtry started writing his *Lonesome Dove* series of novels. Beginning in the 1920s, regional editors, novelists, and a few historians began to express their dissatisfaction with the formulaic Western narrative and "called for a new kind of storyline about the American West" (Etulain 108). Among the most prominent writers who wanted "to portray the western past as a much more complicated, even messy, subject than writers from Owen Wister to Louis L'Amour had presented" was Wallace Stegner, nearly all of whose "writing contested the earlier frontier stories of the American West" (Etulain 109). The most noteworthy of Stegner's works was the 1972 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Angle of Repose* (1971) which "built on traditions already established in western regional fiction, linked them to new interpretations of the American West, and produced a new kind of western story" (Etulain 111). It may be noted that L'Amour was also producing his written works during these same times and was contemporaneous with Stegner. Etulain observes that

"even as dozens of authors, including novelists, historians, and biographers, were revising the Western past, L'Amour continued to publish two or three novels a year that refused to follow these new trends" (105). He further points out that "[L'Amour's] career, especially after the 1960s, was the exception to major trends in western storytelling during this period" (105). The fact that L'Amour was still able to successfully produce his traditional formulaic Westerns at a time when the clarion call was being sounded for change is a testament to his enduring popularity and prowess as a writer.

Lonesome Dove (1985) may be viewed as McMurtry's response to the call of the regionalists that writers should abandon "the excessively romantic, stereotyped attachments to the frontier and, instead, to deal with the cultural complexities of a postfrontier West" (Etulain 106). In his re-visioning of the American West, McMurtry conspicuously broke away from the heroic template established by Wister's Virginian hero. Etulain points out that two of McMurtry's novels written after *Lonesome Dove*, titled *Anything for Billy* (1988) and *Buffalo Girls* (1990) represent "examples of McMurtry's desire to reinvent a less romantic and myth-ridden West" (148). In these novels, McMurtry takes another look at some of the legendary figures of the West like Buffalo Bill, Billy the Kid, and Calamity Jane and in so doing "dissects the legends surrounding these frontier demigods" (148). Thus thesis will argue that this process of dissecting the legends of frontier demigods has already begun in *Lonesome Dove* with McMurtry's Call and Gus.

The most prominent feature about McMurtry's heroes in *Lonesome Dove*, which sets them apart from all other Western heroes, is their age. They are old men –

retired Texas Rangers. And though the narrative makes constant references to their heroic deeds in the past, it also constantly reminds us that they are indeed well past their prime – the most notable example being the incident in the bar where the insolent bartender refuses to accord them the respect which Gus feels is their due. It is true that the other books in the Lonesome Dove saga, depict McMurtry's two heroes at various points in their life – *Dead Man's Walk* (1995) narrates the adventures that befall Gus and Call not long after they have joined the Texas Rangers as raw recruits. *Comanche Moon* (1997) continues the adventures where *Dead Man's Walk* left off. Gus and Call are now hardened Texas Rangers and they both earn a promotion to the rank of Captain. *Streets of Laredo* (1993) continues the story after the events of *Lonesome Dove* and narrates the story of an even older Call who is beginning to feel the effects of age. The most memorable of the depictions are the ones of Gus and Call in *Lonesome Dove* – nevertheless, even the younger versions of Call and Gus display enough differences from the heroic norm to highlight McMurtry's deliberate rejection of the idea of Western heroism.

The traditional cowboy of fiction is more or less based on Roosevelt's description of him in his *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* "as hardy and self-reliant as any men who ever breathed – with bronzed, set faces and keen eyes that look all the world straight in the face without flinching as they flash out from under the broad-brimmed hats" (9). Thus, the fictional cowboy is usually presented as a fearless individual who will willingly face all dangers without a thought for his own safety.

By contrast, McMurtry brings the cowboy down from the pedestal on which the popular imagination had placed him. In *Lonesome Dove* he presents us with

cowboys who are prone to fears and tender feelings like all the rest of humanity. Their vulnerability makes them stand out from the conventional cowboy figures. For instance, going against the popular idea of the cowboy as a fearless individual, who keeps his fears, if any, to himself, we have many of the cowboys of the Hat Creek Outfit such as Jasper Fant who are not only afraid of things like crossing rivers but also volubly expressing their fears. Jasper seems to have been unnerved by the terrible death of Sean O'Brien, which is hardly surprising given the terrible nature of the death that he has witnessed. Be that as it may, his extreme reaction seems to be more befitting a heroine of the eighteenth century Victorian novel than a cowboy – a figure, whom the popular myth would have us believe, is immune to most fears. Jasper, we are told, was "so unnerved by what he had seen that for a time Call felt he might be losing his mind. Jasper had never been reticent, but now it seemed that he had to be talking every waking minute as a means of holding his own fears in balance" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 334).

McMurtry's efforts to deconstruct the myth of the cowboy god become even more evident in his refusal to romanticize his two heroes in the *Lonesome Dove* saga. McMurtry achieves this demythification of his heroes by showing them doing ordinary mundane things like the rest of humankind. One of the ways by which McMurtry takes away the heroic sheen surrounding his heroes is by depicting them in the act of defecating and urinating – those most mundane yet necessary of acts which all humans have to perform from time to time. In *Lonesome Dove* the Hat Creek Outfit rides into Mexico at night in order to steal horses from Pedro Flores' ranch. They have been riding for some time when suddenly without warning Call halts. The Western genre

has conditioned us to expect that when a hero of Call's credentials abruptly stops in the night while riding in what is effectively enemy territory, something momentous is going to occur. However, nothing momentous happens: Call has simply halted in order to urinate. The other men follow his example and soon everyone, including the young Newt, is urinating. The visual image evoked by the description of a group of grown men urinating all at the same time, at a moment when we expect something earth-shattering to occur, makes for an anti-climactic moment which brings down the men a notch in the reader's estimation. McMurtry expertly builds up the tension and abruptly deflates it at the crucial moment – all at the expense of his characters:

> By this time the stars were bright, and the Milky Way like a long speckled cloud. Without a word the Captain got off. Stepping to the end of his rein, he began to relieve himself. One by one the other men dismounted and did the same, turning slightly so as not to be pointed at one another. Newt thought he had better do what the others were doing, but to his embarrassment could not make water. All he could do was button up again and hope nobody had noticed. (114)

In *Comanche Moon*, McMurtry also portrays Call in that most un-heroic of postures – squatting to do his morning business. Blue Duck is stalking Call – whom the Comanches refer to as Gun-in-the-Water – meaning to shoot an arrow into him while he is defecating: "He was almost to his horse when he saw Gun-in-the-Water walking alone, a pretty rifle in his hands. Blue Duck immediately decided to kill him. Gun-in-the-Water went into a little shallow gully near the edge of the camp and began to take down his pants" (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 56).

McMurtry's attempt to re-vision and de-mythify the romance surrounding the Old West can also be seen in *Streets of Laredo*. The opening of the novel seems to be a direct parody of that quintessential Western novel – Wister's *The Virginian.* Just like in the beginning of *The Virginian*, we have a "greenhorn" Easterner who meets a Westerner. Like the narrator of *The Virginian*, Mr. Brookshire has never been out West and his inexperience is not lost on Call who, not unkindly, tells him: "You can't ride and you don't know whether you can shoot" (McMurtry, *Streets of Laredo* 59). However, it is in the type of Westerner the two Easterners meet that all similarities end. Where *The Virginian's* Easterner meets a "slim young giant", *Streets of Laredo's* Mr. Brookshire meets a "small, weary-looking man" who appears to be "edging seventy" (4). In Chapter 6 of *Streets of Laredo*, Call expresses his opinion of Cody, better known as Buffalo Bill, whom he regards as "a show-off and braggart. No doubt he had killed a number of buffalo, but any man with a gun and a reasonably good aim could have killed a number of buffalo back when there were millions of them" (59). Cody, it is to be remembered, was one of the legendary figures of the Old West who played a large role in helping to define the idea of Western heroism. This rather irreverent attitude taken towards this iconic figure of the Old West suggests the skepticism with which the narrative views the myths of the Old West.

However, it bears mentioning at this point that though McMurtry has refused to romanticize his heroes, even leaving them open to ridicule, they nevertheless retain their core heroic traits. One such trait is the ability to act instantly, even in the most adverse of circumstances. Blue Duck may have literally caught Call with his pants

down but this disadvantage does not prevent Call from bringing up his rifle and shooting Blue Duck whom he manages to wound:

> He crept a little closer and was just raising up to draw the bow when Gun-in-the-Water, still squatting, brought up his rifle and shot him. Blue Duck shot his arrow just as the bullet struck him; the arrow missed completely, sailing over Gun-in-the-Water's head.
>
> The bullet had gone into his side, spilling blood down his leg, but Blue Duck could not pause to think about how badly he might be hurt. He had to run for his life. Gun-in-the-Water fired again and hit him again, this time only in the arm. (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 57)

Lawrence and Jewett in *The Myth of the American Superhero* have listed down a number of qualities which are characteristic of the American hero. This study shall now examine the heroes of L'Amour and McMurtry to assess the extent to which they conform to this idea of heroism.

Lawrence and Jewett identify "sexual renunciation" as "the most distinctive feature" of the American monomythic hero (36). The reason for the emergence of the hero who renounces sex is more a matter of necessity than anything else. This particular characteristic came into vogue after 1929, when serialization in comic books and radio programs were at the height of their popularity: "Sexual renunciation had to become permanent because, if the hero rode off with his bride into the golden sunset . . . it would entail creating a new redeemer figure for the next episode" (Lawrence and Jewett 36-37).

Though Call and Gus have not strictly renounced sex, the narrative never allows them to marry or acquire permanent sexual partners. Gus, in his younger days, is on the cusp of marrying Clara Forsythe, a woman he is deeply in love with. However, this deepest longing of his never comes to fruition. In *Dead Man's Walk* which is chronologically the first book in the *Lonesome Dove* series Gus meets Clara for the first time and instantly falls in love with her. He resolves to marry her but though Clara too is in love with him, she refuses to take that final step with him. *Comanche Moon*, chronologically the second book in the series, sees Gus lose out to Bob Allen in the quest for winning Clara's hand in marriage. When we next see Gus, now considerably advanced in years, in *Lonesome Dove* he is still unattached though we are told that he had been married twice. Both his wives have died.

Call too has more than a passing acquaintance with a whore named Maggie Tilton. It is at her boarding that he lodges when the Rangers are home from their long jaunts into the wilderness. Maggie refuses to accept payment from him for attending to his sexual needs though Call insists on paying her. The intimate nature of their relationship is acknowledged by Call's other Ranger friends, who have stopped visiting Maggie for her services. And when Maggie gives birth to Newt, everyone assumes that the child is Call's though he himself refuses to acknowledge him as a son. Like Gus's two wives, Maggie too dies before the hesitant Call can make his mind up on whether to take the next step in their relationship or not. In the case of our two heroes, they are completely guiltless with regard to the deaths of their respective partners but, keeping in mind the monomyth's insistence on sexual renunciation on the part of its heroes, Lawrence and Jewett's tongue-in-cheek observation that "planning

to marry a fictional redeemer may be the riskiest job in America" might very well be true of the women who aspire to marry Gus and Call (43).

In the case of L'Amour's Hondo and Bendigo Shafter, the narrative allows them to ride off into the sunset with their respective partners, or if not into a golden sunset, at least into the promise of one. At the end of *Hondo* (1953), Hondo plans to move with Angie and Johnny to California, and we can be sure that the way will be beset with dangers, but there is the hope of a better tomorrow. Towards the close of *Bendigo Shafter*, Bendigo is warmed by the thought that he will be returning to Ninon and the future he will share with her. However, unlike McMurtry's heroes, L'Amour's heroes do not actively seek nor attain sexual gratification during the course of the narrative. Even if they do, it is never explicitly described in the narrative, only suggested.

A notable feature of traditional American mythic heroes is their sense of certainty in their conception of the world. They operate in a world of absolutes, where there are no shades of grey and no difficult ethical decisions to make. Good is clearly and distinctly demarcated from evil, without any ambiguity as to which is which. In the case of popular heroes like the Lone Ranger and Superman, the moral rightness of their actions is never in doubt – at least in their minds. More importantly, the narrative never throws into question the morality of their actions.

In this connection, Etulain has observed that "[i]n the traditional western story, the hero and heroine usually are moral models for other characters and needy readers" (89). L'Amour himself was "convinced that his frontier fiction could serve as a restorative and constructive moral guide for Americans lost in a gray wilderness"

(Etulain 95). The worldview presented by L'Amour's novels can best be described in the words of Bendigo when he declares that theirs "was a world where only a few positive virtues were required, and where the rights and wrongs of things seemed sharply cut and clear" (L'Amour, *Bendigo Shafter* 55).

This simple Manichean division of the world between good and evil, right and wrong is not available to McMurtry's heroes. It is equally evident that McMurtry was not setting his heroes up as models for emulation. Etulain maintains that McMurtry, in his narratives, has created "a new gray West" (148). In this new West, nothing is certain anymore – what, in L'Amour's narratives, had clearly been delineated in simple black and white terms have now given way to a situation where the morality of everything is thrown into a gray area of doubt. Etulain describes Gus as "the mouthpiece for most of the statements about a closing frontier and wilderness-versus-settlement in the novel" (144). Gus often ponders whether their past actions as Texas Rangers in subduing the Indians has really worked out for the best. He voices these doubts to Call in Chapter 42 of *Lonesome Dove* when they are on the way into San Antonio and pass two small settlements:

> "Now look at that," Augustus said, "The dern people are making towns everywhere. It's our fault, you know."
>
> "It ain't our fault and it ain't our business, either," Call said. "People can do what they want."
>
> "Why, naturally, since we chased out the Indians and hung all the good bandits," Augustus said. "Does it ever occur to you that everything we done

> was probably a mistake? Just look at it from a nature standpoint. If you've got enough snakes around the place you won't be overrun with rats or varmints. The way I see it, the Indians and the bandits have the same job to do. Leave 'em be and you won't constantly be having to ride around these darn settlements."
>
> "You don't have to ride around them," Call said. "What harm do they do?"
>
> "If I'd have wanted civilization I'd have stayed in Tennessee and wrote poetry for a living," Augustus said, "Me and you done our work too well. We killed off most of the people that made this country interesting to begin with." (349)

Admittedly, Gus's comments in the above lines, are spoken in a rather flippant vein – as most of Gus's comments are – but it forces his morally smug companion, and by extension, the reader, to look at the implications of their actions from a different perspective. It also questions what Patricia Nelson Limerick in her *The Legacy of Conquest* (1987) refers to as "the Westerner's traditional stance as innocent victim" (54). The White pioneering Westerner was accustomed to seeing himself as the victim – whether of marauding Indians or of nature or even of the federal government – when things did not quite pan out for him in his movement West. It is this point of view that the traditional Western smugly adopts. McMurtry's narrative forces the reader to acknowledge the existence of other points of view which contest this traditional one.

It is worth mentioning that most of the cattle the Hat Creek Outfit is driving to Montana is stolen. Gus is the one who explicitly points out the immorality of their enterprise to Call, again in a humorous vein, while hoping to rile his partner: "'It's a funny life', Augustus said. 'All these cattle and nine-tenths of the horses is stolen, and yet we was once respected lawmen. If we get to Montana we'll have to go into politics. You'll wind up governor if the dern place ever gets to be a state. And you'll spend all your time passing laws against cattle thieves'" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 238).

Through Gus who questions the rightness of their past actions, the narrative forces the reader to view the past and present actions of its two heroes with a certain amount of skepticism. The narrative also forces the reader to question the moral position of the two heroes themselves thereby forcing him to question the smug assumptions of the traditional Western narrative which sets up clear demarcations between right and wrong. This questioning of the actions of the heroes forces on to the reader's attention the fact that this is a revised and more complex type of Western narrative where simplistic good and bad Manichean divisions are replaced by areas of gray. This is why Etulain's characterization of McMurtry's West as "a new gray West" is so apt (148). The narrative itself makes no attempt to hide the fact that in their foray into Mexico, they are doing in Mexico what the Mexican bandits and thieves are doing on the Texas side of the border. Gus asks Call: "Where are we aiming to steal a hundred horses?" and Call answers that it is the Hacienda Flores – a ranch owned by Old Pedro Flores, a tough Mexican who is certainly not going to give up the aforementioned horses without a fight (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 106). If anything, the narrative forces the reader to acknowledge that right and wrong are not simple black and white

divisions but a matter of perspective, or a matter of which side of the border you are on when considering such activities.

Despite the fact that they are, in effect, horse thieves themselves, Gus and Call have no moral qualms about hanging any horse thieves they may encounter. After the death of Gus, Call establishes a ranch in Montana – which must have been quite like the one that Pedro Flores had established in Mexico. One day, it is discovered that some horses are missing and a posse is immediately put together to pursue the thieves, who turn out to be only "a shaky old man with a dirty gray beard and a strapping boy about Newt's age" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 912). The old man claims to be "a minister of the Lord" and the fact that he was poring over a Bible when apprehended suggests that there might be some truth to his words (912). In any case, it was clear to Call that "the two were poor, and the old man out of his head" (913). Yet, despite these extenuating circumstances, Call decides to hang them anyway – "he himself didn't relish it, but they were horse-thieves and he felt he had no choice" (913).

One incident which, more than any other, calls into question the morality of the kind of vigilante justice administered by Gus and Call is their hanging of their old companion Jake Spoon. Jake, more through bad luck than anything else, finds that he has to throw in his lot with the Suggs boys who are a violent and murderous bunch. When Gus and Call finally catch up with the Suggs boys, they decide to summarily hang all of them. They are aware that Jake is not a murderer, having ridden with him in the past, but they refuse to entertain his explanations. When Jake protests his innocence with regard to the killing of Wilbarger and the two farmers, his protestations fall on deaf ears:

> "I ain't no criminal, Gus," [Jake] said. "Dan's the only one that done anything. He shot that old man over there, and he killed them famers. He shot Wilbarger and his men. Me and the other boys have killed nobody."
>
> "We'll hang him for the killings and the rest of you for the horse theft, then," Augustus said. "Out in these parts the punishment's the same, as you well know." (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 637)

In effect, Gus and Call are hanging Jake, not for the killings but for horse-theft – a crime which they themselves have committed on the Mexican side of the border while in the company of Jake himself. It is not that the two Rangers do not feel a twinge of regret at having to hang their old companion. "I'm sorry you crossed the line, though" Gus tells Jake (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 637). Call himself does not feel any less reluctant. "Now that they were about it he felt a keen sorrow. Jake had ridden the river with them and been the life of the camp once – not the steadiest boy in the troop, but lively and friendly to a fault" (640-41). We are forced to question the morality of the two heroes who would, albeit reluctantly, hang a companion for a crime which they themselves have been guilty of – all in the name of upholding a "harsh code" which they conveniently ignore when they themselves are the perpetrators of the crime which that same code is meant to punish. We are forced to acknowledge the moral hypocrisy of the two heroes. Moral hypocrisy, it might be added, is a despicable trait which we usually do not associate with protagonists, be they heroic or otherwise.

Another telling observation made by Lawrence and Jewett is that benign violence characterizes the actions of the American hero. Though heroes like the Lone Ranger and Superman may be taking actions which effectively mark them as vigilantes

"there is an elaborate effort to downplay objectionable features" of such actions (Lawrence and Jewett 40). The Lone Ranger may not, notwithstanding the silver star that he wears, officially be a law-enforcement officer but "he invariably turns his captured crooks over to the authorities for punishment" (Lawrence and Jewett 40). He never kills anyone and he subdues evil-doers by inflicting minimal injury. This particular trait is not shared by Gus and Call. The violence that they dole out has nothing benign about it and seems calculated to exact the maximum amount of damage. This can be seen in *Lonesome Dove* in the incident involving Call and the rude Army scout named Dixon. When Call sees Dixon savagely beating Newt, "anger flooded him, of a kind he had not felt in many years" and consumed by a towering rage, he proceeds to beat Dixon to within an inch of his life (738). Dixon's companions are unable to come to his aid, stunned to inaction in the face of such fury:

> The six soldiers, watching, were too astonished to move. The small-seeming cowman kicked Dixon so hard that it seemed his head would fly off. Then the man stood over Dixon, who spat out blood and teeth. When Dixon struggled to his feet, the smaller man immediately knocked him down again and then ground his face into the dirt with a boot. (739)

It is to be admitted that Dixon is a bully who deserves what he is getting. It is also true that he had offered Call a provocation on an earlier occasion. But Call's reaction is quite different from the way in which we are accustomed to seeing traditional American heroes handle similar situations. We can imagine that the Lone Ranger, for instance, would have handed Dixon over to the authorities after subduing him with the use of minimal violence. Call, however, is blinded by an all-consuming

anger which he cannot control – the kind of anger which popular American heroes like the Lone Ranger and Superman are never allowed to experience or give free rein to, for that would question the nature of the kind of justice that they administer.

Lest the reader thinks that this is a one-off occurrence, we see Call consumed by a similar type of anger on another occasion in the last book in the series called *Streets of Laredo*. In this instance, Call has gone to the local jail to secure the release of his deputy Pea Eye and the Indian scout Famous Shoes who have been wrongly arrested at the whim of the sheriff, Doniphan. He even has a letter from the Governor directing the sheriff to co-operate with Call. However, the haughty sheriff flatly refuses to comply with Call's request. Again, on this occasion Call has some justification for anger but the punishment he metes out to Doniphan surely does not fit the crime. After all, Doniphan is a sworn officer of the law and is only doing what he thinks is right – though it is also obvious that he is deliberately trying to make things difficult for Call through his annoyance at having his authority circumvented. Be that as it may, Call is by contrast merely an ex-Texas Ranger and is in this instance operating as a bounty hunter hired in a private capacity by Colonel Terry, a railroad baron. His actions amount to an attack on the authorities in the pursuit of what he believes to be correct.

When Call ignores Doniphan and proceeds to free his men from their cells, the irate sheriff now points a gun at Call. Then suddenly, without warning:

> Call flattened the sheriff with a rifle. He whacked him right in the neck with a hard swing. He hadn't been carrying a rifle though there were several in a gun rack along the wall. Somehow the Captain, who usually moved slowly and

> stiffly, had walked right in front of the sheriff, ignored his cocked pistol, pulled loose a rifle, and hit the sheriff with it.
>
> The minute he struck the blow, the Captain seemed to change. He didn't stop with one blow, although Doniphan was knocked flat, and his pistol went skittering across the floor of the jail. Call continued to hit the sheriff with the rifle. Once, when the sheriff turned to try and escape, the Captain knocked him in the ear with his boot, so hard that Brookshire would not have been surprised if Doniphan's head had flown off. (McMurtry, *Streets of Laredo* 277)

This is similar to the kind of treatment meted out to Dixon, the army scout. As on that earlier occasion, "the Captain could no more stop hitting and kicking than a blizzard could stop blowing" (McMurtry, *Streets of Laredo* 278). Again, this is an example of a rage allowed to run wild, a luxury that is not afforded to other heroes in the American monomyth. It should be noted that Doniphan is a duly sworn officer of the law – a figure to whom heroes like the Lone Ranger would have handed over the criminals they apprehend.

By contrast, Gus appears to be more cool-headed than his temperamental partner. However, he too is prone to such outbursts of anger and dishes out disproportionate amounts of violence when agitated, though his is not the all-consuming anger that blinds him to everything else. An instance of Gus losing his temper is seen in *Lonesome Dove* when he and Call ride into San Antonio and stop at the Buckhorn saloon for a drink. The young bartender manning the bar insolently stares at his two customers and is slow in serving them. When he also rudely comments on the dusty appearance of Gus and Call:

> Augustus pitched a ten-dollar gold piece on the bar and as the young man took it, suddenly reached out, grabbed his head and smashed his face into the bar, before the young man could even react. Then he quickly drew his big Colt, and when the bartender raised his head, his broken nose gushing blood onto his white shirtfront, he found himself looking right into the barrel of a very big gun. (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 351)

When the bartender loudly complains to the owner of the treatment he has received, Gus "rapped the bartender above the ear with his gun barrel. A tap was enough. The bartender slid out of sight and was seen no more" (353).

L'Amour's Hondo and Bendigo conform more to the traditional American heroic ideal of benign violence in this regard. Though they are portrayed as being more than capable of holding their own in a fight, they do not dole out gratuitous amounts of violence even when reluctantly forced into a confrontation. In *Hondo*, the hero of that name finds himself forced into a confrontation with Ed Lowe. When Ed pulls a gun on Hondo, the latter merely kicks the gun from his hand and engages with his opponent in fisticuffs. Though Hondo beats Ed he, unlike Call, does not leave his opponent half-dead; he merely administers a good beating after which he throws Ed out into the street. Hondo has not beaten Ed to the extent that all the defiance has even been knocked out of him. For, at the end of it all, Ed is still defiant and warns Hondo, "You ain't heard the last of this!" (92).

Bendigo too, finds himself drawn into a verbal argument on a train with a belligerent man named Alec Williams who, not realizing whom he is talking to, rudely makes disparaging remarks about Bendigo and effectively calls him a liar. Instead of

taking offence and settling the matter with his fists or his guns – as Gus, in the same situation, might have done – Bendigo merely warns Williams that "what you have just said could get you killed where you are going. In this country if you call a man a liar you'd better reach for a gun when you do it. Nobody out here likes a loose tongue. You'd better learn while you can" (L'Amour, *Bendigo Shafter* 380). Not wishing to get further drawn into the argument, he ignores the man and goes about doing the more important work at hand.

This thesis shall also examine the heroes of L'Amour and McMurtry to assess the extent to which they conform to or deviate from those qualities which are said to be peculiar to the hero of the Western genre in particular.

A defining characteristic of the Western hero is his total control and mastery over his closest companion – the horse. L'Amour's Hondo is good with horses and the novel contains a vivid description of the hero riding and ultimately subduing a wild mustang which has supposedly already injured another cowboy:

> There was a certain brutal beauty in the struggle between man and horse. The mustang, given his chance, decided to make a fight for it. Infuriated by the thing clinging to his back, the powerful horse bucked wildly, but the man remained in the saddle. Seeming to anticipate the horse's every move, he swayed and bobbed with the maddened plunging of the horse, but stuck to the saddle and even seemed to urge the lineback to do his worst. (L'Amour, *Hondo* 21)

This description of Hondo taming the bucking horse is evocative of Frederic Remington's iconic sculpture "The Bronco Buster" which epitomizes Western masculinity.

McMurtry, by contrast, makes it plain that Call and Gus are not particularly good with horses. The beginning of *Dead Man's Walk* shows Call and Gus struggling unsuccessfully to saddle-break a "skinny little Mexican mustang" (13). This ineptitude with horses seems to be a quality that dogs Call all his life, for a much older Call in *Lonesome Dove* still manages to get badly bitten by his vicious mare.

In her insightful analysis of the Western in her *West of Everything* (1992), Jane Tompkins asserts that the Western rejects Christianity and Christian values. This rejection is seen most explicitly in scenes that involve burial. Tompkins' claim in this regard amounts to a claim that the hero rejects Christianity for, after all, it is the hero who is invariably called upon to do the burying and utters the words or performs the actions that can be interpreted as a rejection of religion.

Tompkins uses films to explicate her point but this applies equally well to the novel form. After all, the Western is a genre in which the novel both influences and is, in turn, influenced by its counterpart in the cinema. As C.L. Sonnichsen in his *From Hopalong to Hud* (1978) points out, "the cowboy in novels and short stories . . . provides a good deal of the raw material for movie and television westerns" (104). Tompkins cites a scene from the movie *Red River* starring John Wayne. When Wayne's character perfunctorily mutters that "the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away" (qtd. in Tompkins 36) over the bodies of men he has killed, Tompkins interprets this as a call to the audience "to perceive the ridiculousness of believing in a Divine

Providence that has obviously had no part in deciding the fate of these poor chumps, and to recognize instead the power of one strong-willed, almost superhuman man" (36).

Gus and Call seem to echo the Western hero's disregard – a disregard bordering on contempt – of religion. Their reaction is not very different from that of Wayne's character when they find themselves having to bury dead bodies. In *Lonesome Dove*, Sean O'Brien has the misfortune to ride into a nest of poisonous snakes while crossing the Nueces river, is bitten, and succumbs to his injuries. They decide to bury the boy beside the banks of the river and hold an impromptu funeral service:

> "If you'd like to sing or something, do it," Call said. Allen stood a moment, started singing an Irish song in a quavering voice, then broke down crying and couldn't finish it. . . .
>
> "Well, I'll say a word," Augustus said, "This was a good, brave boy, for we all saw that he conquered his fear of riding. He had a fine tenor voice, and we'll all miss that. But he wasn't used to this part of the world. There's accidents in life and he met with a bad one. We may all do the same if we ain't careful."
>
> He turned and mounted Old Malaria. "Dust to dust," he said. "Let's the rest of us go on to Montana." (307)

One thing which is conspicuous by its very absence in this burial scene is the reference to a deity, religion or an afterlife.

Gus's eulogy, or what passes for one anyway, is strikingly similar to another example cited by Tompkins to make her point. In the 1958 movie *Cowboy* starring Glenn Ford, Ford's character makes a speech over the body of a man he is about to bury. He asks, "Does anybody know the proper words?" and his question is greeted by silence. He concludes his short speech by observing that the deceased "was a good man with cattle and he always did the best job he could. I hope they can say as much for me one day" (qtd. in Tompkins 36). Call too agrees with his partner and refuses to spend time even ruminating on death, the afterlife or God. "He's right, Call thought. The best thing to do with a death was to move on from it" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 307). Both of McMurtry's heroes, it would seem, share this disregard for religion.

This disregard for religion is taken a step further in *Comanche Moon* when Captain Inish Scull – a heroic figure in his own right – talks about the death of his cousin Willy. The reason for launching into this anecdote about his cousin Willy is that one of the rangers James Watson has just been killed and they are facing a problem because the ground is frozen so hard that it is nearly impossible to dig a grave. He tells them of how Willy's corpse, in accordance with his own wishes, was laid out in the open to be devoured by insects. Captain Scull's anecdote suggests the idea of not just doing away with burial rites in accordance with the dictates of religious customs but doing away with burial altogether, thus rejecting any belief in the existence of an afterlife. On hearing the story, a shocked Long Bill Coleman asks, "How would a man get up to heaven, with no one to say any scriptures over him, and with just a dern bunch of beetles for undertakers?" (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 47). The implicit answer to

this is that there is no need for anyone to quote scriptures because there is no heaven to get up to.

Significantly enough, L'Amour's narratives do not contain this deliberate rejection or parody of religion. This can perhaps be attributed to a fact already mentioned earlier: the author's intention that his narratives serve as moral guides to his readers. In the very first chapter of *Bendigo Shafter*, the narrator Bendigo informs the reader that "[m]y father had been a Bible-reading man and named his sons from the Book" (4). Indeed, his older brother is named Cain. The expectation is already set early on that this will not be one of those Westerns which disregard religion.

Tompkins also points out another interesting feature about Westerns which is that "Westerns distrust language", preferring action over words. She explains that "Westerns distrust language in part because language tends to be wielded most skillfully by people who possess a certain kind of power: class privilege, political clout, financial strength" (Tompkins 49). The Western's distrust of language manifests itself clearly in its hero's attitude towards language – namely his avoidance of it.

In a similar vein, Peter Schwenger in *Phallic Critiques* (1984) identified a style of writing he calls "'the language of men', a language that belongs to what he terms the School of Virility, starting with Jack London and continuing through Ernest Hemingway to Norman Mailer and beyond" (qtd. in Tompkins 55). This language of men is "[i]nfused by colloquialism, slang, choppy rhythms, 'bitten-off fragments,' and diction that marks the writer as 'tough' . . ." (qtd. in Tompkins 55-56). Such language, Schwenger claims, confers to its user "masculine reserve" – a trait which scornfully enables him to become impervious to what the Western, in Tompkins's analysis, sees

as women's "chief weapon" – language (64). Explaining why the use of language is scorned as feminine, Schwenger states that "[i]t is by talking that one opens up to another person and becomes vulnerable. It is by putting words to an emotion that it becomes feminized. As long as the emotion itself is restrained, held back, it hardly matters what the emotion itself is, it will retain a male integrity". Thus, silence becomes "a demonstration of masculine control over emotion" (qtd. in Tompkins 56).

One of the most recognizable traits of the Western hero is his reticence – the desire to express himself in as few words as possible, and the privileging of deeds over words. The Western's contempt for extraneous language is best exemplified by the words of Tuco, the happy-go-lucky villain in the 1966 spaghetti Western movie directed by Sergio Leone *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. A man who is hunting Tuco to exact revenge finally catches up with the latter while he is sitting in a bathtub, covered with soap suds and apparently helpless. The man gloats over Tuco's apparent helplessness without immediately pulling the trigger. It is while he is delivering his brief monologue preparatory to shooting Tuco that the latter pulls out a gun which had been hidden under the suds and kills him. Tuco then looks at the dead man and says: "When you have to shoot, shoot. Don't talk."

Call's reticence is something that is repeatedly stressed in the *Lonesome Dove* series. His desire to be apart from the other men is constantly mentioned. We are told that Call likes to be alone, mainly to get away from the all talking in camp. "In his years as a Ranger captain it had been his habit to get off by himself for a time, every night, out of camp and away from whatever talking and bickering were going on. He had discovered early on that his instincts needed privacy in which to operate"

(McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 18). For Call, at least, engaging in conversation is something which tends to blunt his instincts – something which detracts from his heroic qualities.

With regard to talkativeness, Call's partner is the exact opposite. It is as though Gus makes an effort to be more talkative, perhaps to make up for his partner's silence. Gus's talkativeness is put forward in a humorous manner in *Lonesome Dove*. Regarding his fondness for conversation Lorena, the whore, feels that:

> In that respect, Gus was unusual, for most men didn't talk. He would blab right up until he shoved his old carrot in, and then would be blabbing again, before it was even dry. Generous as he was by local standards – he gave her five dollars on gold every single time – Lorena still felt a little underpaid. It should have been five dollars for wetting his carrot and another five dollars for listening to all the blab. (30-31)

It is interesting that McMurtry chooses to portray one of his heroes as the silent type in the vein of the traditional Western hero while the other is portrayed as the diametrical opposite in his loquaciousness. This is perhaps indicative of McMurtry's indebtedness to the earlier tradition and represents his attempt to negotiate a position between the old and the emerging tradition which was supplanting the old. In this regard, it is important to note that despite the many ways in which *Lonesome Dove* breaks away from the traditional Western formula it does not represent an attempt to "replace earlier Westerns but is a magnificent retelling of the western story through a complex, provocative reweaving of many of the familiar ingredients of the narrative" (Etulain 141).

Despite stressing Gus's talkativeness the narrative makes it abundantly clear that his talkativeness does in no way detract from his other heroic qualities. This is demonstrated amply enough in the very first chapter of *Lonesome Dove* when we are told of Gus's love for argument:

> He didn't really care what the question was, and it made no great difference to him which side he was on. He just plain loved to argue, whereas Call hated to. Long experience had taught him that there was no winning arguments with Augustus, even in cases where there was a simple right and wrong at issue. Even in the old days, when they were in the thick of it, with Indians and hardcases to worry about, Augustus would seize any chance for a dispute. Practically the closest call they ever had, when the two of them and six Rangers got surprised by the Comanches up the Prairie Dog Fork of the Red and were all digging holes in the bank that could have turned out to be their graves if they hadn't been lucky and got a cloudy night and sneaked away, Augustus had kept up a running argument with a Ranger they called Ugly Bobby. The argument was entirely about coon dogs, and Augustus had kept it up all night, though most of the Rangers were so scared they couldn't pass water. (16)

By demonstrating Gus's ability to carry on a conversation even in the most dangerous of situations, McMurtry seems to suggest that talkativeness, or even silence for that matter, has nothing to do with heroism or the ability to act, as most Westerns seem to imply.

In L'Amour's Hondo we see a perfect embodiment of the Western hero whose masculinity seems to be closely tied to his avoidance of gratuitous conversation. His

economy with words is best demonstrated when he tries to teach the boy Johnny about the ways of the wilderness. The short, yet pithy sentences – often shorn of articles – suggests that this is a man who would rather dispense with conversation altogether and is reluctantly using the bare, minimum words possible to get his point across.

Tompkins argues that the Western is a reaction against the sentimental novel of the nineteenth century which exclusively focused on women and thus also took place in private spaces like parlours and drawing rooms. Being a "point for point" response to the sentimental novel of the nineteenth century, the Western aimed at minimizing the presence of women just as the presence of men had been minimized in that other genre (Tompkins 38). Tompkins also reasons that this explains the Westerns love of wide open spaces and public places like bars and saloons. She draws the conclusion that women are neglected in the Western.

The argument seems compelling – the Western seems to be a genre that deliberately excludes women as a whole, all in the name of getting back at a genre that had deliberately neglected men. To explicate her point about the lack of importance accorded to women in Westerns, Tompkins points out that in the 1957 movie *Gunfight at the OK Corral*, Laura Dembo simply acts as "an extension of Wyatt Earp" and "a screen for Doc Holliday, an alibi the movie supplies Wyatt Earp with so that his love for Doc won't mark him as 'queer'" (Tompkins 40). Tompkins refers to this role played by Laura Dembo as an "alibi function" that women characters in Westerns perform all the time (40). This "alibi function" performed by women underscores their indispensability to the Western for they serve to establish the heterosexuality of the male hero.

For, ironically enough, it is the Western's very adulation of manly virtues and its depiction of male bonding and camaraderie that lays it open to the charge of homoeroticism. This aspect of the Western has, in more recent times, been brought to the general attention of the public at large by the critically acclaimed 2005 film directed by Ang Lee titled *Brokeback Mountain* which dramatizes the homosexual relationship between two cowboys. But Ang Lee's film has only recently highlighted an aspect of the Western which had already been recognized and pointed out as early as 1966 in *The American Western Novel* by James K. Folsom who pointed out that "[t]he stalwart cowboy . . . who rides off into the sunset leaving a weeping maid behind once seemed pathetic, even tragic; to us he seems ridiculous, and may even be, we whisper, homosexual" (qtd. in Sonnichsen 23).

Indeed, the potential homoerotic tendencies of the Western were evident in Wister's *The Virginian*, which as has been pointed out before, is one of the more influential of the novels in the genre. The description of the "slim young giant" is followed by the subjective proclamation of the narrator: "Had I been the bride, I should have taken the giant, dust and all" (4).

The homoerotic undertones of this passage from *The Virginian* should be evident enough, especially when viewed from the perspective of more recent times where sexuality is less of a taboo and more openly discussed. It would have certainly been evident to critics of an earlier era like Folsom, who would have seen it as a perfect case in point. The narrator of the passage seems to be someone who clearly feels the stirrings of homoerotic desire within him. It could also be reasonably argued that the hero's appearance is such that it induces homosexual longings in some men. Such

being the case, and the Western being more or less preoccupied with male characters and manly pursuits, it does not take too large a stretch of the imagination to imagine that the hero might himself have some of those homoerotic desires that he seems to inspire in some men. The Virginian is here saved from being tarred with the brush of homosexuality by the presence of a heroine – in this case Molly. It is his love for Molly which firmly establishes his identity as a heterosexual male, free from even the suggestion of any homoerotic desires.

The women in the novels selected for the purpose of this thesis too perform the same function as Molly. In the case of *Lonesome Dove* the main action is centered round a cattle drive which takes place all the way from Lonesome Dove in Texas to Montana. This cattle drive is to be undertaken by the Hat Creek Outfit which consists exclusively of males. It is the presence of the whore Lorena in the near vicinity, and the constant longing glances that the cowboys constantly cast her way, which helps assure the reader of the heterosexual nature of the relations prevailing among the men in the group.

McMurtry's *Comanche Moon* also deals with the adventures that befall Gus and Call when they are still young Texas Rangers. It seems that Gus and Call were inseparable even then. When Call lags behind waiting for their scout Famous Shoes, it is a worried Gus who comes back looking for him. Similarly, when Call undertakes night duty – an activity which could not have held any appeal even for the most enthusiastic of Rangers – it is Gus who accompanies him even though it is not his turn to stand duty. In this case, it is the women in their lives who help to establish the heterosexual nature of their companionship. When Gus voluntarily accompanies Call

for night duty, any suspicions that the reader may harbor about his intentions are allayed when he starts talking about the woman in his life, Clara Forsythe.

Women may not occupy the same amount of narrative space in the Western as men do, but in the light of Tompkins' observation about their "alibi function", we will argue that they are indispensable to the genre. Limerick also rightly points out that the inclusion of women in the Western narrative gives to the Western drama "a fully human cast of characters" (52). It is therefore fitting that we should briefly examine the women in the novels selected for the purpose of this thesis.

Wister's Molly Wood, just like her male counterpart, can be viewed as a type for the heroine in the traditional Western. Etulain observes that Wister has presented us with an "ineffectual heroine" in Molly Wood (75). Molly initially comes across as an independent woman who is perfectly capable of handling her affairs on her own. Yet she ultimately surrenders her independence to the hero, becoming subservient to his wishes. She does try to assert her authority when she warns her lover that she will not marry him if he does not call off his duel with Trampas, but willingly takes him back after he returns successfully from the duel with his arch rival.

In the tradition established by Molly, L'Amour's heroines display a certain amount of independence. But like Molly, they always capitulate to the male will in the end, thereby surrendering their independence. The character of Angie Lowe in *Hondo* is a case in point. That she has a certain amount of independence is evident from the fact that she has chosen to stay in a ranch out in the middle of a wilderness which lies in Apache controlled territory. She refuses to leave even when informed that the Apaches are on the warpath. She knows how to use a gun and does not hesitate to reach

for it at the first sign of trouble. That she will not hesitate to use it in defence of her person and that of her son is evident when she pulls the trigger of her gun while it is pointed at Hondo, whom she had then perceived as a threat. Luckily for Hondo, the gun is not loaded. She even stands up to a party of Apache braves and refuses to run away despite her fear. Yet all her resolve and toughness seem to go out of her whenever Hondo appears on the scene. It is almost amusing to see how this woman who has been hardened by the tough frontier conditions in which she lives, starts thinking and acting like a weak–kneed teenage girl on first acquaintance with Hondo. A potential turning point in their relationship occurs when she finds out that he has killed her husband. Yet she does not react in a manner consistent with our first impression of her – we might have expected that a woman who dutifully stays with her husband to start a ranch in the middle of nowhere would at least try to exact some form of retribution on her husband's murderer but she does not do so. In the end, she of course, forgets about any grievances caused to her by Hondo's actions, surrenders to his will, and sets out with him to make a new life for themselves.

Unlike *Hondo* which has a lone woman character in Angie Lowe, *Bendigo Shafter* has a bigger cast of women characters. Prominent among them are the widow Ruth Macken, Ninon Vauvert, Cain's wife Helen, and Mae Stuart. The most significant of them is Ruth Macken who displays an individuality possessed by none of the other characters. Recently widowed, she is still young and attractive enough that even the normally withdrawn Ethan Sackett appears to have taken a liking to her. The location on which Ruth decides to build her house is symbolic of her individuality. Her house stands apart from all the other dwellings which are clustered together for protection

from hostile elements. It is not that Ruth is unmindful of her safety when planning the location for her house – it is just that she is able to look beyond the immediate needs of the present with an eye on the future. As Bendigo notes: ". . . her house would be all of a hundred yards from the others, and such isolation could be dangerous. Yet I knew she built for tomorrow, and she accepted the risks" (13). Yet despite these strong individualistic traits possessed by her, L'Amour never seizes the opportunity to make her into a major character who plays a significant role in the development of the plot. In the final analysis, she is simply there to fulfill a minor role in providing an education for Bendigo who acknowledges that "[i]t was from her that I learned much of the world beyond the limits of our wilderness. I learned from her that a man's world need be no smaller than the mind of the man who scans it" (36). She also acts as a confidante of sorts for the young Bendigo who declares that Ruth "was a woman to whom a boy might talk of things dreamed. There was understanding in her, and sympathy" (34). It is also from her that Bendigo learns of "the wiles of women and how they work upon a man's pride and vanity to get things done" (35).

In like manner, not just Ruth Macken, but all of the other women characters are sacrificed as mere pawns who play important, yet minor roles, in furthering the education of Bendigo in the ways of the world. The coquettish Mae Stuart gives him an experience early on in the ways of the fatal temptress. By the time of the novel's opening, Bendigo is already experienced enough to recognize that the sixteen year old Mae is "mighty notional. She'd put up her hair about a year back, and she was flouncy, feeling her oats, like. She'd been making eyes at men-folks since she was shy of thirteen and was getting to where she wanted to do something about it" (19). After

having rescued her and two other children from the Shoshone Indians, they make camp and Bendigo notes that ". . . Mae was making me nervous, acting like she was asleep but snuggling like she was about to crawl into my lap" (28).

His sister-in-law Helen gives him a glimpse into the life and duties of the woman of the house. And through the narrator Bendigo, L'Amour is perhaps articulating his views on the place of women in society. In one of his frequent musings, Bendigo confidently reasons that his sister Lorna, desires "children, a husband, church on Sunday, the shade of trees, the beauty of flowers, singing at her work. She was one of the good ones who would rear strong sons who would walk their way in pride of home, of country, and of pleasure in their families" (258). Indeed, it appears at times that Bendigo merely serves as a glorified mouthpiece of L'Amour, articulating the author's opinions on a variety of topics. In this regard, Etulain describes Bendigo as "carr[ying] a heavy load of the author's autobiographical freight" (101). Etulain does not seem to be far off the mark, for L'Amour's "memoir" *Education of a Wandering Man* (1989) which tells mostly about how he carried on his self-education, contains views that are markedly similar to Bendigo's.

The status accorded to L'Amour's heroines, in general, is best illustrated by a description of Angie Lowe in *Hondo,* where the narrator, seeking to emphasize her "dignity and reserve", describes her in terms that are usually used in connection with horses: "She had breeding, that was obvious. Not even this ranch and the simple clothing could deprive her of that. It was like seeing a thoroughbred horse in his winter coat. The blood lines were there, despite season or situation" (L'Amour, *Hondo* 25).

Like the horse, indispensable but whose presence is always taken for granted in a Western – that is the lot of the heroine in a standard L'Amour novel.

Etulain makes the observation that "*Lonesome Dove* is a novel about men, it is a man's book" (144). Though there is some truth in this observation, the women in this book bear close analysis for they are more memorable than the women of most other Westerns – certainly more so than the women of L'Amour's narratives. McMurtry's women, like his men, break away from the stereotype of what the Western expects women to be like. This is true of both his marginal characters as well his more prominent characters – from Mrs. Rainey to Clara Wood – who refuse to surrender their independence to men and who refuse to submit themselves to male authority. And unlike the heroines of L'Amour, the narrative does not show them experiencing sudden and improbable changes of heart. The first such woman we encounter in *Lonesome Dove* is Mrs. Rainey who is described thus:

> Maude Rainey was built like a barrel, with a bosom as big as buckets and a voice that some claimed would make hair fall out. It was the general consensus around Lonesome Dove that if she and Augustus had married their combined voices would have deafened whatever children they might have produced. She talked at the table like some men talked when they were driving mules. (178)

In a similar vein but lacking the conviviality of Maude Rainey is Peach Johnson, sister-in-law of July Johnson. July wonders why his brother has nicknamed her Peach, "for she was large and quarrelsome and did not resemble a peach in any way" (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 246). When Peach appears on the scene "she was

carrying a red rooster for some reason. She was the largest woman in town, nearly six feet tall. . . . Also, Peach talked a blue streak . . .” (246). When the rooster she is holding has the temerity to peck at Peach’s hand, she “grabbed him by the head, swung him a few times and wrung his neck” (248). One can only imagine how she must have treated her late husband Ben, who “had been the runt of the Johnson family” (246).

The woman Louise whom Roscoe Brown, July’s hapless deputy comes across during the course of his travels seems to be a more randy version of Peach. Louise is “a good-sized woman wearing man’s clothes. She had brown hair and had sweated through her shirt” (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 315). Just like Peach she too is very outspoken. During supper, Roscoe is taken aback when she asks him: “Roscoe, have you had any personal experience with women at all?” When Roscoe admits that he has not had much experience in such matters, Louise boldly proposes a “solution”: “I got the solution to both our problems. You let that sheriff find his own wife and stay here and we’ll get married.” When a shocked Roscoe believing that he has not heard correctly asks her to repeat what she said, Louisa loudly declares: “I said we oughta get married. What I like about you is you’re quiet. Jim talked every second that he didn’t have a whiskey bottle in his mouth. I got tired of listening. Also, you’re skinny. If you don’t last, you’ll be easy to bury. I’ve buried enough husbands to take such things into account. What do you say?” (McMurtry, *Lonesome Dove* 320)

A voluble woman who proposes marriage to men is a very far cry from the traditional demure Western woman portrayed in the Westerns.

In *Comanche Moon* we are presented with another woman in the same mould as Louisa. Though she plays a more prominent role than Louisa does in *Lonesome*

Dove, Inez Scull, wife of Captain Inish Scull seems to be a development on the character of Louisa. Needless to say that she is the very antithesis of the ideal Western woman.

Inez is in the habit of taking lovers, a fact not unknown to her husband. She seduces the young Jake Spoon and tells him that she has had other lovers like the German boy Jurgen. There is a suggestion that she prefers young boys in her husband's employ though she is not very particular when the urge seizes her, for she had once even copulated with old Ben Mickelson, the butler, with his liver spots and all.

Inez's behavior towards her husband is as shocking as her sexual escapades. Husband and wife often engage in violent physical altercations, with Madame Scull as often as not, being the aggressor:

> Madame Scull and the Captain were often out of temper with one another, and were not quiet in their expressions of rage or discontent. More than once, according to Felice, the Captain had taken a bullwhip to his lady and, more than once, she had taken the same bullwhip to him – not to mention quirts, buggy whips, or anything else that lay to hand, at other times, they screamed wild curses at one another and fought with their fists, like two men. Some of the Mexican servants were so alarmed by the goings-on that they thought the devil lived in the house – a few of them fled in the night and didn't stop until they were across the Rio Grande, more than two hundred and fifty miles away. (McMurtry, *Comanche Moon* 28)

The more prominent of McMurtry's female characters equally defy the mould into which the Westerns attempt to cast its women characters. A case in point is Clara Forsythe. *Comanche Moon* and *Dead Man's Walk* deal with a young Clara before she is married to Bob, the horse trader from Kentucky. Like Molly Wood, she is assertive and independent, often shocking the citizens of Austin with her boldness. However, unlike Molly, she does not capitulate to the male will. This is most evident in her dealings with Gus. That she reciprocates the love he feels for her is obvious enough. But for reasons of her own, she refuses to marry Gus. Even though the narrative makes it plain enough that Gus cuts a more dashing figure than Bob, Clara does not relent as a Molly-like heroine would have been expected to do. In *Comanche Moon* Clara is described as

> a woman far too independent for her own good, or anybody else's good either . . . [Gus] had proposed to Clara the day he met her, in her father's store in Austin, years before, but she had hesitated then and was still hesitating, despite the fact that he had courted her fast and furiously, all that time. Clara would admit that she loved him – she was not the standoffish sort – but she would not agree to marry him . . . (21)

In fact, Gus is not the only man whom Clara has turned away. Later on, long after she is married to Bob and living in Nebraska, we are told that she is an expert at gelding young horses – symbolic perhaps of the manner in which she had emasculated the male suitors who had gathered to ask for her hand in marriage.

It is his treatment of Lorena, the prostitute in *Lonesome Dove* that partly allows McMurtry to debunk the myth of the old West. McMurtry describes the situation of

Lorena with a frankness that is rarely seen in other Westerns. From describing the manner in which she found herself caught in the trade to describing her experiences with her customers, McMurtry lays bare the livelihood of a certain class of women who constituted an indispensable part of Western history. The extent to which McMurtry's realistic treatment of the profession of the prostitute enables him to re-vision the West can be seen from Limerick's observation: "Acknowledge the human reality of Western prostitutes, and you have taken a major step toward removing Western history from the domain of myth and symbol and restoring it to actuality" (52). If McMurtry was using his unconventional heroes to reimagine crucial aspects of the Western story, his detailed and realistic treatment of the life of Lorena the prostitute also constitutes "a major step toward removing Western history from the domain of myth and symbol and restoring it to actuality" (Limerick 52).

Trying to account for the marginalization of women in the Western, Etulain postulates that "[i]n the public's eye the frontier story represented masculine courage and individualism in fronting demanding landscapes and human competitors" (75). And according to him, "[c]ontemporary gender expectations" ensured that women characters ended up being subservient to their male counterparts even though "they might initially compete or contest with the hero" (75). Limerick's observation "that Turner-style history simply left women out" (49) may also partly explain the lack of narrative space accorded to women characters in Westerns. Whatever the reason for their marginalized status, it is clear that women are indispensable to the plot and, in the case of McMurtry's novels, add variety to an already motley cast of interesting characters. Limerick makes a telling observation in this regard: "Exclude women from

Western history, and unreality sets in. Restore them, and the Western drama gains a fully human cast of characters – males and females whose urges, needs, failings, and conflicts we can recognize and even share" (52).

It would be fitting to conclude the chapter by summarizing briefly about the heroes of the two writers under consideration. The heroes of L'Amour and McMurtry display significant differences, representative as they are of two very different ways of looking at the American West. Despite the differences in their characterization they nevertheless retain some core heroic qualities which enable them to spring into action in defence of civilization and the agents of civilization from what the narrative tradition has constructed as that evil Other of the myth – the Indian. McVeigh has suggested that America "is a nation that understands the world and its place in it in adversarial terms: it understands its values by defining and testing them against an 'other' (213). The Indian, being the native inhabitant of the lands who opposed the White expansion, became a convenient and readily available Other against which valiant Whites tested their mettle. As a result, theatre, fiction, film and the popular imagination all combined to construct the Indian as an evil Other. The prevailing social norms and dominant religious frameworks also worked in tandem to produce an Other against whom the Western hero tests and demonstrates his heroic qualities. As Sonnichsen has pointed out, and as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Indian has been cast by the requirements of the myth into the role of:

> the Enemy – the same one John Bunyan's Christian fought all the way to the Celestial City, and just as deeply rooted in folklore.

> It is understood that he must be totally bad. No redeeming feature is possible. And if he is not bad enough to suit us, we work on him till he is. . . . We give him credit for everything we find intolerable in ourselves. (72)

In the final analysis, the Western hero is not merely a self-reliant heroic self, but morally supported by a complicit culture which dominates and marginalizes the Other whose terms of response, in contrast, are of a different order and different belief.

Works Cited

Etulain, Richard W. *Telling Western Stories: From Buffalo Bill to Larry McMurtry*. U of New Mexico P, 1999.

L'Amour, Louis. *Bendigo Shafter*. Bantam Books, 1979.

---. *Hondo*. Bantam Books, 1953.

Lawrence, John Shelton, and Robert Jewett. *The Myth of the American Superhero*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.

Lemann, Nicholas. "Tall in the Saddle." *Nytimes*, 9 June 1985, movies2.nytimes.com/books/99/01/10/specials/mcmurtry-dove.html.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West.* W.W. Norton, 1987.

McMurtry, Larry. *Comanche Moon*. Picador, 2015.

---. *Dead Man's Walk*. Simon & Schuster, 1995.

---. *Lonesome Dove.* Pocket Books, 1985.

---. *Streets of Laredo*. Pocket Books, 1993.

McVeigh, Stephen. *The American Western*. Edinburgh UP, 2007.

Reilly, John M. *Larry McMurtry: A Critical Companion.* Greenwood Press, 2000.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*. New York: The Century, 1899.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Harvard UP, 1950.

Sonnichsen, C. L. *From Hopalong to Hud: Thoughts on Western Fiction*. Texas A&M UP, 1978.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Directed by Sergio Leone, United Artists, 1966.

Tompkins, Jane. *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*. Oxford UP, 1992.

Wister, Owen. *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains.* Macmillan, 1904.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MISSING INDIAN IN LOUIS L'AMOUR'S LANDSCAPE

CHAPTER IV

THE MISSING INDIAN IN LOUIS L'AMOUR'S LANDSCAPE

In Louis L'Amour we have a very different type of writer as compared to McMurtry. Where McMurtry often tries to break away from convention even while writing within the Western genre, L'Amour is a more traditional Western author who adheres to the accepted formula in his fiction – and that formula has worked for him, as is attested to by the fact that "sales of Louis L'Amour books were over two hundred and thirty million copies" (Weinberg 253). And if we are to believe a Bantam Books publicity release ". . . if L'Amour's books were stacked end to end they would stretch around the circumference of the Earth." (Weinberg 253). Thus, in the larger scheme of things, McMurtry and L'Amour represent two very different styles of writing within the Western genre. If Chapter II examines the works of a writer who tried to break away from traditional narrative strictures, Chapter IV proposes to deal with a writer who adhered to popular, well-established formulas.

It is worth noting, at the very outset, that L'Amour has often been commended for the authenticity of his landscapes. What is of critical interest is whether L'Amour's landscape which is so authentic in all other respects is peopled by the authentic Indian or by the stereotyped abstractions of old. Jane Tompkins in her *West of Everything* (1992) makes an observation about Indian representation in Westerns and asserts that they are "there but not there" (9). This chapter will examine whether Tompkins' observation in this regard holds true for the narratives of L'Amour.

As has already been mentioned, L'Amour is a popular storywriter who stands head and shoulders above other writers of Westerns with regard to popularity and sales

figures. Robert Weinberg in *The Louis L'Amour Companion* (1992) has provided a brief comparison of L'Amour with other noted popular Western writers:

> L'Amour's sales are even more incredible when matched against other Western writers. His novels have sold more copies than the combined numbers of Max Brand and Zane Grey, the second and third best-selling Western writers of all time. And both Brand and Grey already had novels in print when L'Amour was still a child. (Weinberg 253)

Further attesting to the popularity of L'Amour was the decision taken by Bantam Books "to keep all of L'Amour's books in print. This course of action had never been taken for any Western writer up to that time. Normally, whenever a Western title sold out, it was gone and no longer available to the author's fans" (Weinberg 258). Bantam Books' decision ensured that all of L'Amour's books were available in print at any one time, a testament to the demand for not just the latest L'Amour books but for all of his books.

The Walking Drum (1984) is an interesting work which throws light on L'Amour's versatility as an author for it proves that he could stray into genres other than the Western and still produce a bestseller. The story of Mathurin Kerbouchard – a picaresque tale which the author describes as a "historical" novel – sees the hero wandering over all parts of the civilized world at the time and making his learned observations therein. While not a Western, it shows the amount of research that L'Amour put into the making of his books. He seems to be as at home here as he is in writing stories set in the American West. It bears mentioning that L'Amour had plans to write two more novels featuring Kerbouchard. In an interview given for KIOU radio

in 1986 in San Francisco, L'Amour claimed: "I'm following it up with two others. One where he goes on to India and one where he goes to China" (Weinberg 342).

The Walking Drum proves that the elements that make the Western so popular could be successfully carried over into other genres. Though L'Amour has here branched out into another completely different genre, some of the basic storytelling elements remain the same: for one, Kerbouchard, could be classed as one with the rest of L'Amour's other Western heroes – men "who know the difference between right and wrong and are willing to fight for the right. Uncompromising in their belief in justice, they always do the right thing, whether they have to or not" (Weinberg 12). In *The Walking Drum*, one can also discern the reverence and love for learning that characterizes L'Amour's other Westerns like *Bendigo Shafter* (1979). Like Bendigo who thirsts for ever greater knowledge and learning, Kerbouchard "is a seeker for knowledge. Wherever he goes, he studies. He looks for the town scholar, the town library . . ." (Weinberg 342-3). And like most of L'Amour's heroes, Kerbouchard is simply a mouthpiece for the author. There is never any doubt in the mind of the reader during any part of the narrative that L'Amour is speaking to us through the character of Kerbouchard.

As a point of departure, it would be well to examine the relation between L'Amour and the heroes in his books. A section called "About Louis L'Amour" that is appended to every L'Amour novel proudly claims that he "physically fill[ed] the boots of the rugged characters he wrote about . . ." (L'Amour, *Hondo* 209). The typical L'Amour hero is over 6 feet tall and has a rugged appearance much like L'Amour who was reportedly "[s]ix foot one, two hundred pounds" (Weinberg 17). L'Amour has

often been compared to his novel's heroes. Walker A. Tompkins also notes that L'Amour is "the only Western story writer I know who has the physique and the background to play the hero of one of his own novels" (Weinberg 17). This thesis would suggest that the similarity does not end there – not only do L'Amour's heroes physically resemble him but they also share and express the same opinions as their creator. In short, they often function as mouthpieces of L'Amour through which he expresses his views on various issues. In a novel like *Bendigo Shafter* where the story is told in the first person perspective, it becomes obvious that L'Amour is using Bendigo as a mouthpiece to express his own views – a fact which becomes evident if we compare Bendigo's views with that of the views expressed by L'Amour in his memoir *Education of a Wandering Man* (1989).

A brief mention of the varied and colourful life led by L'Amour is necessary, if only to show the truth of his claim that most of what he wrote about was written from personal experience. Weinberg observes that "[L'Amour's] descriptions of the time and place and people are meticulous and worked out to the last detail" (11). This may sound like a tall claim but there is no denying the fact that L'Amour has more varied personal experiences to draw on than the average writer. For instance, comparing Clarence E. Mulford who originally wrote the Hopalong Cassidy series of novels and L'Amour who was also commissioned to write a number of Cassidy novels under the name of "Tex Burns", Bernard A. Drew observes that "L'Amour and Mulford were more dissimilar than alike. Mulford was an easterner; L'Amour was a Western rover. Mulford was of slight physique; L'Amour was large and robust. Mulford researched the West in books while L'Amour wrote of firsthand experience" (Weinberg 273).

Walter A. Tompkins, highlighting some of what he calls the "high spots" in L'Amour's life, gives us a brief overview of a life that is filled with adventure:

> Louis L'Amour (the name is his own) was born in Jamestown, N.D., but before his sixteenth birthday he had explored the West Indies and Europe, panned gold along the Ague Fria, rode a raft through a canyon in a flash flood, worked in a circus, shocked hay in New Mexico, picked fruit in the Southwest, and became a professional prizefighter. . . .
>
> He's been a tugboat deckhand, a longshoreman, an AB on a round-the-world freighter. Between voyages he mined all over Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and Colorado – boxing on the side. After a look at South America, he tried his hand at lumberjacking and flume-building. A year later he was in China and India, finally wound up sailing a dhow in the Red Sea, and later was a tourist guide in Egypt. Finally back in the States he took up writing. . . . (Weinberg 18)

Regarding his career as a prizefighter, L'Amour seems to have been a fighter of no mean talent and ability. According to Walter A. Tompkins "[h]e fought fifty-nine bouts professionally, winning thirty-four by KOs, and lost only five" (Weinberg 18). L'Amour also served in World War II as "an officer in the Tank Destroyer and Transportation Corps; he was in every major action from D-Day on except the Battle of the Bulge" (Weinberg 18).

With regard to the authenticity of his novels, L'Amour in an article published by Harold Keith, claimed that ". . . my facts, my terrain, my guns, my Indians are real. I've ridden and hunted the country. When I write about a spring, the spring is there

and the water is good to drink" (Weinberg 33). Elsewhere, in an interview with Jon Tuska, L'Amour reiterates his claim with regard to the accuracy of the landscapes mentioned in his narratives: "When I say there is a rock in the road in one of my books, my readers know that if they go to that spot and look they'll find that rock" (Weinberg 103). L'Amour's claim to authenticity, especially with regard to the terrain that he describes in his narratives, has often been acknowledged to be true. In fact, this is an important aspect of his novels – one he constantly reminds his readers about. A section that is appended to every one of L'Amour's novels titled "About Louis L'Amour" tells us that "he literally 'walked the land my characters walk'" (*Bendigo Shafter* 481). The above quoted statement is no idle exaggeration either, for he did literally walk the land his characters walked – he was an avid hiker and had once, out of necessity, "walked sixty-nine miles across a desert in midsummer without a canteen . . ."(Weinberg 19).

That he had first-hand knowledge about the land is beyond doubt as has been proved by Bert Murphy, a retired petroleum engineer who set out to document and verify the locations mentioned by L'Amour in his novels. As to the authenticity of the locales, Murphy has nothing but praise for L'Amour. In an article written by Connie Gotsch and published online in fourcornersfreepress.com, Murphy is reported to have said: "He was very, very accurate with the geography. When he says there's a cave, there's a cave." That Murphy set out to document L'Amour's locations in earnest and with no small amount of scholarly interest is attested to by the two reference books which have subsequently been published by him: *Trailing Louis L'Amour From California to Alaska* (1999) and *Trailing Louis L'Amour in New Mexico* (1996). According to Murphy, it was not just the landscape which was accurate – the author's historical settings were equally accurate.

With regard to his claim as to the accuracy of the guns in his narratives, L'Amour's knowledge of and familiarity with guns is attested to by his claim that Bill Tilghman, the famous lawman who took down the Dalton gang, taught him how to use a six-shooter: "[Tilghman] found that Parker was interested in shooting too so the following weekend he took us out in the north river bottoms and showed us how it was done and taught me how to use a six-shooter. I started from there" (Weinberg 60). This knowledge of guns is carried over into his novels as is demonstrated by the incident in *Hondo* (1953) where Angie Lowe points a gun at Hondo and accidentally pulls the trigger. The gun is, of course, not loaded but Angie is shocked by the realization that she might have killed a man. Hondo gently takes the gun and points out to her: "Shouldn't point a gun at anybody when there's an empty chamber under the firing pin. It can be seen mighty plain. Specially with the light behind it" (38). He then advises her to keep it loaded and out of reach – advice that saves both her life and Johnny's later on in the narrative. Such an incident, with its intricate detailing of how to ascertain whether a gun held by another person is loaded or not, can only have been written by a person with an intimate knowledge of firearms.

Although L'Amour's claims with regard to the authenticity of his terrain and guns have often been borne out, one needs to examine the author's claim with regard to the authenticity of his Indians more closely. In popular discourse there has always been a tendency to view Indians as a generalized entity, as though they were all the same. No effort is made to observe the distinctions between the various tribes. The image of the Indian that has been imprinted on the popular imagination is that of "the generic tribesman of the Plains – the new quintessential image of the Native American in White eyes" (Berkhofer 97). That the feathered, horse-riding Plains Indian came to

be emblematic, in most people's minds, of what all Indians were like, owes much to the influence of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows. Tompkins points out that "[t]hough many Indian tribes wore no feathers and fought on foot, you will never see a featherless, horseless Indian warrior in the movies, because Bill employed only Sioux and other Plains tribes which had horses and traditionally wore feathered headdresses" (199-200). Given these premises, it would not be idle to speculate that the Wild West Show's portrayal of Indians influenced not just the movies but perhaps also influenced L'Amour's presentation of the Apaches in *Hondo*. For L'Amour's Apaches seem more like the Wild West Show's plains Indians than the actual Apaches who inhabited the dry desert terrain of Arizona and New Mexico.

It is not the case that L'Amour grossly misrepresents the Apache. For instance, in *Hondo* we are told that the Apaches preferred mule meat which is in accord with S.C. Gywnne's observation in his *Empire of the Summer Moon*(2010) that they "had an inordinate fondness for cooked horseflesh" (ch. 3). As if to parade his intimate knowledge of this tribe and their ways, Hondo further goes on to elaborate on what Apaches won't eat, noting that "no Apache will eat fish" (L'Amour, *Hondo* 160). When Angie expresses her surprise that this should be so, Hondo goes on to explain this strange refusal to eat fish: "Down at Camp Grant the 'Pache kids used to hang around, beggin' candy or biscuits. When the pony soldiers got tired of havin' them around, they'd open a can of fish and set it out. They'd all leave" (160). According to Hondo, there are two reasons for this strange behaviour. "Partly it was the fish, partly the label on the can." The label on some brands of fish cans which had a red devil on them was apparently what "[s]cares Apaches. They call it ghost meat" (160). Details like these

give the impression that Hondo, and by extension L'Amour, had an intimate knowledge of the Apache and their ways.

However, it is in the finer details that L'Amour's superficial knowledge of the Apache is exposed. The Apaches in *Hondo* are described as attacking on horseback in the climactic battle towards the end. Describing an Apache attack, the narrative gives an account of the scene: "The Indians vanished, then came again, swiftly, some on horseback, but more upon foot" (203). In another one of the Apache attacks "fifty horsemen charged over the hill" (205). These same Apache horsemen seem to be experts at fighting while mounted, as the subsequent description of the battle shows: "Some had gone down, but a dozen leaped their horses into the circle. One big brave lunged his horse at Hondo, his lance poised" (206). Interestingly, the arch-villain and the most conspicuous of the Indians, Silva also rides a horse into the battle. "The big Indian's face was a twisted mask of fury and he leaped his horse at Hondo" (206). In reality, Apaches never attacked on horseback. S.C. Gwynne informs us that "the Apaches were never a great horse tribe: They did not fight on horseback, and never learned the art of breeding or particularly cared to learn it. They used their Spanish mustangs mainly for basic travel and had an inordinate fondness for cooked horseflesh, eating most of the ones they had and saving only the choicest for riding" (ch. 3).

Like most other Indian horse tribes – with the exception of the Comanche and the Kiowa who fought on horseback – the Apaches "would ride to the battle, then dismount and fight" – a vital detail that L'Amour's Apaches seem to have forgotten in the swirling heat of battle! (Gwynne ch. 3). In what is perhaps a veiled reference to the 1953 *Hondo* movie starring John Wayne which also portrays Apaches fighting on

horseback, Gwynne informs us that "[o]nly in the movies did the Apache attack riding horses" (ch. 3). It is worth noting that when providing us with specific verifiable details pertaining to the Apache tribe, the narrative refers to them pointedly as Apaches. However, when it comes to scenes like the one described above, they are referred to as Indians – perhaps a subconscious admission on L'Amour's part that he has reverted to the stereotyped Indian imagery in such cases.

It is not just the portrayal of Apaches riding horses into battle which betrays L'Amour's lack of knowledge about Indians. It is the subtle but unmistakeable shift in narrative style that takes place whenever the narrative shifts to anything having to do with Indians or Indian life that suggests that L'Amour was not quite familiar with the things that he was writing of. For instance, when Hondo is captured by the Apaches and taken to their camp, the narrative scarcely provides the reader with any details worth noting about this camp. The only details provided by the narrative are that Hondo "smelled smoke, and another, older, more familiar smell. An Apache *rancheria*" (L'Amour, *Hondo* 139). The narrative style has accustomed the reader to expect a detailed description of this same *rancheria* for we have often been provided with gratuitous descriptions of the sights that greet Hondo during the course of his travels. Earlier in this chapter there is a detailed description of the sight that greets Hondo when he gets to the top of a crest: "A wide, long valley opened before him, dotted with the tall sentinel fingers of saguaro and the serrated ridge of an upthrust ledge that cut down the opposite wall. It was of dark, sun-blackened rock" (134). Given the detailed description of this relatively unimportant sight the reader might expect to be provided with a detailed description of the Apache *rancheria* that appears at such an important point in the narrative. Yet the detailed description of the *rancheria* that

we expect does not really come. All the reader is told is that the Apache *rancheria* "was familiar, old in his memory, the sights, the smells" (139). What those same "sights" are is presumably left to the imagination of the reader, for the narrative does not elaborate on what they are. We are only told about "the flat, hard faces of the men, the wide cheekbones, the square jaws, the headbands" which is as stereotyped a description as any of the Indian (139). It is not unreasonable to assume that L'Amour does not elaborate on the Apache *rancheria* because he does not possess any first-hand knowledge of any Apache settlements. Had he possessed authentic knowledge about such settlements he would undoubtedly have enlightened the reader – for this is a narrative which delves into such minutiae as the differences between the kind of tracks left by an Indian and a White man: "Wild game will not step on fallen branches. Neither would an Indian. Only a horse, a cow, or a white man would be so foolish. The weight of the horse or cow or man would break the branch into finer pieces and press it into the ground" (L'Amour, *Hondo* 133).

This same paucity of details with regard to the Indian is also apparent in *Bendigo Shafter*. In *Bendigo Shafter*, it seems inconceivable that a mind as curious and that pays as much attention to detail as Bendigo's should suddenly forgo the chance to describe important details when the narrative concerns Indians. In Chapter 1, Bendigo describes in detail the house that he has built for the widow Ruth Macken: "Eighteen inches thick at bottom was each wall, tapering to twelve under the eaves, and the fireplace was built of stones artfully chosen" (14). Yet when it comes to the Indian encampment that they chance upon in the course of their search for the missing children, there is no detailed description of the encampment that the reader would have come to expect from one with such an eye for detail – especially so in this instance,

since they take some time scouting out the encampment and listening outside each lodge until they hear the sound of voices. The interior of the lodge that they step into is, likewise, curiously devoid of details – not even a description of the layout of the inside of the lodge – a detail that would have been an important consideration to a man who anticipates getting into a scrape there and escaping alive. A short quotation should suffice to show the dearth of details in describing the Indian lodge and its surroundings – a fact which becomes ever more apparent when compared with the detailed manner in which other relatively less important things have been described:

> We went down the hill through the deepening snow, smelling smoke on the wind, and sure enough, the lodges were there, three of them, covered with snow except around the smoke hole at the top where the warmth had melted the snow away.
>
> We listened outside each lodge until we heard Mae speak and some arguing among the Indians. Ethan lifted the flap and went in, with me right behind him.
>
> A small fire burned in the centre of the tent, and the air was stifling hot and smoky after the cold outside. Right off I spotted Mae and the youngsters beside her. (L'Amour, *Bendigo Shafter* 24)

This curious elision of details with regard to anything relating to Indians is something which occurs constantly. In Chapter 15, Bendigo and Ethan Sackett locate the village of the wounded Indian whom they have rescued. Bendigo proceeds to describe the Indian lodges: “The lodges squatted on the valley floor a thousand feet below, smoke lifting from them” (L'Amour, *Bendigo Shafter* 170). That is about the

only description of the lodges that is provided by a narrator who is normally so unstinting with details in describing the things that are of interest to him. He further proceeds to mention: "We sat our saddles a moment, studying them out, for in time to come it might be good to know" (170). Despite "studying" the Indian lodges, Bendigo never tells his readers anything concrete about these same lodges which is uncharacteristic of one who likes to regale his readers with such minor details as the appearance of a relatively unimportant abandoned station that he passes along the way: "When I came to where the station should be, there were only a few blackened timbers from a fire a few months old and three ugly-looking holes filled with slightly alkaline water that trickled off into a mud hole" (183).

Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., in his *The White Man's Indian* (1978) points out that as far as the representation of Indians is concerned "only an accurate understanding of cultural diversity and ethnographic detail combined with firsthand experience constitutes a true basis for the realistic depiction of Indian life" (104). It becomes obvious that, when dealing with Indians, L'Amour was no longer writing out of such an understanding or of first-hand experience but was influenced by popular narrative traditions which use traditional stereotyped imagery in their portrayal of Indians. What is conspicuously missing is any mention of the Indian's religious beliefs and traditions which would have been an indication of a true ethnographic understanding of the tribes. Narratives by Native American writers like Leslie Marmon Silko stress the religious aspect of Native American life, which indicates the importance that this aspect of their life has for them. In her *Ceremony* (1977), Silko focuses on the role that native ceremonies can play in order to heal a world that has been torn apart by strife and violence. Vine Deloria, Jr., in his *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969) talks about the

role played by religion in traditional Indian societies and asserts that "[r]eligion formerly held an important place in Indian tribal life" (119). It is manifestly clear that their religious life is, for Indians, as for most people, central to their conception of themselves as a people. Yet, despite L'Amour's claims that his Indians are real, his narratives make no mention of the religious aspect of Indian life which is a clear indicator of the fact that the Indians in L'Amour's narratives as not as real as the writer claims they are – at any event, there are nowhere as authentic as his landscapes. In portraying his Indians, L'Amour was simply writing from a very narrow Euro-American perspective which chooses to blithely ignore anything which it does not understand and does not consider important.

In order to better understand the representation of the Indian vis-à-vis popular narrative traditions, it is essential to examine the manner in which both races viewed the land. Deloria points out that "[l]and has been the basis on which racial relations have been defined ever since the first settlers got off the boat" (178). Any examination of Indian-White relations should make evident the fact that land is, and has always been, the main cause of conflict between the two races, ever since the arrival of the first Spanish conquerors to the New World. The White invaders felt that their possession of a higher "civilization" as well as the "true faith" gave them the prerogative to usurp lands from the natives: "Many writers justified, as Peckham and Hawkins did, the invasion and settlement of native lands as beneficial to the Indians as well as to the Whites, for the Indians received the blessings of Christianity and civilization in exchange for their labor and/or lands" (Berkhofer 117-18). Apparently, it was not just in the interests of the Whites but also to the benefit of the Indians that the exploitation of the latter and their lands should take place!

In addition, theories like *vacuum domicilium* and *occupatio bellica* were used to justify the acquisition – often forced – of native lands. The theory of *vacuum domicilium* gave a nation the right to claim both land title and political jurisdiction over an area, provided "the land was vacant of any human occupancy" (Berkhofer 120). Even here, the White invaders' claims were often contested by the natives since "[w]hat to White eyes appeared empty or underutilized according to European practices was seen as owned and fully utilized according to tribal custom and economy" (Berkhofer 120). *Occupatio bellica* was "a doctrine of conquest applicable to American peoples that established White rights and jurisdiction by extinguishing or augmenting previous Indian title and rights – in White eyes, of course" (Berkhofer 122).

Indian beliefs with regard to the land are best expressed in "a speech purportedly given by the Suquamish/Duwamish leader Seattle in 1855" (P. Deloria 166). Even though, as has been pointed out by Philip J. Deloria in his *Playing Indian* (1998), "'Seattle's wisdom' came from the pen of a white screenwriter from Texas, and his moving words were the single highlight of an obscure television script on pollution produced by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1972" it nevertheless contains the essence of Indian thoughts and beliefs with regard to the land (167). Central to such thought was the belief that land cannot be owned by people. In the words supposedly spoken by Seattle "[e]very part of this earth is sacred to my people . . . we are part of the earth and it is part of us . . . the Earth does not belong to man, Man belongs to the earth" (qtd. in P. Deloria 166).

Similar sentiments with regard to land ownership have been articulated by Native American authors in their writings. For instance, in Silko's *Ceremony*, old man Betonie tells Tayo: "They only fool themselves when they think it is theirs. The deeds and papers don't mean anything. It is the people who belong to the mountain" (Silko 128).

For the white man, land meant something else altogether. It was something to be possessed, for this ownership of land was central to his identity as an American. Patricia Nelson Limerick in her *The Legacy of Conquest* (1987) asserts that the possession of land constitutes "the emotional center of Western history" (55). She further explains that "White Americans saw the acquisition of property as a cultural imperative, manifestly the right way to go about things. There was one appropriate way to treat land – divide it, distribute it, register it" (55). In this regard, Berkhofer points out that:

> [g]iven the perspective of the time, land played an important role in the preservation as well as the fulfilment of what had been achieved in America. To leading Americans of the Revolutionary generation, agriculture was the preferred (as well as the predominant) means of existence for the vast majority of the population, because it provided the best economic foundation for the political and social arrangements considered ideal in the new nation. If a citizen was economically independent, he would be politically autonomous in their opinion. (137)

Agriculture meant, in effect, fencing off the land for the exclusive use of the White owner, a concept that was alien to the Indian. In addition, as Henry Nash Smith

in his *Virgin Land* (1950) points out, "[t]he ownership of land, by making the farmer independent, gives him social status and dignity . . ." (126). Prominent leaders of the time like Jefferson "saw the cultivator of the earth, the husbandman who tilled his own acres, as the rock upon which the American republic must stand" (Smith 128). In like manner, Franklin and Crevecoeur believed that "a simple agricultural society became the most certain guarantee that the United States would for a long age maintain its republican institutions" (128). All of this shows how important land was to the identity of the United States as its leaders saw it.

After the American Revolution the leaders of the new nation found themselves facing a moral dilemma. While the movement westwards was seen as essential to the destiny of America as a nation, those lands were occupied by Indian tribes who were not quite ready to cede their lands to the White invaders. While theories like *vacuum domicilium* and *occupatio bellica* may have been used successfully in the past to justify occupation of native lands, it was not quite in keeping with the image of this new nation founded on the principles of liberty and justice, to employ similar methods which, in the final analysis, amounted to a forcible seizure of Indian lands either through guile or force. As pointed out by historian Francis Prucha, the ". . . policy makers from George Washington and Henry Knox on, were imbued with a vision of the United States as the great republican model for the world, and they were continually conscious of the duties of justice towards a less favored people" (qtd. in Carr 41-2).

If "[t]he new Americans had defined their nation in terms of opposition to injustice, and of belief in inalienable natural rights" as Helen Carr in her *Inventing the*

American Primitive (1996) points out, "[t]he first Congress saw itself quite self-consciously as a defender of natural rights against the wrongs of tyranny. This was the principle on which its own claim to legitimacy rested. The revolutionaries had justified their fight for independence on the grounds that the natural rights of the American settlers had been infringed by the British government" (Carr 23). It was not morally justifiable for the new nation to infringe on the rights of its natives, having just successfully fought for its own independence on the grounds that its rights had been infringed upon. Yet, westward expansion was inextricably tied up with what the new nation saw as its destiny. For instance, George Henry Evans' "safety-valve theory" suggested that the availability of free lands in the West would operate as a safety-valve that would prevent the exploitation of factory workers in the east while also prevent overcrowding in the cities of the east. Were either of these two undesirable eventualities to come to pass, the afflicted labourers and citizens could always move West and start life anew in those virgin lands. In a speech given by Frederick Jackson Turner in 1896, which was reported in the *Portage Weekly Democrat*, he maintained that:

> Americans had a safety valve for social danger, a bank account on which they might continually draw to meet losses. This was the vast unoccupied domain that stretched from the borders of the settled area to the Pacific Ocean. . . . No grave social problem could exist while the wilderness at the edge of civilizations opened wide its portals to all who were oppressed, to all who with strong arms and stout heats desired to hew out a home and a career for themselves. Here was an opportunity for social development continually to begin over again, wherever society gave signs of breaking into classes. Here

> was a magic fountain of youth in which America continually bathed and was rejuvenated. (qtd. in Smith 254)

Thus, alternative theories had to be formulated to justify the continuation of the old policy of the possession of the Indian's lands – for though the means were questioned, there was never any doubt in the minds of the White men as to the desirability, if not inevitability, of White takeover of Indian lands. To this end, theories questioning the Indian's claim to lands were used since they allowed the United States to carry out its campaign of expansion without besmirching its honour – in short, such theories would allow the United States to pursue a policy of what Berkhofer refers to as "expansion with honour" (145). It was felt that "the right to property is dependent on the labour expended on it, and as it was asserted that the Indians did not cultivate their land," they did not really have any real claim to ownership of the land (Carr 26).

The idea that the Indian has no real claim to the lands of which he was the first inhabitant had been articulated as early as 1625 by Samuel Purchas in his *Hakluytus Posthums or Purchas His Pilgrimes*. Purchas, in describing the natives of the New World, referred incidentally to "that unmanned wild Countrey, which they range rather than inhabite" (231). Similarly, Peter Heylyn in *Microcosmus* (1636) confidently declared that:

> The lands lie in common to all Natives and all Comers, though some few parcels are sown, yet the Tiller claims no right in them when he has reaped his crop once. . . . Sometimes whole Nations change their Seats, and go at once to very distant places, Hunting as they go for a Subsistence, and they that have come after the first discoverers have found these places desolate which the

> other found full of inhabitants. This will show that we have done them no Injury by settling amongst them; we rather than they being the prime occupants, and they only Sojourners in the land: . . . (qtd. in Berkhofer 131)

Such a theory which absolved the American of any wrongdoing in the taking of the Indian's lands, took on an increased urgency in the newly constituted United States, with its pressure for westward expansion, especially as it was tacitly felt that such expansion would have to be accomplished with honour to the United States. Thus, John Quincy Adams, rearticulating the same theory, posed the question in 1802: "What is the right of a huntsman to the forest of a thousand miles over which he has accidentally ranged in search of prey? . . . Shall the fields and vallies, which a beneficent God has formed to teem with the life of innumerable multitudes, be condemned to everlasting barrenness?" (qtd. in Carr, 26).

Declarations like Adams' amount to a denial that a lot of Indian tribes engaged in extensive agricultural practices. What Carr refers to as "this strange blindness to Indian farming" is closely related to the subordinate status accorded to women during those times (49). White women, leave alone Indian women, were relegated to the background in this patriarchal society. Such being the case, the White Americans "ignore[d] the (to them) unimportant social contribution of [Indian] women" (49). As Carr points out, during those times "[s]ociety was expressed as the sum of its male inhabitants" and since agriculture was the exclusive preserve of Indian women in most Indian tribes while Indian men engaged in hunting, there developed the tendency to see the Indian exclusively as hunter while ignoring the agricultural aspect of his existence. This "increasing disregard of the presence of Indian farming in the

nineteenth century was clearly part of the racist rhetoric which justified dispossession" (Carr 50).

That the Indians did extensively engage in agricultural practices can be seen in the reports of Major-General Anthony Wayne who led an expedition against the Indians in the Northwest Territory in 1794. Wayne was able to overcome his Indian adversaries by using the tactic of crop burning. His reports make reference to "[t]he very extensive and highly cultivated fields and gardens [which] show the work of many hands. . . . nor have I ever before beheld such immense fields of corn, in any parts of America, from Canada to Florida" (qtd in Carr 48). It is also to be noted that as late as 1864, Brigadier General James H. Carleton, with the help of the famed frontier scout Colonel Christopher "Kit" Carson, was able to force the surrender of the Navajos only by destroying their crops. The notion that the Indians were all nomadic tribes is entirely false.

Like John Quincy Adams who felt that the Indian had no real claim to lands over which he "accidentally ranged in search of prey", L'Amour too asserted that:

> The Indians didn't own the lands they occupied. Many of the tribes, in fact, had only recently occupied certain regions before the white man arrived. The Indians took the land from others, the cliff dwellers, for example. And the white man took the land from the Indians. It wasn't the Indians' to claim or to sell. It went to the strongest. The white men were stronger. There's nothing more stupid, in my opinion, than to talk about paying the Indians for the land. It was never theirs to sell." (qtd. in Weinberg 102)

L'Amour's denial of Indian title to their lands, despite its shockingly arrogant assumptions, were not peculiar to him but shared even by "historical" works like Thomas A. Bailey's *The American Pageant* (1956). As pointed out by Jack D. Forbes in "The Historian and the Indian: Racial Bias in American History" (1963), one of Bailey's maps showing the occupancy of land in North America in 1700 "shows no areas held by Indian tribes: those areas not 'held' by Europeans are labelled simply 'unexplored.' Aside from being inaccurate, the map is entirely oriented towards the European point of view and actually denies that any lands were possessed by Indians or that native Americans even occupied any portion of America" (356). Like Bailey's map, L'Amour's opinion is this regard is emblematic of the "one-sided approach to American history" (Forbes 356).

L'Amour's viewpoints regarding the land and the Indians' claims to it find expression in *Bendigo Shafter*. In Chapter 25, Bendigo helpfully gives his readers a brief generalized overview about Indian migratory patterns:

> The Chinooks were pushing in from the west, encroaching on their land. Other Indians were moving in also, and the Umatillas, never a large tribe, suddenly found their hunting lands growing less.
>
> It was a story I had heard many times, and was to hear many times again, the story of one tribe pushing another, moving in, warring against them in long sporadic wars, and then taking over their hunting lands. Each time they were pushed they themselves pushed against other tribes, or moved to distant, less occupied areas. (*Bendigo Shafter* 233-34)

Explanations like these serve to imply that the intrusion of the White man on Indian lands is just another part of a natural process of a Darwinian survival of the fittest while at the same time absolving the White man of any wrongdoing in his takeover of Indian lands. Ideas such as these were not new – in fact, they can be traced back to the early Spanish colonizers. Juan Gines de Sepulveda in 1550 articulated similar beliefs in trying to justify Spain's policies with regard to the natives: "And don't think that before the arrival of the Christians they were living in quiet and the Saturnian peace of the poets. On the contrary they were making war continuously and ferociously against each other . . ." (qtd. in Berkhofer 12).

Thus, in both *Hondo* and *Bendigo Shafter* the rights of the Whites to the lands which they are effectively intruding on, is never questioned but is simply taken for granted. In *Hondo*, Angie's ranch is situated right in the heart of Apache country. But neither the narrator nor Hondo nor Angie herself ever wonder about their right to settle on those lands. In Chapter 6, Vittoro claims that the spring which is located on Angie's ranch is "an Apache spring" (L'Amour, *Hondo* 76). Angie's answer reflects the influence of the theory of *vacuum domicilium* in her thinking: "'The Apaches live in the mountains. They do not need this spring. I have a son. I do need it" (77). Just because the Apaches do not actually occupy that part of the land, she like other settlers assumes, in accordance with the theory of *vacuum domicilium*, that she has the right to settle in it. Then as though to demonstrate the rightness of her claim over that area and its spring she tells Vittoro that "if the people of Vittoro come in peace, they may drink. When have I denied them?" (77). By claiming as her right the power to deny the use of the spring and its water and setting conditions for the Apaches' use of this same spring, Angie like many another Western settler has, theoretically at least,

claimed legitimate title to the land which is apparently "vacant of any human occupancy".

The same confidence in claiming ownership of lands which are apparently uninhabited is seen in *Bendigo Shafter*. The settlers know that they are in Indian territory – Bendigo observes that "[a]ll about us was Indian country and we were few" (4). The manner in which they construct their houses suggests that they are aware that the Indians may not be very amenable to their settling in the area. Yet, the settlers never question their right to establish their settlement exactly where they want to. The novel begins with Bendigo's assertion that "[w]here the wagons stopped we built our homes, making the cabins tight against the winter's coming. Here in this place we would build our town, here we would create something new" (3). The only precondition for settlement, in their eyes, is that the land be empty of (White) human habitation. As Bendigo points out: "No settlement lay nearer than Fort Bridger, more than a hundred miles to the southwest" (4). By "settlement," Bendigo is here referring to White settlements. The Indian settlements which are close by, and whose presence they are ever aware of, do not seem to count as settlements – at least to Bendigo and the settlers. Once they have laid the foundations of their settlement, that which was once a "savage wilderness" becomes "our town" and their rightful claim to it is legitimized – at least in their eyes. Being told from the perspective of the Whites, both narratives invite the reader to unquestioningly acquiesce in this fiction of the invisible Indian.

Forbes points out that this tendency to ignore the Indian presence – what he refers to as the "tendency towards Europeanism" – is characteristic of American

"history" (350). Forbes points out that for most American historians, the history of America begins with "the European conquest" (349). Such historians "when writing of the period from 1513 to 1890 almost completely ignore the native American" choosing instead to "concentrate upon the history of the European settlements" (349, 350). Such versions of history, which ignore the story of the Native American are necessarily incomplete (Forbes 351).

Given the tendency of American "histories" to simply dismiss the Indian presence on the continent, it was understandable that L'Amour could claim, with a clear conscience, that his narratives were historically accurate. Describing the kind of narrative which results when "historians ignore the native," Forbes observes that "[t]he westward-moving settlers move into a vacuum vaguely peopled by 'savages.' The Indians are mere shadows and the stage is dominated by rugged frontiersmen who grapple with ephemeral and undescribed foes" (361). *Bendigo Shafter* is a perfect example of such a narrative which ignores the native.

That these less-than-honourable methods of land acquisition were morally questionable was not lost on most Americans. But soothing the American conscience with regard to the rightness of their actions where Indian civilization was concerned, was also the popular image of the Indian as a dying race which was doomed to give way before the onward march of White civilization. Explaining the origins of this idea of the vanishing Indian, Berkhofer points out that "[d]eath through disease and warfare decimated the aboriginal population in the face of White advance and gave rise by the time of the American Revolution to the idea of the vanishing race" (29). Henry Knox,

first Secretary of War of the fledgling United States expressed his belief in this idea in the papers he presented to the Congress, wherein he postulated that:

> As the settlements of the white shall approach near to the Indian boundaries established by treaties, the game will be diminished, and the lands being valuable to the Indians only as hunting grounds, they will be willing to sell further tracts for small considerations. By the expiration, therefore, of the above period, it is most probable that the Indians will, by the invariable operation of the causes which have hitherto existed in their intercourse with the whites, be reduced to a very small number. (qtd. in Carr 43)

The idea of the Indian as a dying race was ripe for romantic appropriation and with the arrival of Romanticism to the United States:

> "[t]he tragedy of the dying Indian, especially as portrayed by the last living member of a tribe, became a staple of American literature, beginning with Philip Freneau's poems in the 1780s. It made its mark on world literature through James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), and inspired George Catlin to do his famed portraits of noble Indians on the plains and prairies before it was too late to capture on canvas a dying race." (Berkhofer 88)

L'Amour too, seems to have subscribed to this idea of the Indian inevitably giving way before the advent of civilization, as is revealed in an interview with Jon Tuska in *A Variable Harvest* in 1990. "It was inevitable that the Indian way of life should cease. And look at what replaced it! Where there was wilderness, there are now hospitals and schools" (qtd. in Weinberg 102). For L'Amour, the decimation of the

buffalo was a necessity: "They had outlived their usefulness. It was necessary that they be killed. Now there are farms throughout that whole area, farms that grow to feed one-third of the world. It's a matter of progress" (qtd. in Weinberg 102).

As this examination of L'Amour's ideas with regard to the Indians indicates, he subscribed to the idea of progress as dictated by the White man. This thesis shall attempt to gauge the extent to which such ideas inform his narratives. In *Hondo*, L'Amour's belief in this idea finds expression within the course of the narrative. After being captured by the Apaches, Hondo is left alone to ruminate on many things. Thinking about the Apaches and their cause, Hondo thinks:

> And these people – how could he blame them? They were the People. That was what their name meant. They had believed that they were meant to be the People. Yet when the first Americans came they had greeted them with friendship, and had been met with war. Then fiercely they had fought back. Not one but knew he fought in vain. They saw the white men endlessly coming, their many soldiers, their many ponies, their food supply that was endless, and their many cartridges of brass. (143)

Here Hondo, and by extension, L'Amour, acknowledges the bravery of the Apache and even acknowledges the rightness of the Apache's cause. But neither bravery nor rightness of cause can halt the inexorable onward march of the White man's civilization and the eventual effacement of the Apache and his way of life. This dominating theory of progress and the inevitable westward march of civilization is so inexorable in its operation that it is supposedly evident even to the Apaches: "The Apache knew his hour was past. He knew the white men would take even his last land,

but it was not in him to knuckle under. He would fight, sing his death song, and die" (*Hondo* 143). There is here a moment of nostalgia and pity for the Apache who is the victim of forces beyond his control, but like Hondo, the Apache "was only a small part of the much vaster picture, and it mattered not at all to that picture that he was not through living, that he had left things undone . . ." (*Hondo* 143-44).

That this myth of the dying Indian refuses to die out, despite the fact that Indians are still among us, is a testament to the endurance of the myth. In the case of L'Amour, it proved powerful enough to blind him to the facts that must have been staring him in the face, even at the time he was writing his novels: Indian society and culture had not died out nor were they dying out. This idea of the dying Indian rested on the assumption that Indian societies were static and unable to adapt to changes. As Limerick has demonstrated, such assumptions are totally unfounded. If anything, "[a]daptation and borrowing were far more central to Indian tradition than was any imposed notion of purity" (Limerick 189). As an example of the adaptability of Indian society, Limerick quotes the salutation used by the Chinook Indians to greet White men: "Clak-hoh-ah-yah". This phrase, according to the Canadian artist Paul Kane who stayed with the Chinook Indians, was derived from the Indians' "having heard in the early days of the fur trade, a gentleman named Clark frequently addressed by his friends, 'Clark, how are you?'" (qtd. in Limerick 188). Despite the fact that their language was very unlike the English language, the Chinooks had "met the Europeans halfway" in their attempt to adapt to the foreign culture (Limerick 188).

Limerick also points out that the horse, which the Indian ultimately mastered, was not native to North America but had been introduced there by Europeans. With

regard to the meeting of these two cultures, it was the Europeans who refused to assimilate and reciprocate to the Indians' efforts to meet them halfway, simply imposing their culture on the natives by dint of force. The notion of the so-called "static" Indian society is just another fiction dreamed up by the dominant White society in order to justify its forceful imposition of its own cultural mores on the natives.

It is also possible to see the influence of the romanticized dying Indian imagery in L'Amour's portrayal of Uruwishi and his grandson, Short Bull, in *Bendigo Shafter*. Bendigo tells his readers that "[t]he Umatilla were a small tribe, but its warriors had been brave, great trackers and hunters . . . but Short Bull still had much to learn" (198). The use of the past tense "had" in describing the bravery of the Umatilla suggests that their best years are in the past and that they are a dying breed or – at any event – a people on the decline. The narrator also tells us that though prepared for his death – "[h]e had sung his song to the Great Spirit" – old Uruwishi still "lingered on . . . to see Short Bull, his grandson, grow strong" (198). Uruwishi's desire to extend his life in order to see his grandson "grow strong" suggests that he is the last living relative of his grandson. This, coupled with the fact that we do not see or hear mention of any other members of the Umatilla tribe in an area which is supposedly inhabited by them, cements the notion that old Uruwishi and Short Bull are the last remnants of their tribe.

In his portrayal of Uruwishi and Short Bull, L'Amour may have also been influenced by the figure of Tonto. This figure of the White man's Indian, or "the white Indian", as Vine Deloria, Jr., puts it, "was born one day in the pulp magazines", in April 1937 to be exact (200). Tonto is the faithful and dependable side-kick "whose

duty was to do the bidding of the all-wise white hero" who in this case is that famous Western hero, the Lone Ranger (200). Deloria views the figure of Tonto as highly damaging to a reconstruction and portrayal of true Indian identity – preventing as it does a true representation of the Indian by "pushing the historical and the contemporary Indians into obscurity" (200). Tonto is a perfect emblem of the Indian as the White man imagines and needs him to be. Moreover, the figure of Tonto with his friendship towards the Lone Ranger "overlooked the centuries of bloodshed between white and red, effectively neutralizing historical betrayals of the Indian by the government" (200). Through Tonto, Whites could reassure themselves that the history of Indian-White relations were and had been largely amicable. Some of the notable characteristics of Tonto, as identified by Deloria are that he is "inarticulate to a fault", "never rebelled, never questioned the Lone Ranger's judgment, never longed to go back to the tribe for the annual Sun Dance. Tonto was a cultureless Indian for Indians and an uncultured Indian for whites" (201).

In *Bendigo Shafter* we have a Tonto-like figure in old Uruwishi, and to an extent in his grandson, Short Bull. It is perhaps significant that the only two Indians who figure prominently in the narrative – with the exception of the belligerent Shoshone Indian – are drawn in the Tonto image. This is not to suggest that L'Amour consciously modelled his good Indians in accordance with the Tonto figure but rather shows the pervasiveness of the Tonto imagery. It is worth noting that like the reticent Tonto, neither Short Bull nor Uruwishi are very talkative. At any event, they are rarely allowed a direct voice in the narrative. Most of what they do say is conveyed indirectly to us by Bendigo. Their reticence does not mean that they are incapable of action, for they too, like Tonto, are men of action, though they never seem to act for their own

benefit but always in defence of Bendigo or in accordance with his instructions. They do not seem to be anchored to any homeland of their own but seem perfectly content to follow Bendigo wherever he leads them. Despite the fact that they follow Bendigo unquestioningly, and in every respect conform to the White man's expectation of the ideal Indian, their imminent arrival at Bendigo's town, raises doubts in his own mind as to whether they will be universally accepted by the citizens. Bendigo fears that people like the irascible Webb may still regard them as uncultured Indians and object to their presence in the town. But then he reasons to himself, their utility to the town and their subservience will ultimately reconcile people like Webb to their presence.

Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) declared that the Oriental functioned as a negative and inferior Other against which the European defined himself. The Orient has always been for Europe, "its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" and as a result, "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said 1-2, 3). In like manner, the Indian also plays an important role in the White man's definition of himself, for the White American often defined himself in contrast to the Indian. Berkhofer points out that:

> many commentators on the history of White Indian imagery see Europeans and Americans as using counterimages of themselves to describe Indians and the counterimages of Indians to describe themselves. Such a negative reference group could be used to define White identity or to prove White superiority over the worst fears of their own depravity. (27)

We can see how this process of self-definition against an alien Other works in Chapter 15 of *Bendigo Shafter* where the first person narrator, Bendigo, confidently makes a number of observations about Indians – observations which distinctly define the Indian as different from the White man. In this chapter Bendigo and his sister Lorna discover a wounded Shoshone Indian who is pursued by White men whose friends and acquaintances he has killed. Bendigo immediately recognizes the Indian as the same one who, on an earlier occasion, had kidnapped the children of their settlement. When Lorna appears hesitant about leaving Bendigo alone with the Indian for fear that her brother might kill the Indian in cold blood, Bendigo assures her that he will not shoot a man when he is down as this is not the White man's way – the Indian, he claims, will not have any such moral scruples: "'I'd never shoot a man when he was down,' I said, 'but he'd do it to me. Indians don't feel the same way about things as we do" (152). Here, the attempt to establish Manichean divisions between the Indian and the White can be clearly discerned. Interestingly enough, Bendigo's words reveal another persistent practice found in the representation of the Indian which has been pointed out by Berkhofer: the tendency of "generalizing from one tribe's society and culture to all Indians" (25). In this instance, we can discern an attempt to pass off a negative characteristic which one bad Indian supposedly possesses as a generalized trait which, not just the Shoshone tribe, but all Indians possess.

A little later, when confronting the posse of men who want to hang this same Indian, Bendigo tells the angry men that "taking scalps is the Indian's way of life and you are strangers in the country" (159). While again drawing the distinction between White ways and Indian ways, this statement by Bendigo glibly tries to pass off the barbarous practice of the taking of scalps as a distinctly Indian way of life, while

implicitly suggesting that such a practice is not the White way. The men, being strangers to the country, are not aware that scalping is the Indian way of life: the implication is that they, and by extension all White men, are not aware of the practice of scalping. That Bendigo - unlike McMurtry's Call in *Comanche Moon* (1997) – does not explicitly state that the taking of scalps is not the White way is significant: to do so would be to go against the spirit of authenticity which L'Amour strives for in his works. For it is a well-documented fact that Whites were as guilty of the practice as Indians were – indeed they may have encouraged the perpetuation of the practice by offering bounties for enemy Indian scalps. A noteworthy example is the proclamation "[g]iven at the Council Chamber in Boston this third day of November 1755" by J. Willard (V. Deloria 6). This proclamation went on to offer the following bounties for the scalps of the Penobscot Indians:

> For every scalp of a male Indian brought in as evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, forty pounds.
>
> For every scalp of such female Indian or male Indian under the age of twelve years that shall be killed and brought in as evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, twenty pounds. (V. Deloria 6)

As Vine Deloria, Jr., observes, "an Indian scalp became more valuable than beaver, otter, marten, and other animal pelts" (7).

That part of the novel in which Hondo does some introspection and contemplates on the chances of his sharing a life with Angie Lowe is important because it highlights some important White attitudes with regard to Indians – Indian women in particular. It is also indicative of the general White attitude which has always regarded

Indians as second-class citizens. After having a brief discussion with the scout, Buffalo, about the fate of C Company, Hondo is left alone with his thoughts and they tend towards the woman, Angie, and her son whom he has recently left behind:

> He was no man to be thinking about a woman. He had never lived with a woman . . . wouldn't know how to. He wouldn't know how to handle a kid, either. And women . . . It was one thing with a squaw. After a while you knew them. But a girl like Angie, now, that would be different. He was a fool to even think about it. What did he have to offer a woman? (L'Amour, *Hondo* 87)

When the narrator proclaims that "[Hondo] had never lived with a woman . . . wouldn't know how to" he has perhaps overlooked the fact that Hondo has, by his own admission, lived with a woman. Or maybe it is the fact that that woman was an *Indian* woman which makes her suddenly invisible when a White woman enters the picture. In Chapter 3, Hondo has waxed almost poetic when describing to Angie Lowe what the Indian woman, Destarte's, name means:

> You can't say it except in Mescalero. It means Morning, but that isn't what it means, either. Indian words are more than just that, they also mean the feel and the sound of the name. It means like Crack of Dawn, the first bronze light that makes the buttes stand out against the grey desert. It means the first sound you hear of a brook curling over some rocks – some trout jumping and a beaver crooning. It means the sound a stallion makes when he whistles at some mares just as the first puff of wind kicks up at daybreak. (43)

Yet when it comes to thinking about the potential relationship that he might have with a White woman, the Indian woman Destarte seems to have lost her identity as a human

being. In attempting to explain to Angie what Destarte's name means, Hondo has painted a very romantic picture of the life he once lived with her: "It means like you get up in the first light and you and her go out of the wickiup, where it smells smoky and private and just you and her, and kind of safe with just the two of you there, and you stand outside and smell the first bite of the wind coming down from the high divide and promising the first snowfall" (43).

Despite this description of the intimacy he once claimed to have shared with his Indian woman, the phrase telling the reader that Hondo ". . . had never lived with a woman" denies humanity to the Indian woman whom he has, by his own admission, lived with. It is true that this particular phrase is one not directly uttered by Hondo but by his narrator; but Hondo seems to share the same beliefs and prejudices as the narrator of his tale when it comes to Indian women. For instance, when Angie initially asks of Hondo if he had an Indian wife, Hondo refuses to acknowledge her as a wife but points out after some hesitation that she is a squaw. Then as if wishing to avoid the implications of his refusal to accord the Indian woman the title of "wife" he immediately changes the topic: "Wife . . . squaw. Took the liberty of borrowing a few feet of rope off that roll in the lean-to. Mine was 'most worn out. I'll be glad to pay you for it if you'll let me" (L'Amour, *Hondo* 42). Or perhaps this abrupt change of topic is indicative of the lack of importance the Indian woman holds for Hondo. For when Angie asks him whether he loved her, he replies after some hesitation: "I don't know. I needed her" (44). The Indian woman is not someone who is worthy of love, Hondo's reply seems to suggest – she is simply there to fulfil a basic need. Chapter III has examined how (White) women have been marginalized in the Western. Yet even

here they are, though relatively unimportant, still accorded status as human beings. *Hondo's* narrative seems to have denied even this to the Indian woman.

Vine Deloria, Jr., bemoans the fact that most non-Indians, particularly White Americans, automatically assume that they know all that there is to know about Indians:

> There appears to be some secret osmosis about Indian people by which they can magically and instantaneously communicate complete knowledge about themselves to these interested whites. Rarely is physical contact required. Anyone and everyone who knows an Indian or who is *interested*, immediately and thoroughly understands them. (5)

Echoing similar sentiments, Alan Slickpoo, director of the Nez Perce tribe's History and Culture Project, bemoaned the development of:

> a situation in which "anyone who got on the 'bandwagon' of American Indian history became an 'expert' on the life of the Indian, all except the Indian himself." Ignoring Indian expertise and tribal interests, "too many books have been written without the expressed consent and endorsement of the Indian tribes concerned." (Limerick 219)

Deloria further claims that "[e]asy knowledge about Indians is a historical tradition" and it is a historical tradition that L'Amour, or in any case, his omniscient narrator in *Hondo*, seems to subscribe to (5). Hondo, as he reveals to Angie Lowe in Chapter 3, had once been married to, or rather lived with, a squaw named Destarte. But thinking of Angie Lowe, Hondo feels that he is not equal to the task of living with

her. “He was no man to be thinking about a woman. He had never lived with a woman . . . wouldn’t know how to” (L'Amour, *Hondo* 87). Then as if suddenly remembering that Hondo had supposedly once had an Indian “wife”, the narrator continues: “It was one thing with a squaw. After a while you knew them” (87). The narrator assumes, just like most Whites do, that Indians are easy to “figure out.” But when it comes to the White woman, Angie Lowe, things are a little different: “But a girl like Angie, now, that would be different. He was a fool to even think about it. What did he have to offer a woman?” (87). The narrative tries to normalize the notion that White women have more complexity to them than Indian women who anyway belong to a race that White people have always found easy to figure out. Perhaps it is the Indian woman’s inability to speak that relegates her to the status of an artefact available for study.

The representation of Destarte is indicative of the dynamics of power in Indian-White relations. Said in *Orientalism* points out that Flaubert was able to represent the Egyptian courtesan Kuchuk Hanem because of the “historical facts of domination” that worked in his favour (6). This Egyptian courtesan “never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history” while he was “foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her . . . ” (Said 6). Like Flaubert, Hondo is able to represent Destarte because similar “historical facts of domination” work in his favour. While she is never allowed a voice in the narrative and hence cannot represent her own “emotions, presence, or history” Hondo is a White male who expertly wields a gun and is a good rider to boot – qualities that function as “historical facts of domination” in the wild, unsettled frontier of the period that is being written about.

The mention of the relationship between Hondo and the Indian woman Destarte, however fleeting, brings up an interesting fact about the representation, in Westerns, of the romantic entanglements between Indians and Whites. Hondo's time with Destarte, however brief, and however long ago it was, places him within that category of White men known as "squaw men" who had taken Indian women as wives. C.L. Sonnichsen in his *From Hopalong to Hud* (1978) has pointed out that "[s]quaw men – whites who married Indian women – were a reality of the frontier and had a place, of sorts, in fiction" (68). White men marrying Indian women may have had a place in fiction but Indian men marrying or having aspirations towards marrying White women were invariably killed off by the writers during the course of the narrative. As Sonnichsen so aptly puts it, "[t]o aspire was to expire" (68). He also observes that "[a] white woman and a red man may come together, but they can't live happily ever after" (69). The taboos around miscegenation ensured that, at least in fiction, "an Indian man who conceived an attachment for a white woman never lived to do anything about it" (6). If an Indian man did manage to successfully woo the White maiden, the narrative invariably reveals that such an Indian man did have White origins, as can be seen in Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Apache Devil* (1933).

The name of Custer has often been invoked by Whites as an example of Indian savagery. General George Armstrong Custer, along with the entire Seventh Cavalry commanded by him, met his end at the hands of the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho in 1876, in what has come to be known as the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Although history acknowledges that the massacre of Custer and his men was entirely his fault, the fact that none were spared as well as the reports of mutilated corpses infuriated the Whites who made a martyr out of Custer and have ever since used that name as a

synonym of Indian savagery and barbarism. Indians, for their part, have always resisted the White narrative concerning Custer, with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) going so far as to refer to him as "the 'Adolph Eichmann' of the nineteenth century" (V. Deloria 24). For instance, when ABC television started airing a series on Custer in 1967, most Indian groups moved to get it banned and "[s]everal tribes filed against the local affiliates of ABC and did receive some air time to present the Indian side of the Custer story during the brief run of the show" (24). Incidentally, only nine episodes were aired before the series was cancelled. Vine Deloria, Jr., also points out that "it has been a favorite technique to boost the numbers on the Indian side and reduce the numbers on the white side so that Custer stands out as a man fighting against insurmountable odds" (149-50).

Without explicitly mentioning the name of Custer, L'Amour in *Hondo* has invoked the Custer imagery and all that it entails by depicting a group of soldiers who find themselves in similar circumstances. The similarities between the situation of Lieutenant Creyton C. Davis and the men in his Company C, and General George Armstrong Custer and his Seventh Cavalry are unmistakeable. They are both companies of soldiers going out to attack hostile Indians who are on the warpath. They both finally encounter the Indians whom they are pursuing and find themselves heavily outnumbered. The manner in which Davis chooses to lay out an ambush for the Apaches closely resembles Custer's preferred method of carrying out an attack. The strategy employed by Custer in the Battle of the Little Big Horn was the same one he had used to such devastating effect in the Battle of the Washita River (1868), also known as the Washita Massacre because of the wholescale slaughter of a Cheyenne village, most of whom were non-combatants: "[Custer] divided his force, then

advanced over unknown terrain against an enemy of unknown strength, and executed a 'double envelopment,' a maneuver that required overwhelming superiority in numbers" (Gwynne ch. 16). In like manner, Lieutenant Davis divides his small force of forty seven men. He orders his Corporal to "take Silvers and Shoemaker and get behind that hill opposite. When the enemy are well into the meadow, fire on them." He explains this decision to the Corporal: "When you fire, I think they'll run to this hill for shelter" (L'Amour, *Hondo* 59). But Davis has not accounted for the entire strength of his enemy. Pete Britton, the scout, reveals after the initial melee that there are more than a hundred Mimbrenos approaching from the rear. This effectively means that they have been surrounded with no hope of escape. Similar to the bodies of the men of the Seventh Cavalry, those of Company C have been mutilated, though in the latter case, the bodies of some men have been left unmutilated as "signs of respect paid by the Apaches to a fighting man" (66).

There are also remarkable similarities between the persons of Lieutenant Creyton C. Davis and General George Armstrong Custer. The latter graduated from West Point in time to take part in and distinguish himself in the Civil War. After the Civil War he was employed in campaigns against Indians – one such campaign being the Battle of the Washita River which led to the destruction of chief Black Kettle's encampment. Davis' life seems to have followed a similar trajectory:

> At thirty-two, Creyton Davis was a case-hardened veteran. Graduated from the Point in time to serve the last year of the War between the States, he had transferred west following the war in time to ride with Carpenter to the

> relief of Forsyth at Beacher's Island. Later he was at the destruction of Tall Bull's villages in '69. (*Hondo* 46)

Whether L'Amour expressly intended to evoke the Custer episode in his depiction of the Davis episode is not clear. Nowhere is there an explicit reference to Custer or to the Seventh Cavalry commanded by him. Whatever L'Amour's intention may have been, the close similarities between the fate of Custer's command and Davis' command are unmistakeable – the trope of a small group of hopelessly outnumbered White soldiers who are surrounded and mercilessly killed by a much larger force of Indians is evoked in both cases and underscores the savagery of the Indian. Thus, despite the acknowledgement of the Apaches' respect for bravery, it is impossible to interpret the Davis episode but as a negative portrayal of the Indian.

Vine Deloria, Jr., also points out that a problem which faces the Indian is the fact that he is believed to be a warrior, and hence, incapable of change. The Indian is trapped within this "warrior image" and this is in turn used to explain away any ills which afflict the Indian. For instance, in "attempting to explain the apparent lack of progress of the Oglala Sioux" (V. Deloria 90), the explanation was advanced that they were "warriors without weapons" – thus the problems of the Oglala Sioux were put down to "the failure of a warrior people to become domesticated" (91).

We can see this same "warrior image" being used in *Bendigo Shafter* to explain the inability of the Shoshone Indian to appreciate the kindness that is being done to him by Bendigo and his community. Not only have they rescued him from the cold but they have tended to his wounds, fed him, given him Christmas presents, and protected him from vengeful Whites who wanted to kill him for the murders he has committed.

Yet this same Indian does not show the slightest sign of gratitude nor does he appear to comprehend the favour that is being done to him. Bendigo observes of this Indian: "He was our enemy, and the small gifts we had given him he would accept without gratitude" (165). Before leaving the Indian Bendigo makes "the sign for friend to him but he just glared at me, then spat" (170). The Indian then opens his mouth to utter the words which place him solidly within the tradition of the bad Indian: "I kill! I kill all!" In the final analysis this is not strange or completely unexpected for according to the savage warrior image that is used here, the Indian knows only about fighting and little else.

Bendigo also confidently makes observations which locate the Indian firmly within the savage warrior image. Says Bendigo: "I've no argument against the Indian. He was a mighty savage man and he fought the way he knew how. Only toward the end was he fighting for country; mostly he fought just to be fighting" (L'Amour, *Bendigo Shafter* 153). While this observation made by one fighting man about another is more a mark of respect than an expression of prejudice, it solidly places the Indian within the "warrior image" identified by Deloria. The same point is made again when Bendigo, referring to the Indians, mentions that "there was much warring back and forth with nothing more in mind than the taking of scalps, counting coup, or stealing horses" (234).

It has been demonstrated that L'Amour draws on both negative as well as positive stereotypes in his portrayal of the Indian. While the use of popular narrative traditions in his representation of the Indians might suggest a lack of first-hand knowledge about Indians, there is also the possibility that L'Amour deliberately

employed those same traditions and relegated the Indian to the background out of a refusal to risk the possibility of alienating his readership. In this connection, Berkhofer has pointed out that:

> If the Indian was to be taken seriously, his motives and his culture would have to be presented as alternative values and lifestyles to White civilization, thereby introducing ambiguity into the genre. At the least, such introduction of Indian culture would imply the questioning of White values if not the criticism of White actions in history, and the popular artist would risk the possibility of alienating his audience. (98)

Being a popular writer, L'Amour undoubtedly realized the importance of giving the readers what they wanted. Analysing the reason for L'Amour's popularity, Weinberg discounts the reason given by most critics who "latched onto the fact that L'Amour's novels were historically accurate, that the books were technically correct in every aspect of the Old West" (Weinberg 11). He points out that L'Amour was not unique in this – other less popular Western writers had also been writing "authentic stories of the West for years" (Weinberg 11). Weinberg's contention is that L'Amour's popularity is the result of the fact that "[h]e wrote the type of Westerns that people wanted to read" (Weinberg 11). And as Weinberg goes on to point out, "people reading Westerns are not looking for mainstream novels disguised as frontier fiction. They want stories of the mythic West, the legendary West as defined by tall tales, John Wayne movies, and television series" (Weinberg 11). In other words, they want something that conforms to the preconceived image of the Wild West that they already have in their minds. L'Amour, on his part, has always affirmed his status as a popular

novelist who wrote to satisfy the tastes of his readers. In an interview given to *Contemporary Authors* he asserts that "I pay no attention to critics. The only people I pay attention to are the readers, the audience" (qtd. in Weinberg 354). For L'Amour, it was in his best interests as well as that of his readers that he adhere to the already established tradition as far as the representation of the Indian is concerned.

At any event, L'Amour cannot be slated for a lack of realism in his portrayal of Indians even while claiming authenticity for his narratives. For precedent had already been set by writers of the local-color school like Mark Twain who, although retaining "a sense of fidelity and accuracy of description" in their portrayal of a specific region, did not extend this accuracy of portrayal to the Indian but rather relied on popular stereotypes (Hart 427). As Berkhofer points out:

> What is called realism in literature did not necessarily produce realistic Indian imagery. Indian life was part of the regional or local-color school of that literary movement in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Those authors like Mark Twain and Bret Harte who wrote of the Far West with its picturesque scenery and romantic styles of life included Indians in their detailed portrayal of locale, language, and customs on the frontier. If these authors often glorified the White outcast of society in the West, they also seemed to adopt those Whites' prejudices against the Indian. (105)

The description of the Giosute Indians in Twain's *Roughing It* (1872) seems to be a collation of all the negative stereotypes usually attributed to Indians. After initially referring to the Giosute as "the wretchedest type of mankind I have ever seen", the narrator goes on to describe them as:

> small, lean, 'scrawny' creatures; in complexion a dull black like the ordinary American negro; their faces and hands bearing dirt which they had been hoarding and accumulating for months, years, and even generations . . . a silent, sneaking, treacherous-looking race; taking note of everything, covertly . . . indolent, everlastingly patient and tireless, like all other Indians; prideless beggars . . . hungry, always hungry, and yet never refusing anything that a hog would decline; hunters, but having no higher ambition than to kill and eat jackass rabbits, crickets, and grasshoppers, and embezzle carrion from the buzzards and coyotes; savages who, when asked if they have the common Indian belief in a Great Spirit, show a something which almost amounts to emotion, thinking whiskey is referred to; a thin scattering race of almost naked black children, these Goshoots are, who produce nothing at all, and have no villages, and no gatherings together into strictly defined tribal communities . . . (101)

In another one of his novels, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), "Twain found the stereotypical Indian a convenient analogy to describe and explain the negative aspects of other peoples and their cultures. Evidently finding the technique effective, he was later to use it many times in his fiction" (Harris 496).

The portrayal of the Indian by the so-called local-color school was not all negative however, as can be seen in the case of Joaquin Miller, another writer of this school, who portrayed his Indians in accordance with the Noble Savage image in his *Life Among the Modocs* (1873). It becomes clear then that realism in literature did not

automatically imply a realistic portrayal of the Indian, whether that portrayal be according to positive or negative stereotypes.

Whether L'Amour genuinely lacked first-hand knowledge about Indians or whether he deliberately conformed to stereotypes out of a fear of losing his readership, one can discern, in his narratives, a genuine attempt to portray the Indian in as unbiased a manner as possible even while drawing on those same stereotypes. Descriptions like Twain's vis-à-vis the Giosute, with its racist overtones, never figure in L'Amour's novels. As Richard W. Etulain in his *Telling Western Stories* (1999) points out, "[L'Amour's] treatment of Indians differs noticeably from their depictions early in the century. Although Native Americans in *Hondo* . . . serve as the main antagonists, they are not pictured as brutal savages bent on rape and pillage" (98).

Etulain also points out that L'Amour, in his narratives, usually "provides a wise, older Indian to balance the young warrior" (103). This observation holds true of both *Hondo* and *Bendigo Shafter*. *Hondo* may feature the archetypal Indian villain in the form of Silva who deliberately runs his lance through a wounded dog but the kindly, almost fatherly figure of Vittoro gives the lie to the image of the Indian as cruel, vicious savage – even when he is on the warpath. Similarly, the presence of the vicious, unregenerate Shoshone Indian in *Bendigo Shafter* is balanced by the presence of Uruwishi who is drawn in accordance with the image of the friendly and subservient Tonto.

In the final analysis, whether one chooses to accept the hypothesis that L'Amour lacked first-hand knowledge of Indians or that he deliberately conformed to traditional stereotypes out of an apprehension of alienating his readership, one thing is

clear – the use of traditional Indian imagery prevents L'Amour from portraying the real native inhabitant who might once have actually roamed the authentic landscape of his narratives.

Works Cited

Berkhofer, Robert F., Jr. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1978.

Carr, Helen. *Inventing the American Primitive: Politics, Gender and the Representation of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789-1936*. Cork UP, 1996.

Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian*. Yale UP, 1998.

Deloria, Vine, Jr. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. U of Oklahoma P, 1969.

Etulain, Richard W. *Telling Western Stories: From Buffalo Bill to Larry McMurtry*. U of New Mexico P, 1999.

Forbes, Jack D. "The Historian and the Indian: Racial Bias in American History." *The Americas*, vol. 19, no. 4, Apr. 1963, pp. 349-362. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/979504.

Gotsch, Connie. "Following in his footsteps: Author documents locations in L'Amour's novels." *Four Corners Free Press*, Mar. 2007, www.fourcornersfreepress.com/news/2007/030702.htm.

Gwynne, S.C. *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*. Kobo ed., Scribner, 2010.

Harris, Helen L. “Mark Twain's Response to the Native American.” *American Literature*, vol. 46, no. 4, Jan. 1975, pp. 495-505. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2924574.

Hart, James D. *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*. Oxford UP, 1941.

L'Amour, Louis. *Bendigo Shafter*. Bantam Books, 1979.

---. *Hondo*. Bantam Books, 1953.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. W.W. Norton, 1987.

Purchas, Samuel. *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*. Vol. XIX. Robert MacLehose and Sons, 1906.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. Penguin, 1977.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Harvard UP, 1950.

Sonnichsen, C.L. *From Hopalong to Hud: Thoughts on Western Fiction.* Texas A&M UP, 1978.

Twain, Mark. *Roughing It.* London: George Routledge & Sons, 1872.

Weinberg, Robert. *The Louis L'Amour Companion.* Bantam Books, 1992.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

It is perhaps significant that in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, George Bush's response to a journalist's question about whether he wanted Osama bin Laden dead is couched in terms which are evocative of the Western genre:

> "I want justice. There's an old poster out West, as I recall, that said, 'Wanted: Dead or Alive.'". When pressed as to what exactly he meant by the utterance Bush elaborated: "I just remember, all I'm doing is remembering when I was a kid I remember that they used to put out there in the old West, a wanted poster. It said: 'Wanted, Dead or Alive.' All I want and America wants him brought to justice. That's what we want." (qtd. in McVeigh vii)

That the leader of the American nation used Western imagery to respond to and to try to come to terms with the greatest terror attack on American soil:

> demonstrate(s) the ongoing and central importance of Western mythology to America. Just as the Western had been evoked in previous moments of war, crisis, and anxiety, so it would be again in the wake of 11 September and the advent of the War of [*sic*] Terror. Bush used the language, values and imagery of the frontier in the rhetoric he employed to respond to the crisis. Such rhetoric served on the one hand to mobilize the country for the coming wars, in Afghanistan and more generally, on terror, and to offer a sense of familiar security to the national psyche. (McVeigh 215)

In this instance, as Stephen McVeigh in his *The American Western* (2007) points out, "the Western was evoked as a means of, firstly, understanding what had happened, and, secondly, shaping the American response" (vii). Bush was thus, using "Western mythology as a script through which to frame his administration's reaction to the attacks" (McVeigh 218). Bush then continues his use of Western imagery, referring to the enemy as ". . . 'barbaric,' who 'slit throats,' and who 'like to hit, and then they like to hide out" (vii-viii) – a range of descriptive epithets which ascribes to the enemy the same characteristics usually said to be possessed by the traditional enemy in the Westerns. As pointed out by McVeigh, "[t]his construction of the enemy resonates with the kind of imagery equated with Indians. It mirrors the Old Western portrayal of the Indian as a faceless and savage who seeks to deny Americans their Manifest Destiny" (217).

The importance of the Western as a cultural artefact can be gauged by the fact that, for many people, the West of the Westerns has come to be seen as an authentic representation of the actual West of history. McVeigh notes that "[a]fter 1893, for a vast number of Americans, the West became a landscape known through and completely identified with the fictions created about it" (McVeigh 26). This is hardly surprising considering the influence exerted on the Western by the Wild West Show which "codified many of the conventions of the Western" (McVeigh 32). The founder and owner of the Wild West Show was William F. Cody – more popularly known as Buffalo Bill – "a figure who embodies perhaps better than any other the myth of the frontier, the man who did more to construct the West in cultural and mythic terms, and the model, the archetype for Western heroism and frontier values which endured and

resonated throughout the twentieth century" (McVeigh 27). Even though the main purpose of the Wild West Show was to entertain audiences:

> Cody was determined to make his version of the West as realistic as possible. The show had a clear mission to educate audiences in the ways of the West. To this end, the Wild West epically re-enacted some of the most famous and evocative elements of life on the frontier. Over the course of its run, the show dramatizes a buffalo hunt, with real buffalo; an Indian attack in the real Deadwood Stage with real Indians; a pony express ride; and a tableau presentation of Custer's last stand, in which some Lakota who had actually fought in the battle recreated their parts. Once more such recreations further blurred the lines between fact and fiction. The Wild West then was a spectacular outoor circus but it was also a living history lesson, and Cody took this aspect of the show very seriously. (McVeigh 32)

Considering the influence Cody's Wild West Show had on the Western it is no wonder that the Western as a genre insists on the authenticity of its representations, and conversely, that its representations are taken as fact by many people.

That the Western has exerted and continues to exert a tremendous influence on the American consciousness is beyond doubt. Jane Tompkins in her *West of Everything* (1992) demonstrates how the Western has played a key role in shaping the behaviour of an entire generation of male movie goers who try to emulate the hero of the Westerns – specifically with regard to the hero's reticence. Tompkins points out how what she refers to as "the Western's hatred of language" is something that has:

> codified and sanctioned the way several generations of men have behaved verbally toward women in American society. Young boys sitting in the Saturday afternoon darkness could not ride horses or shoot guns, but they could talk. Or rather, they could learn how to keep silent. The Western man's silence functions as a script for behavior; it expresses and authorizes a power relation that reaches in to the furthest corners of domestic and social life. (59)

It is true that Tompkins is here referring specifically to the cinema Western, but this reluctance to speak is a characteristic which can ultimately be traced back to the hero of the Western novel. As Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., points out in his *The White Man's Indian* (1978): "Although the medium for its presentation has varied greatly since that time, the basic ingredients of the Western have remained fundamentally the same for well over a century" (97).

Accentuating the importance of the role of the Western as a cultural artefact, McVeigh's analysis has shown that the Western is a form that closely reflects the fears and anxieties of the American public at large during "moments of war, crisis and anxiety" (215). For instance, Westerns like Jack Schaefer's *Shane* (1946) had "represent[ed] anxiety, conflict, or pressing issues . . . in the era of the Cold War" (McVeigh 213).

The enduring power of the Western as purveyor of myth also bears commenting on. Jenni Calder has pointed out that even though the demise of the Western has been predicted at regular intervals "the myth retains its vitality" (qtd. in Sonnichsen 16). The importance of the myth in the American consciousness can be gauged from C.L. Sonnichsen's proclamation in his *From Hopalong to Hud* (1978)

that "[Americans] won't give it up. We can't give it up" (13). Also attesting to the resilience of the Western is McVeigh's observation that the Western, which was "seemingly exhausted at the end of the twentieth century was . . . readily rehabilitated at the beginning of the twenty-first" (viii). And firmly expressing her belief that the Western myth will endure against all odds, Calder states that the Western "enriches a brief past for the benefit of a possible barren present. It feeds contemporary culture, and has done so for many years, with a vision of independence which America and the world find both comforting and exciting" (qtd. in Gard).

Indeed, the influence exerted by the Western is not restricted solely to the United States. The Westerns of Karl May, a German author, are a testament to the fact of the Western's universal appeal and its applicability for a wide range of purposes. May's books, "[a]lthough written according to the Western formula and placed upon the American frontier . . . nevertheless stressed German nationalism and shaped the outlook of many a German youth, including one devoted reader named Adolf Hitler" (Berkhofer 101). In this regard, Sonnichsen has rightly pointed out that "the legendary West belongs to the world and not just to [Americans]" (8).

Chapter I establishes that the highly popular and influential image of the Wild West, as it has been projected in the movies and novels, is not an accurate representation of reality but a myth. Sonnichsen points out that this West of violent gunfights and encounters with hostile Indians is not a complete fabrication. In the words of Sonnichsen: "It was real enough; it just wasn't real all the time" (11). An analysis of the works of other writers like Mary Hallock Foote who wrote during and about the same time period reveals the extent to which the myth differed from reality.

The works of Foote portray a "domestic West" instead of the more popular "Wild West" that the Westerns portray. Similarly, the appearance of Native American warrior narratives in the 1920s and 30s, contesting their popular representation as evil Others "against whom masculine white heroes test their courage and endurance" did not do much to alter popular formulas which had already ossified into set formulas by that time (Etulain 32).

The role played by such influential figures as Theodore Roosevelt, Frederick Jackson Turner, William F. Cody and Owen Wister in constructing the myth of the "Wild West" has also been examined in the first chapter. This study has found that this mythification of the Wild West was accompanied by a mythification of some of the well-known characters who actually lived in the West of those times – most of these legendary characters like Billy the Kid and Wyatt Earp have been transformed by the myth into heroic figures and this transformation has not gone uncontested by historians and other people who claim to know better. The dissenting voices of the detractors has not in any way affected the popularity of the myth. The chapter then goes on to analyse the reasons for the persistence of the myth and why it is so important for the American people.

The study further contends that the Western novel, as a genre, serves a purpose, which is to be for the American people what the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are for the Greeks; in short, a national myth which helps Americans "understand the nature of the universe and [their] place in it" (Sonnichsen 18). Having established the importance of the Western, this study questions whether the Western, as a genre, possesses a work

which is worthy of being called an epic and argues that *Lonesome Dove* (1985) has all the qualities of the traditional epic.

This chapter also addresses the lack of critical attention with which the Western has usually been regarded. Westerns have traditionally been overlooked as not being worthy of consideration as serious literature owing to their formulaic nature, which makes them unable to plumb the depths of human experience as all great works of literature are supposed to do. This study argues that *Lonesome Dove*, by virtue of its having won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1986 as well as its being the epic of the American frontier, deserves a status as a serious work of literature. By extension, this also proves that Westerns, as a genre, are capable of plumbing the depths of human experience and emotion, and need no longer be summarily dismissed as non-serious works unworthy of the critic's attention.

Having established that the Western needs to be given more serious consideration as literature, this study also analyses the Western's power to influence attitudes and establish patterns of behaviour.

Chapter II provides a brief summary of the manner in which the Indian has been represented by the White invaders over time. Such a representation has been necessarily one-sided, owing to the fact that Indians, unlike the Whites, did not possess the power of the written word. Patricia Nelson Limerick in *The Legacy of Conquest* (1987) points out that:

> [o]ne of the few things that characterized all Indian tribes north of the Rio Grande was the practice of an oral culture. Europeans and Americans seemed, by contrast, to be compulsively literate, pausing in the midst of their exploring

> and colonizing for frequent journal entries, letters, and reports. The result was a vast imbalance in the production of records: a flood of words in which White people said what they thought of Indians, and few chances for Indians to reciprocate. (213-14)

As far as the ability of Indians to "reciprocate" in like manner is concerned, Dee Brown in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970) observes that "[o]nly occasionally was the voice of an Indian heard, and then more often than not it was recorded by the pen of a white man. The Indian was the dark menace of the myths, and even if he had known how to write in English, where would he have found a printer or a publisher?" (Brown xi). In any case the Indian's powerlessness in a White-dominated America, ensured that the word of the White man would take precedence over the word of a "savage". Witness, for instance, the case of the Cherokees who contested the claims of the state of Georgia which wanted them uprooted from their homes and relocated to Indian Territory west of the Mississippi. Despite the Indians clearly having legitimate claim to the lands on which they lived, neither the federal government nor the Supreme Court was able to provide them relief from the rapaciousness of the Georgians. "Appeal after appeal to the President and to Congress for protection produced only reiterated confessions of the Government's inability to protect them – reiterated proposals to them to accept a price for their country and move away" (Jackson 277).Even when the Cherokees turned to the Supreme Court as a last resort, the highest court in the land was unable to provide them any relief in the case known as *The Cherokee Nation v. The State of Georgia* (1831). The Cherokees were ultimately forced to remove to lands west of the Mississippi in a forced march during a particularly cold winter which has subsequently come to be referred to as their "trail

of tears". All this, despite the fact that the Cherokee had more or less adopted the White man's civilization as is evident by the fact that they were referred to as one of the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes". Helen Hunt Jackson in *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) notes that the Cherokees:

> were enthusiastic in their efforts to establish and perfect their own system of jurisprudence. Missions of several sects were established in their country, and a large number of them had professed Christianity, and were living exemplary lives.
>
> There is no instance in all history of a race of people passing in so short a space of time from the barbarous stage to the agricultural and civilized. (271)

The manner in which Whites have traditionally represented the Indian can roughly be seen as falling in between the two extremes of the good Indian and the bad Indian. While Columbus may have been possibly the first White man to use the good Indian imagery to describe the natives of the New World, he also used the bad Indian imagery to describe some of the negative traits which he saw in these same natives. This dual imagery has ever since been used to categorize Indians, and it is also used to represent them in Westerns. While *Lonesome Dove* may seem to be inimical to Indians, this thesis has identified the strategy used by the narrative which dredges up all the negative traits supposedly possessed by Indians only to have such negative traits disproved by the Indians who appear in the course of the narrative. Just as this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel seeks to present a more realistic portrait of the cowboy as a hero with feet of clay, so too does it attempt to provide us with a more realistic portrayal of the Indian by its disproving of those stereotypes of the bad Indian. True to its attempt

to provide us with a realistic portrayal, the narrative does not suggest that all Indians are good either; rather, its portrayal of both good and bad Indians, as well as of good and bad White men shows that neither good nor bad is a characteristic of race.

However, despite *Lonesome Dove's* attempt to provide an unbiased portrait of the Indian, McMurtry is still writing within the tradition of the Western novel and, as a result, is completely unable to break away from an underlying narrative tradition which has traditionally portrayed the Indian as a negative and inferior Other. The Indians of *Lonesome Dove* may not be demonized but their portrayal draws heavily on the image of the deficient Indian which has been traditionally used to describe the Indian. Thus, underlying McMurtry's portrayal of the Indian is a tradition which stresses the Indian's inferiority especially when compared to the White man. McMurtry's Indians may not be the savage Indians of popular myth but they surely share some commonalities with these Indians of myth in their inferiority to the White man, be it in the field of battle or the ability to make a living off the land and establish new settlements.

While *Lonesome Dove* does attempt to provide an unbiased picture of the Indian, the other novels in the saga hold true to the popular Western tradition in their representation of the Indian. *Comanche Moon* (1997) and *Dead Man's Walk* (1995) present us with Indians who conform to the popular stereotype of Indians who kill and plunder merely for the joy of killing and without much cause or reason. They take captives at will and their mistreatment of these captives denude them of any humanity whatsoever. Here we find Indians who seem to be the direct descendants of the bad Indians of the popular captivity narratives. Though Indians have an insignificant

presence in *Streets of Laredo* (1993) their evil influence is still felt in the background for the narrative suggests that the evil in the main antagonist, Joey Garza, is a result of his having lived among the Apaches as an impressionable child. Much as *Lonesome Dove* strives to break away from the stereotyped portrayal of the Indian, the other three novels featuring the adventures of Gus and Call portray Indians in accordance with popular narrative traditions.

Chapter III takes a look at the idea of the Western hero and traces the influence of such figures as Buffalo Bill, Theodore Roosevelt, and Owen Wister in the development of such a figure. It has been demonstrated that the heroes of L'Amour and McMurtry are representative of two very different trends in Western storytelling. As Richard Etulain in *Telling Western Stories* (1999) points out, "L'Amour followed the familiar content and form of the western story as it had evolved by the mid-twentieth century" (96). L'Amour's novels are thus representative of the traditional Westerns which tend to see things in simplistic black and white terms. McMurtry's novels, on the other hand, represents those Western narratives which sought to break away from the formula Westerns and re-vision the history of the West. In keeping with their differing views on the West, the heroes of L'Amour and McMurtry display markedly different characteristics. L'Amour's heroes are shaped in the image of the archetypal Western hero – Wister's Virginian hero. Both Hondo and Bendigo are created in the image of the "slim young giant" – a template which had been established by Wister's hero. McMurtry's heroes, by contrast, seem to have been created as a deliberate rejection of Wister's ideal hero. In *Lonesome Dove*, McMurtry's heroes are portrayed as old men who are well past their prime. Even when in their prime – as *Dead Man's Walk* and *Comanche Moon* portray them – they often fail to live up to the

exacting standards of Western heroism. *Streets of Laredo* depicts a Call who is much advanced in years and is beginning to feel the effects of old age.

In stripping the romantic veil from off the figure of the cowboy hero McMurtry is perhaps seeking to give a more realistic portrayal of the cowboy. Before Cody's Wild West shows metamorphosed them from ordinary workers on the range to Anglo Saxon knights, cowboys, far from being seen as heroic figures, were "generally considered less than wholesome figures, at best foul-mouthed, drunken delinquents, at worst, criminals capable of any amount of violent excess" (McVeigh 33-34). After examining the heroes of McMurtry we can perhaps say of them what Samuel Johnson said of Shakespeare's heroes – that McMurtry has no heroes either, if being a hero entails being perfect and without any perceptible flaws. McMurtry's characters are men who are prone to the same failings as their fellow men – men who are subject to the same bodily inconveniences as their fellow human beings.

Yet, for all the differences between the two types of heroes as represented by L'Amour and McMurtry, what they have in common is the possession of core heroic qualities – the ability to spring into action at a moment's notice. These heroes, as the myth represents them, are all that stand between civilization and savagery as represented by the Indian – the evil Other of the myth.

In light of Tompkins' highlighting of the important "alibi function" performed by the women characters in Westerns, this chapter has also taken a brief look at the women characters in the selected narratives. Marginalized they may be, but they surely play an indispensable role in the Western, whose preoccupation with manly pursuits and manly interests leaves it open to the charge of homoeroticism. It has been found

that L'Amour's heroines are more or less the literary descendants of *The Virginian's* Molly Wood who, despite her initial show of independence, ultimately capitulates to the male will in the end. McMurtry's women characters though, like his heroes, break away from the traditional mould. Whether playing minor or relatively major roles, McMurtry's women all possess idiosyncrasies which makes them add variety and colour to an already colourful canvas.

Chapter IV takes a look at the novels of Louis L'Amour who is widely acknowledged as one of the most popular writers of Westerns. What sets L'Amour apart from most other writers of Westerns is the attention he pays to authenticity, particularly with regard to the landscape. L'Amour's claim as to the authenticity of the landscapes in his narratives have often been proved to be true. Of particular note is the case of retired petroleum engineer Burt Murphy, who after his retirement, set out on a quest to map the locations mentioned in L'Amour's novels. Murphy too attests to the truth of L'Amour's assertion of veracity with regard to the landscapes in his narratives.

However, L'Amour also claims that the Indians in his narratives are authentic and the main thrust of Chapter IV is to closely analyse this claim. Indians do figure in the novels of L'Amour but the authentic Indians that the landscape would lead us to expect do not really appear – what we have are two dimensional Indian characters who are drawn on popular stereotypes. It is the finding of this thesis that L'Amour's Indians are drawn on the well-worn template of the good and bad Indian and do not seem to exhibit any sort of individuality. His good Indians faithfully follow the lead of the White heroes of the narratives in the manner of *The Lone Ranger's* Tonto, or what Vine Deloria, Jr., in *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969) refers to as "Uncle Tomahawks"

(207). The bad Indians, on the other hand, display all the negative characteristics ascribed to the demonized Indian of myth.

It is then the finding of this thesis that two very different authors – one appealing to a mass readership and the other appealing to both a mass readership as well as the critics as is evidenced by the Pulitzer Prize won by its author – despite the differences in narrative technique feature Indians who lack serious presence as individuals. While L'Amour follows the established popular formulas McMurtry tries to break away from them – yet both authors end up with Indian characters who, in one way or another, conform to the popular age old stereotypes. Thus, the selected narratives of L'Amour and McMurtry, notwithstanding the differences in their approach to the story of the West, seem to be, like the American "histories", merely "a repetition of the prejudices and attitude of one portion of the population" (Forbes 351).

This is not to suggest that the narratives of L'Amour and McMurtry provide a completely unrealistic portrayal of the West. In their portrayal of bad White men alongside the good White men, they were providing an accurate picture of the heterogeneous mix of characters that populated the frontier. It is just that their portrayal of the Indian is based on popular narrative stereotypes which, as has been demonstrated by this study, are rather unreliable as purveyor of fact.

The role assigned to Indians in Western narratives can thus be summed up in the words of Tompkins as follows: "Quite often they filled the role of villains, predictably, driving the engine of the plot, threatening the wagon train, the stagecoach, the cavalry detachment – a particularly dangerous form of local wildlife" (8).

In like manner, what Daniel J. Boorstin says of the marginalized role accorded to Indians in "American national histories" holds equally true of the role traditionally played by Indians in Westerns:

> [Indians] are often included with the inclement weather, the wild animals, and the unknown distances, among the half-predictable perils of a wilderness. We are taught to remember them as carrying off an unwary traveler, harassing a wagon train, or fighting the cowboys. The Indians thus seem nothing more than sand in the smoothly oiled gears of American progress. (qtd. in Forbes 352)

The marginalized role assigned to Indians in the Westerns is in no way indicative of the important role Indians play in the American consciousness. Philip J. Deloria in *Playing Indian* (1998) points out that in order "[t]o understand the various ways Americans have contested and constructed national identities, we must constantly return to the original mysteries of Indianness" (4). Deloria shows how Whites have constantly used and assumed the identity and culture of the Indian through the ages, beginning with the assumption of Mohawk identity in the Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773. For Deloria, the Boston Tea Party is "a catalytic moment, the first drumbeat in the long cadence of rebellion through which Americans redefined themselves as something other than British colonists" (2). The use of Mohawk disguises in what Deloria refers to as "the national big bang" is not merely incidental but represents an important first step in the quest for a unique American identity, for "[t]he performance of Indian Americanness afforded a powerful foundation for subsequent pursuits of national identity" (7).

The assuming of Indian disguise was not used solely for the purposes of airing discontent, as was the case in the Boston Tea Party. Another trend that emerged which centred round the use of Indian dress and customs was the establishment of fraternal societies like the Tammany Society which represents an attempt to establish an American identity that is separate and distinct from a European one. The Tammany society was based on the figure of a Delaware leader Tamenend and gave rise to many similar type of societies like the Society of Red Men and the Improved Order of Red Men – all of whom were centred round the theme of Indianness as part of an effort to negotiate an American identity.

This practice of playing Indian permeated the entire American society was not confined to adults alone. Ernest Thompson Seton's Woodcraft Indians is an example of how the Indian way of life was used "to create modern American character in children (especially boys)" in order to counter the effects of "an effeminate, postfrontier urbanism" (P. Deloria 96). The Woodcraft Indians was a youth development organization created by Seton with the aim of reforming a group of "local vandals" whom he invited for the purpose of camping out at his estate:

> After regaling the boys with Indian tales, he organized them into a make-believe tribe, the Sinaways, led them through nature study games, and put them to work making Indian costumes. The experiment worked beautifully, and, after being serialized in *Ladies Home* Journal during 1902, the so-called Seton Indian program spread rapidly. Seton went on to transform the material into a popular autobiographical novel, *Two Little Savages*, which served as a dictionary of woodcraft and nature study activities. (P. Deloria 96-7)

The Camp Fire Girls, a similar organization for girls was founded by Luther and Charlotte Gulick who "adapted Seton's Indian lore program, giving it a gender-specific feel" (P. Deloria 111). The Camp Fire Girls sought to use Indian play with a view to:

> reconstructing middle-class notions of gender. If camping and boy scouting were about restoring masculinity to postfrontier city boys, Camp Fire was about reaffirming female difference in terms of domesticity and service. Camp Fire Girls, for example, "were not to wear feathers in their headbands; that was for braves." In one organizational meeting, Gulick laid the matter out quite plainly: "The bearing and rearing of children has always been the first duty of most women, and that must always continue to be. This involves service, constant service, self-forgetfulness, and always service. I suggest that the fire be taken as the symbol of the girl's movement, the domestic fire – not the wild fire – and that from the first the very meaning of the fire be explained to her in poetry and dance," Camp Fire Girls were to learn the true import of womanhood, defined as knowing the value of domestic work and appreciating art, beauty, and healthy natural living. (P. Deloria 113)

If the figure of the Indian proved useful in articulating a revolutionary identity and in the quest for a unique American identity, it was equally useful in the attempt to construct a national literature that broke firmly and completely from the European model that preceded it. At the same time, this national literature would also play a crucial role in defining American identity as well, for as Philip J. Deloria has pointed out "literature and art had been critical venues for imagining American identity" (74).

Berkhofer has shown the important role played by the Indian in the establishment of an American literature that was separate and distinct from the antecedent European literature against which it was often unfavourably compared (86). Men of letters looking for a distinct American subject matter seized upon the figure of the Indian as material fit for a national literature. At the same time, the arrival of Romanticism to American shores, though late, ensured that the Indian became, however briefly, a fit subject for high art. Lewis Henry Morgan's literary fraternity – the Gordian Knot – tasked its members with the portentous task of "the writing of a native, American epic that would define national identity and put an end to unflattering comparisons between the United States and Europe. . . . As symbols both of a classic past and of American nature, Indians inevitably found their way to the very heart of the tales told by the Gordian Knot" (P. Deloria 72).

The Indian way of life also seemed to offer to Americans who felt cut off and alienated from a rapidly industrializing society, a more wholesome way of life which was otherwise inaccessible to them. Thus John Collier, who later went on to become Commissioner of Indian Affairs under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, thought he had:

> discovered among the Pueblos of the Southwest the sense of community and harmony of life he thought White American industrial society lacked. . . . The integrated life of the Pueblos stood as a reproach to atomized modern civilization; and their harmonious, democratic ways a vital lesson to all White Americans. (Berkhofer 178)

For Collier, the communal life led by Indians which was perceived by many at the time as being opposed to that most celebrated of American characteristics, viz.

"individualism," as well as an obstacle to their assimilation into mainstream American society, offered "hope for the survival of civilization" (Berkhofer 178).

Ironically enough, White Americans also occasionally appropriated Indian identity in order to claim the role of injured innocent and articulate their determination to resist this infringement of their "rights". Limerick cites the example of Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado, who along with his co-author, Michael McCarthy, attempted to cast Westerners in the role of beleaguered Indians in order to resist what they felt to be "the assault of development" (47).

Indian society has traditionally been dismissed as anachronistic and backward. The early anthropologists saw Indian society as representative of an early stage of human development in their categorization of human societies. Lewis Henry Morgan, for instance:

> trace[d] the institutions of government, property, and technology through seven "ethnical periods" – lower, middle, and upper savagery; lower, middle, and upper barbarism; and civilization – differentiated according to technological innovation and economic development. As he measured the "ratio of human progress," the American Indians had advanced beyond the "zero" of lower savagery but had fallen far behind the superior Aryan and Semitic races. (Berkhofer 53)

Vine Deloria, Jr., derides such a viewpoint by humorously pointing out that Indians are often treated as if they "were just coming out of the woods with their flint-tipped arrows and were demonstrating an unusual amount of curiosity about the

printing press, the choochoo train, the pop machine, and other marvels of civilized man" (225).

Deloria argues that Indian tribal organization is anything but backward and that its increasing relevance can be discerned everywhere in the modern age. "When an Indian considers the modern world, however, he sees it inevitably drawn into social structures in which tribalism appears to be the only valid form of supra-individual participation" (V. Deloria 226).

For Deloria, contemporary developments like the much vaunted Community Development Corporation (CDC) which, in the late 1960s, "was hailed as an important new step in the development of black pride and initiative in the private area" is just a step taken by its intended beneficiaries (227) – the black community – towards tribalism, which the supposedly backward Indian was already well familiar with:

> If the CDC was brand-new for blacks it had a mighty familiar ring to the Indian people. The tribal council, as set up under the Indian Reorganization Act, had precisely the same powers, function, and intents. Indians have been using the tribal council as organized under IRA for nearly a generation. As Indians viewed the "new" CDC, the blacks were finally ready to tribalize. (V. Deloria 227)

Deloria analyses the phenomenon of the corporation and points out the parallels between it and Indian tribalism: "The corporation forms the closest attempt of the white man to socialize his individualism and become a tribal man" (228). Even though the corporation was subject to a lot of criticism, particularly by Vance Packard and William H. White who felt that it "impinges upon individual man in his private

life and reorients him toward non-individual goals," it nevertheless offered to its members:

> a tribal existence of security and ease. The corporation provided everything a man might need if he were to maintain an affluent life over and above that of non-corporate man and befitting a person of vast educational achievement. . . . With untold fringe benefits covering all conceivable circumstances which might arise, organization man dwelt in an economic tribe to which he needed only give his allegiance and daylight hours. In return he had social and economic security rarely equalled since the days of feudalism. (V. Deloria 228)

Deloria's analysis of the corporation and the manner in which it resembles the Indian tribal way of life forces him to the conclusion that "corporate life since the last world war has structured itself along the lines taken a couple of centuries earlier by Indian tribes as the developed their customs and traditions of social existence" (229).

Further attesting to the importance of the Indian in American society, Jack D. Forbes in "The Historian and the Indian: Racial Bias in American History" (1963) points out that the:

> cultural impact [of the Indian] has been very great indeed. The first European settlers invariably adopted Indian farming techniques, foods, methods of transportation, herbology, fighting techniques, forest-lore, clothing, and many other items. . . . one would do well to recall that such things as corn, hominy, tomatoes, potatoes . . . domesticated turkeys, many words in our language, and a number of other items had an Indian origin. (359)

The Indian, it would seem, is integral to American society – a status which is not reflected in the popular narratives in which he usually figures as simply an inferior and negative Other. Forbes' contention that "the native has been significant in American history" is not an idle one either (360). Reflecting on "what the history of the western world would have been like *without* the native," Forbes ponders whether the English colonies would have survived without friendly native intervention or whether Spain would have entered the Americas without the lure of wealth and plunder (362). Though such reflection is merely an academic exercise, "it should be clear to all that the Indian was tremendously significant in the history of America" (Forbes 362).

The narrative tradition of the Western needs to admit of changes with regard to the representation of the Indian. Ever since the so-called "discovery" of the New World, the natives have been conceived of in terms of what they are thought to be. The very term Indian is itself a White construct – an identity that has been foisted on to the Indian from the time of Columbus who started it off by referring to the natives he saw as "los Indios". As pointed out by Berkhofer:

> White hopes for the exploitation of Indians and their lands certainly shaped their perceptions of Native Americans from the very beginning of contact. Conceptions of what the natives had to be so they could satisfy the demands Europeans would make of them influenced, if not fostered, the descriptions explorers, missionaries, and settlers provided financial backers and policy makers. (118)

As Berkhofer has shown, simply reversing the roles and portraying Indians as good while assigning the role of villain to the Whites, does not amount to a realistic portrayal of Native Americans:

> Some analysts argue that any sympathetic portrayal of Native Americans and their plight in a White world is a realistic picture, but others contend that the Noble Savage image is as much stereotype as the ignoble one. Neither nostalgia nor sympathy per se is a substitute for knowledge, in their opinion; only an accurate understanding of cultural diversity and ethnographic detail combined with firsthand experience constitutes a true basis for the realistic depiction of Indian life. From this viewpoint, the countercultural use of the Indian does not equal a realistic portrayal but merely a reversal of judgment upon the standard stereotype. (104-5)

It becomes clear that even when idealized, Native Americans are simply used, as before, to point a moral or adorn a tale. The indigenous people of the continent need to be allowed presence in the popular Western narratives as individuals and be permitted to move out of the preassigned role that the term "Indian" traps them in. It may be noted that beginning in the 1960s – with N. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *House Made of Dawn* (1968) being a notable example – Native Americans have gained recognition in the literary marketplace and thus, have been able to write back and counter the White-dominated narratives. Yet their representation in a genre whose narrative of events "comes closer than the fiction of any other region to providing an index to America" demands reappraisal, for it still reflects the old

prejudices and assumptions that have been carried down from the time of Columbus to the present and which display a remarkable staying power (Sonnichsen 4).

Indians, as has been demonstrated, are both relevant and essential to the modern world and particularly to a modern America, whether that importance be in the form of a negotiation of American identity or in providing an alternative, more spiritually fulfilling mode of existence. Thus their representation in such a popular and influential genre should reflect their importance.

As Forbes has shown, historians have not been kind to Native Americans, summarily dismissing them in most cases as inconsequential aliens trying to ineffectually halt the onward march of civilization and progress. In this regard, Limerick asserts that "[m]uch of what passed for objective frontier history was in fact nationalistic history, celebrating the winners and downgrading or ignoring the losers" (219). It is said that history and literature are intertwined. If history is a record of the events of the past then, as William J. Long in his *English Literature* (1909) points out, literature is a record of the aspirations and ideals of the people of an era (6). Since history has failed to faithfully record the lives and times of Native Americans, literature may show history the way forward by giving a fair and unbiased representation of Native Americans within its narratives.

Giving a more unbiased representation to the Indian in the Western is a necessity which arises as much out of a desire to do justice to the portrayal of Native Americans as it is to do justice to a narrative form whose representation of the American West, as has been demonstrated earlier, is taken by many to be an authentic representation of the actual West of history. If nothing else, and given the importance

of the Indian in the negotiation of an American identity, a more realistic portrayal of Native Americans in the Western may go a long way towards providing the elusive answer to that most enigmatic of questions asked first by St. John de Crevecoeur, then by the British writer D.H. Lawrence, and subsequently echoed by succeeding generations of Americans: “What is an American?”

Works Cited

Berkhofer, Robert F., Jr. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1978.

Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian*. Yale UP, 1998.

Deloria, Vine, Jr. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. U of Oklahoma P, 1969.

Forbes, Jack D. "The Historian and the Indian: Racial Bias in American History." *The Americas*, vol. 19, no. 4, Apr. 1963, pp. 349-362. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/979504.

Gard, Wayne. Review of *There Must Be a Lone Ranger: The American West in Film and Reality* by Jenni Calder. *Southwest Review*, vol. 60, no. 4, Autumn 1975, pp. 405-409. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43468781.

Jackson, Helen Hunt. *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings With Some of the Indian Tribes.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. W.W. Norton, 1987.

Long, William J. *English Literature: Its History and its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World*. AITBS Publishers, 2015.

McVeigh, Stephen. *The American Western*. Edinburgh UP, 2007.

Sonnichsen, C.L. *From Hopalong to Hud: Thoughts on Western Fiction*. Texas A&M UP, 1978.

Tompkins, Jane. *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*. Oxford UP, 1992.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

L'Amour, Louis. *Bendigo Shafter*. Bantam Books, 1979.

---. *Hondo*. Bantam Books, 1953.

---. *The Walking Drum*. Bantam Books, 1985.

McMurtry, Larry. *Comanche Moon*. Picador, 2015.

---. *Dead Man's Walk*. Simon & Schuster, 1995.

---. *Lonesome Dove*. Pocket Books, 1985.

---. *Streets of Laredo*. Pocket Books, 1993.

Secondary Sources:

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Heinle & Heinle, 1999.

Athearn, Robert G. *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America.* UP of Kansas, 1986.

Bataille, Gretchen M., ed. *Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations*. U of Nebraska P, 2001.

Berkhofer, Robert F., Jr. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present.* Alfred A. Knopf, 1978.

Billington, Ray Allen. *Fredrick Jackson Turner: Historian, Scholar, Teacher.* Oxford UP, 1973.

---. *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*. Macmillan, 1960.

Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. Pan Books, 1972.

Brownlow, Kevin. *The War, the West and the Wilderness*. Secker & Warburg, 1979.

Burroughs, Edgar Rice. *Apache Devil*. Ballantine Books, 1964.

Butler, Anne M. *Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-90.* U of Illinois P, 1985.

Carr, Helen. *Inventing the American Primitive: Politics, Gender and the Representation of Native American Literary Traditions, 1789-1936*. Cork UP, 1996.

Carter, Robert A. *Buffalo Bill Cody: the Man Behind the Legend*. John Wiley & Sons, 2000.

Cawelti, John G. *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture*. U of Chicago P, 1976.

---. *The Six-Gun Mystique*. Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970.

---. *The Six-Gun Mystique Sequel.* Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1999.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness,* edited by Sumanyu Satpathy, Worldview Publications, 2002.

Cooper, James Fenimore. *The Last of the Mohicans.* London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1826.

Coyne, Michael. *The Crowded Prairie: American National Identity in the American Western*. I. B. Tauris, 1998.

Dary, David. *Cowboy Culture: a Saga of Five Centuries*. UP of Kansas, 1989.

Debo, Angie. *Geronimo: The Man His Time His Place*. Pimlico, 1993.

Degler, Carl. *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present*. Oxford UP, 1980.

Deloria, Philip J. *Playing Indian*. Yale UP, 1998.

Deloria, Vine, Jr. *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*. U of Oklahoma P, 1969.

Drinnon, Richard. *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building*. U of Minnesota P, 1980.

Drury, Clifford. *Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and the Opening of Old Oregon*. Arthur H. Clarke, 1973.

Easton, Robert. *Max Brand: the Big "Westerner."* U of Oklahoma P, 1970.

Eblen, Jack. *The First and Second United States Empires: Governors and Territorial Government, 1784-1912*. U of Pittsburgh P, 1968.

Ellis, Edward S. *Seth Jones; or, the Captive of the Frontier*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.

Etulain, Richard W. *Re-Imaging the Modern American West: a Century of Fiction, History and Art*. U of Arizona P, 1996.

Etulain, Richard W. *Telling Western Stories: From Buffalo Bill to Larry McMurtry*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1999.

Faragher, John Mack. *Women and Men on the Overland Trail.* Yale UP, 1979.

Fenin, George N. and William K. Everson. *The Western: From Silents to the Seventies*. Grossman, 1973.

Fiedler, Leslie A. *The Return of the Vanishing American*. Paladin, 1972.

Fischer, Christiane, ed. *Let Them Speak for Themselves: Women in the American West, 1849-1900.* E.P. Dutton, 1978.

Foote, Mary Hallock. *The Led-Horse Claim: A Romance of a Mining Camp*. Cambridge: John Wilson and Son, 1883.

Frayling, Christopher. *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

French, Philip. *Westerns: Aspects of a Movie Genre and Westerns Revisited*. Carcanet, 2005.

Frohock, W.M. *The Novel of Violence in America*. Southern Methodist UP, 1971.

Fussell, Edwin. *Frontier: American Literature and the American West*. Princeton UP, 1965.

Gressley, Gene M., ed. *Old West/New West*. U of Oklahoma P, 1997.

Hall, Roger A. *Performing the American Frontier: 1870-1906*. Cambridge UP, 2001.

Hardy, Phil. *The Western*. Aurum, 1995.

Hart, James D. *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*. Oxford UP, 1941.

Hollon, W. Eugene. *The Great American Desert Then and Now.* Oxford UP, 1966.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. The Free Press, 2002.

Jackson, Helen Hunt. *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings With Some of the Indian Tribes.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881.

Johnson, Dorothy M. *Indian Country*. U of Nebraska P, 1995.

Jordan, Teresa. *Cowgirls: Women of the American West*. Doubleday, 1982.

Josephy, Alvin M., Jr. *The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest*. Yale UP, 1971.

Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn. *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans in Film*. U of Nebraska P, 1999.

Kolodny, Annette. *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860.* U of North Carolina P, 1984.

Kowalewski, Michael. *Reading the West: New Essays on the Literature of the American West*. Cambridge UP, 1996.

L'Amour, Louis. *Education of a Wandering Man*. Bantam, 1989.

Lamar, Howard R. *The Far Southwest, 1846-1912: A Territorial History.* Yale UP, 1966.

---, ed. *The Reader's Encyclopedia of the American West*. Crowell, 1977.

Lawrence, John Shelton, and Robert Jewett. *The Myth of the American Superhero*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002.

Lich, Lera Patrick Tyler. *Larry McMurtry's Texas: Evolution of a Myth*. Eakin Pr., 1988.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*. W.W. Norton, 1987.

Long, William J. *English Literature: Its History and its Significance for the Life of the English Speaking World*. AITBS Publishers, 2015.

McGee, Patrick. *From Shane to Kill Bill: Rethinking the Western*. Blackwell, 2007.

McVeigh, Stephen. *The American Western.* Edinburgh UP, 2007.

Miller, Christopher L. *Prophetic Worlds: Indians and Whites on the Columbian Plateau*. Rutgers UP, 1985.

Milner, Clyde A., Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss, eds. *The Oxford History of the American West*. Oxford UP, 1994.

Milton, John R. *The Novel of the American West*. U of Nebraska P, 1980.

Mitchell, Lee Clark. *Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film*. U of Chicago P, 1996.

Nash, Gerald D. *The American West in the Twentieth Century: A Short History of an Urban Oasis.* Perntice-Hall, 1973.

Payne, Darwin. *Owen Wister: Chronicler of the West, Gentleman of the East.* Southern Methodist UP, 1985.

Pearce, Roy Harvey. *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind.* U of California P, 1988.

Purchas, Samuel. *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*. Vol. XIX. Robert MacLehose and Sons, 1906.

Reilly, John M. *Larry McMurtry: A Critical Companion.* Greenwood Press, 2000.

Riley, Glenda. *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915.* U of New Mexico P, 1984.

Robinson, Forrest G., ed. *The New Western History: The Territory Ahead*. U of Arizona P, 1998.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail.* New York: The Century, 1899.

Roosevelt, Theodore. *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses*. Grant Richards, 1902.

---. *An Autobiography*. Macmillan, 1913.

Rothman, Hal K. *Reopening the American West*. U of Arizona P, 1998.

Rowlandson, Mary. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together, with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by Her, to All that Desire to Know the Lords Doings to, and Dealings with Her*. Cambridge: Samuel Green, 1682.

Russell, Donald B. *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*. U of Oklahoma P, 1960.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Vintage Books, 1978.

Saloutos, Theodore. *The American Farmer and the New Deal*. Iowa State UP, 1982.

Sayre, Gordon M. *Les Sauvages Americains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature.* U of North Carolina P, 1997.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. Penguin, 1977.

Sim, Stuart, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*. Routledge, 2011.

Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America*. HarperCollins, 1992.

---. *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*. HarperCollins, 1994.

Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Harvard UP, 1950.

Sonnichsen, C.L. *From Hopalong to Hud: Thoughts on Western Fiction.* Texas A&M UP, 1978.

Staig, Lawrence, and Tony Williams. *Italian Western: The Opera of Violence*. Lorrimer, 1975.

Steffen, Jerome O., ed. *The American West: New Perspectives, New Dimensions*. U of Oklahoma P, 1979.

Tompkins, Jane. *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*. Oxford UP, 1992.

Trachtenberg, Alan. *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*. Hill & Wang, 1982.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Frontier in American History*. Henry Holt, 1920.

Tuska, Jon. *The Filming of the West*. Hale, 1976.

---, ed. *The Western Story: A Chronological Treasury*. U of Nebraska P, 1995.

Twain, Mark. *Roughing It.* London: George Routledge & Sons, 1872.

Twain, Mark. *The Innocents Abroad: Or, the New Pilgrim's Progress*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1897.

Unruh, John David. *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60.* U of Illinois P, 1974.

Utley, Robert M. *Billy the Kid: A Short and Violent Life*. Bloomsbury, 2000.

---. *Custer and the Great Controversy: The Origin and Development of a Legend*. U of Nebraska P, 1998.

Vespucci, Amerigo. *Mundus Novus.* Translated by George Tyler Northup, Princeton UP, 1916.

Walsh, Margaret. *The American West: Visions and Revisions*. Cambridge UP, 2005.

Webb, Walter Prescott. *The Great Frontier.* Secker and Warburg, 1953.

Weinberg, Robert. *The Louis L'Amour Companion*. Bantam Books, 1992.

Weston, Jack. *The Real American Cowboy*. New Amsterdam Books, 1988.

Weybright, Victor, and Henry Blackman Sell. *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West*. Oxford UP, 1955.

White, Richard. *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West*. U of Oklahoma P, 1993.

White, Richard, and Patricia Nelson Limerick. *The Frontier in American Culture*. U of California P, 1994.

Whitman, Narcissa, and Eliza Spalding. *Where Wagons Could Go.* U of Nebraska P, 1997.

Wiley, Peter, and Robert Gottlieb. *Empires in the Sun: The Rise of the New American West*. G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1982.

Wister, Owen. *The Virginian: A Horseman of the Plains.* Macmillan, 1904.

Wright, Will. *Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western*. U of California P, 1977.

---. *The Wild West: The Mythical Cowboy and Social Theory*. Sage Books, 2001.

Yost, Nellie Snyder. *Buffalo Bill, His Family, Friends, Fame, Failure, and Fortunes.* Sage Books, 1979.

Journals, Periodicals and Electronic Sources:

Birchfield, D.L. "Lonesome Duck: The Blueing of a Texas-American Myth." *Studies in American Indian Literatures,* Series 2, vol. 7, no. 2, Summer 1995, pp. 45-64. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20736848.

Champlin, Tim. *The Wild West of Louis L'Amour.* Voyageur Press, 2015.

Coulombe, Joseph L. “Mark Twain's Native Americans and the Repeated Racial Pattern in ‘Adventures of Huckleberry Finn’.” *American Literary Realism*, vol. 33, no. 3, Spring 2001, pp. 261-279. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/27747032.

Dylan, Bob. “John Wesley Harding.” *John Wesley Harding*, Columbia Records, 1967, track 1. *Bob Dylan*, www.bobdylan.com/songs/john-wesley-harding/.

Ellis, Millen. “Recommended: Helen Hunt Jackson.” *The English Journal*, vol. 71, no. 8, Dec. 1982, pp. 55-56. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/816447.

Forbes, Jack D. “The Historian and the Indian: Racial Bias in American History.” *The Americas*, vol. 19, no. 4, Apr., 1963, pp. 349-362. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/979504.

Gaffney, Dennis. “‘American Indian’ or ‘Native American’?” *PBS Online*, 24 Apr. 2006, www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/fts/bismarck_200504A16.html.

Gard, Wayne. Review of *There Must Be a Lone Ranger: The American West in Film and Reality* by Jenni Calder. *Southwest Review*, vol. 60, no. 4, Autumn 1975, pp. 405-409. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43468781.

Gibney, Robert. Letter. *Prairie Schooner*, vol. 80, no. 1, Spring 2006, p. 223. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40638310.

Goodwyn, Larry. “The Frontier Myth and Southwestern Literature.” *American Libraries*, vol. 2, no. 4, Apr. 1971, pp. 359-366. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25618266.

Gotsch, Connie. “Following in his footsteps: Author documents locations in L'Amour’s novels.” *Four Corners Free Press*, Mar. 2007, www.fourcornersfreepress.com/news/2007/030702.htm.

Grover, Dorys Crow. “Taking Stock: A Larry McMurtry Casebook by Clay Reynolds.” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, vol. 95, no. 1, Jul. 1991, pp. 123-124. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/30240177.

Gwynne, S.C. *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*. Kobo ed., Scribner, 2010.

Harris, Helen L. “Mark Twain's Response to the Native American.” *American Literature*, vol. 46, no. 4, Jan. 1975, pp. 495-505. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2924574.

Hearne, Joanna. “John Wayne's Teeth: Speech, Sound and Representation in ‘Smoke Signals’ and ‘Imagining Indians’.” *Western Folklore*, vol. 64, no. 3/4, Film and Folklore, Summer - Fall 2005, pp. 189-208. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25474748.

Hinds, Harold E., Jr. “Mexican and Mexican-American Images in the Western Novels of Louis L'Amour.” *Latin American Literary Review*, vol. 5, no. 10, Special Issue of *Chicano Literature*, Spring 1977, pp. 129-141. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20119070.

Hollick, Julian Crandall. “The American West in the European Imagination.” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, vol. 42, no. 2, The European's

American West, Spring 1992, pp. 17-21. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/4519470.

Holwerda, Jane. "Nautdah or Cynthia." *Hppr*, 8 Mar. 2016, www.hppr.org/post/nautdah-or-cynthia.

Kempton, Murray. "That Damned Cowboy." *The Spectator Archive*, The Spectator, archive.spectator.co.uk/article/27th-april-1962/5/that-damned-cowboy.

Lemann, Nicholas. "Tall in the Saddle." *Nytimes*, 9 June 1985, movies2.nytimes.com/books/99/01/10/specials/mcmurtry-dove.html.

Linck, Charles E., Jr. Review of *Larry McMurtry* by Charles D. Peavy. *The South Central Bulletin*, vol. 41, no. 1/2, Spring - Summer 1981, p. 25. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3187417.

Luhr, William. "The Scarred Woman behind the Gun: Gender, Race, and History in Recent Westerns." *Bilingual Review / La Revista Bilingüe*, vol. 20, no. 1, January-April 1995, pp. 3744. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25745252.

Melichar, Don. "Recommended: Larry McMurtry." *The English Journal*, vol. 75, no. 8, Dec. 1986, pp. 49-50. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/819080.

Minus, Ed. "Westerns." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 118, no. 1, Winter 2010, pp. 82-90. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40542522.

Pack, Sam. "Constructing 'The Navajo': Visual and Literary Representation from inside and out." *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 15, no. 1, Spring 2000, pp. 137-156. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1409592.

Padget, Martin. "Claiming, Corrupting, Contesting: Reconsidering 'The West' in Western American Literature." *American Literary History*, vol. 10, no. 2, Summer 1998, pp. 378-392. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/490170.

Reynolds, R. Clay. Review of *Larry McMurtry and the Victorian Novel* by Roger Jones; *Larry McMurtry and the West: An Ambivalent Relationship* by Mark Busby. *South Central Review*, vol. 14, no. 1, Spring 1997, pp. 77-79. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3189758.

Rosenthal, Nicolas G. "Representing Indians: Native American Actors on Hollywood's Frontier." *Western Historical Quarterly*, vol. 36, no. 3, Autumn 2005, pp. 328-352. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25443194.

Seals, Dan. "God Must Be a Cowboy." *Rebel Heart*, Liberty Records, 1983, track 7. *Azlyrics*, www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/danseals/godmustbeacowboyatheart.html.

Shively, JoEllen. "Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western Films Among American Indians and Anglos." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 57, no. 6, Dec. 1992, pp. 725-734. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2096119.

Tangum, Marion. "Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove*: 'This Is What We Call Home.'" *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*, vol. 45, no. 1/2, 1991, pp. 61-73. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1346924.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Directed by Sergio Leone, United Artists, 1966.

"Twain's Indians." *Xroads*, University of Virginia, xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/Indians/twain3.html.

Woal, Linda Kowall and Michael Woal. “Romaine Fielding’s Real Westerns.” *Journal of Film and Video*, vol. 47, no. 1/3, The Western, Spring-Fall 1995, pp. 725. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20688062.

BIO-DATA

Name : Alexander Lalrinzama

Father's Name : John Lalruata Sailo

Address : B-37, Mac Donald Hill, Zarkawt, Aizawl, Mizoram – 796001

Phone No : (+91) 9856548050

Educational Qualifications:

Class	Board/ University	Year of Passing	Division/ Grade	Percentage
Class X	ICSE	1998	First	Grade 7
Class XII	ISC	2000	Distinction	85%
B.A. (Hons)	Delhi University	2003	Second	55%
M.A.	Delhi University	2005	Second	56%
NET	UGC	2012	JRF	

Ph.D. Regn. No. and Date: MZU/Ph.D./618 of 09.05.2014

Other Relevant Information:

List of publications and papers presented at Seminars/ Symposiums:

Sl. No.	Year	Title of Research Paper/ Seminar Presented	Name of book/ journal	Publication details (Place/ publishers) with ISBN/ISSN
1.	2015	Participated as Translator in the National Workshop-cum-Seminar on Translation of Contemporary Short Stories & Tales – Mizo to English	*Contemporary Short Stories from Mizoram*	Published by Sahitya Akademi. ISBN: 978-93-86771-45-2
2.	2016	Indigeneity and the Forces of Modernity: The Native American Situation		Yet to be released
3.	2016	Representation of the Marginalized in Silko's *Ceremony*	*MZU Journal of Literature and Cultural Studies*	Published by Dept. of English, MZU. ISSN: 2348-1188
4.	2016	The Marginalized Elements in the Western	*Claiming the Difference: Identity in Literatures and Cultures*	Published by Authors Press. ISBN: 978-93-87281-72-1
5.	2019	Towards a Better Understanding of Native American Tribes		Yet to be released

PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE

NAME OF CANDIDATE	: Alexander Lalrinzama
DEGREE	: Ph.D.
DEPARTMENT	: English

TITLE OF THESIS	: **Critiquing the Representation of Native Americans in Selected Narratives of Louis L'Amour and Larry McMurtry**
DATE OF ADMISSION	: 29.07.2013
APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL	:
1. BOS	: 30.04.2014
2. SCHOOL BOARD	: 09.05.2014
REGISTRATION NO. & DATE	: MZU/Ph.D./618 of 09.05.2014
EXTENSION (IF ANY)	: N.A.

Head

Department of English

turnitin **Turnitin Originality Report**

Thesis by Alexander Lalrinzama

From Alexander (Prof. Baral)

Processed on 20-Mar-2019 1:26 PM IST
ID: 1096510944
Word Count: 62854

Similarity Index	Similarity by Source	
4%	Internet Sources:	4%
	Publications:	2%
	Student Papers:	2%