



# *Land, Sky, and People: The Southwest Defined*

JAMES W. BYRKIT

The fact remains that, while we have some conception of the Southwest as a whole, we are not at all happy with the names by which the region is usually designated. A region ought to have a name, simple and suggestive of its distinctive qualities, because to lack a name is to invite fuzziness of treatment for any entity which one singles out for systematic study.

—Edward Spicer & Raymond H. Thompson  
*Plural Society in the Southwest*

## THE PROBLEM: NO CONSISTENT DEFINITION

In 1971, the American regional geographer D. W. Meinig published his well-received and now highly regarded monographic study, *Southwest: Three Peoples in Geographical Change, 1500–1970*, a book focusing on the historical geography of the “American Southwest.” In this work, Meinig bluntly stated the basic problem related to the region’s identity: “The Southwest is a distinctive place to the American mind but a some-

This composition is not intended to be a scholarly monograph, but, rather, an essay—empirical yet speculative, documented but irreverent. Most of the “facts” here are self-evident and well known. I have broken no new scholarly ground, I have used virtually no primary sources, and I have taken much from such tertiary sources as college textbooks, maps, encyclopedias and other reference books. Like several other recent contributors to *Journal of the Southwest*, I am deeply grateful to Joseph Wilder for his patience, encouragement, tolerance, and general cerebral stimulation. However, the words in this are all mine. Dr. Wilder’s gentle and cautionary hand has not always prevailed, so any imprudence appears here despite his advice and because of his tolerance. In these ways, as well as many others, he is the ideal editor.

JAMES BYRKIT is professor of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Office of Environmental Science at Northern Arizona University. He is the author of *Forging the Copper Collar* (1982), editor of Charles Lummis’s *Letters from the Southwest* (1989), and has published more than thirty articles, chapters, and reviews, most of them on Southwest topics.

what blurred place on American maps, which is to say that everyone knows that there is a Southwest but there is little agreement as to just where it is." Much-respected Southwest bibliographer T. M. Pearce concurred: "The 'Southwest' is a term more easily felt and understood than defined."

"There are regions in the United States," historian John Caughey wrote, "—New England, the South, and the Great Plains, for example—which have fixed and obvious boundaries and therefore exactness of meaning. But the term Southwest . . . is by contrast a variable which has meant almost all things to all men. . . . And, although there is a Southwest to and for which Nature does certain things differently than for other parts of the United States, its geographical boundaries are blurred rather than sharp, and ordinary maps do not make it clear."

In his work, Meinig summarized the duality of the "Southwest's" identity. It is, quite simply, both a place and a state of mind, never the same place to two people at the same time and often not the same place in any one person's mind at different times.

Nearly everyone who writes about "the Southwest" appears to feel compelled, even obligated, to define it very early. "Prudence," wrote John Caughey, "suggests that anyone proposing to talk about this region should begin by searching for a definition." This gesture, at once a caveat and a rationalization, suggests an insecure and defensive attitude concerning the matter, and it exemplifies the lack of agreement on the Southwest's location.

Many have tried to tell us where their particular Southwest is:

Who can say precisely where it begins? Rolling down U.S. 54 to junction with U.S. 66 at Tucumcari, I saw the Southwest gradually appear, as the land grew more barren and beautiful; and by the time I had entered New Mexico and was climbing steadily into the Upper Sonoran life-zone, to piñon and juniper and even higher to ponderosa pine at Flagstaff, I sensed around me that vast complex of mineral mountains, saguaro and mesquite desert, and those mostly subterranean rivers—the Gila, the San Juan, and the Bill Williams—all seeking union with *the* water-course of all the Southwest, that old canyon-carving, silt-laden, turbine-turning, crop-nurturing, gulf-bound Rio Colorado. The Mesa Verde, Shiprock, and the Grand Canyon to the north; the descent to Lower Sonoran in the south, the ruinous smelters at Clarkdale and Jerome, the

hellish open pit at Morenci, its copper-tailings pistachio-colored; Pinos Altos, and Cochise's Stronghold; and before me in the west, my homeland on the coastal plain.

So has Lawrence Clark Powell, the premier bibliographer of the region, distilled *his* Southwest in an introduction to a reprint of Edwin Corle's *Figtree John*, published in 1971. Earlier, in an article which appeared in *Arizona Highways* (1958), Powell agreed with this designation, saying that the Southwest included "the lands lying west of the Pecos, north of the [Mexican] Border, south of the Mesa Verde and the Grand Canyon, and east of the mountains which wall off Southern California and make it a land in itself." Yet in another place, one of Powell's own books, *Southwestern Book Trails*, and at another time, 1963, he said: "It is at the heart that I take my stand; at the heart of hearts, the *cor cordium*, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, that ancient crossing on the Rio Grande. . . . Albuquerque is the midway point [of the Southwest], roughly equidistant between Fort Worth and Los Angeles." This "midway point," curiously, is on the eastern fringe of his other perceptions, and Fort Worth is 609 miles *east* of Albuquerque. In still another of his own books, *Southwest Classics*, published in 1974, Powell (acknowledging the earlier Albuquerque-*cor cordium* quote) said of the Southwest simply: "Its heartland is Arizona and New Mexico." In a more recent (1984) book by Powell, a short novel called *El Morro*, he implies that at the centuries-old travelers' stopping place in extreme western New Mexico, which bears the same name as the novel, one can find an even more westward and precise "magnetic Southwest."

But Larry Powell's ambivalent perspectives can be explained—and understood. Like many other people, he, too, obviously did not always agree with himself as to the precise locale of this region. More important, the difference between his 1963 Southwest and his 1974 version reflects a change in many people's perception of the region's location. As the result of a definition that has been evolving for more than a hundred and fifty years, "the Southwest" has steadily moved farther south and west and has become more and more intensely confined.

Southwestern writer Mary Austin, for instance, in 1888 came to the southernmost San Joaquin Valley in California and later to the California-Nevada borderlands along the Great Basin margin, the latter to become the setting for several of her early books. One of these, *Land of Little Rain* (1903), became known as a "Southwest classic." But thirty-





six years after coming to California, in her last book about the region, another classic, *The Land of Journey's Ending* (1924), she concluded that the heart of the Southwest lay "between the Rio Colorado and the upper course of the Rio Grande." "No such natural boundaries, but the limits of habitableness, define it north and south," she wrote. "All of the country east of the Grand Cañon, west and north of the Jornada del Muerto, is like the middle life of a strong man, splendidly ordered." In her case, then, as well as drastically curtailing the region's eastern limits, she also trimmed off a good portion of the Southwest's western territory, including that part she had used as the locale for *Land of Little Rain*.

Scholarly example illustrates this evolution. In 1948 *National Geographic* published a map entitled "Southwestern United States." The map included the states of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico in their entirety, with a narrow margin of southern Oregon, Idaho, and Wyoming, as well as bits of southwest Nebraska, western Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas thrown in. In addition, it encompassed thin northern border strips of three states of Mexico: Baja California, Sonora, and Chihuahua. The *Geographic's* 1977 map, "The Southwest," included all of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico, but showed no details of any of the surrounding areas. However, a version published in 1982, strongly and conspicuously influenced by D. W. Meinig, contains all of Arizona and New Mexico, with the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua only north of the 29th Parallel. In addition, the map shows California's Mohave and Colorado Deserts as being the only parts of that state belonging to the Southwest. And just snippets of Utah and Colorado south of the 37th Parallel are included in this latest version of the *National Geographic's* Southwest. While the map shows Texas west of the 103rd Meridian, both this area and eastern New Mexico contain very little detail on the map when contrasted with the Arizona and western New Mexico details.

But, again, this evolution reflects the general changes in perception that characterize the efforts Southwesterners, themselves, have made to identify the region. For the most part, those writers who have actually lived in the region seem to be more in harmony than in disagreement about the Southwest's boundaries.

Seasoned visitors, Albuquerque-born (1888) Erna Fergusson said, have their own way of identifying the region: "'You know. When you get that first clear breath of high, dry air. That's the Southwest.' Along about La Junta on the Santa Fe when the Kansas wheat-fields drop be-

hind and the horizon becomes a blue and jagged glory; that is Colorado. Northern Colorado belongs to the West of Wyoming and Montana, which knows cattle but not the Mexican, which has more cold and less laziness than the Southwest and was settled by Northerners; but southern Colorado is altogether of the Southwest. And its Indian ruins in the Mesa Verde belong to the archaeological region south of them.”

Erna Fergusson allowed that there was an argument to include Oklahoma and west Texas, too, as well as Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila, Mexico. But she declared, “There is no argument about the twin states of New Mexico and Arizona. They are Southwest.” And, in particular, the western three-fourths of New Mexico together with the adjoining eastern three-fourths of Arizona.

And the most passionate regional chauvinist of them all, Charles Lummis, said that the Southwest was composed of “the enormous area [which] roughly includes New Mexico and Arizona with parts of the regions next adjacent on all sides.” And he made the modest claim that “it was indeed I who first gave that name, ‘the Southwest.’” Actually, the “Southwest” Lummis visited and wrote about was limited to places within seventy-five miles north or south of the main Santa Fe Railroad tracks between Kingman, Arizona, and Lamy, New Mexico.

These well-respected Southwest lovers share pretty much the same notion about the boundaries of the region. Apparently both modern-day serious scholars and the Southwest regional writers of the past, particularly the longtime residents of Arizona and New Mexico as well as the people who were born and raised in these states (to the frustration and dismay of many Texans), have a more narrow and precise definition of the region. Steeped in their region’s unique ambiance, most of them seem to be in agreement with Erna Fergusson and with *National Geographic’s* most recent version.

Cultural geographer Raymond Gastil refines the area, which he calls “the interior Southwest,” even more closely:

Today the borders of the region can be defined by a series of contact zones. To the south the Mexican border separates the dominance of two distinct ways of life. On the west the lower Colorado River irrigated areas represent a contact zone between California and the southwest. The zone has two Indian reservations, a large Mexican-American population, is rural-agricultural (including cotton), and is in the oasis-style of all the interior Southwest border-

lands. Discontinuities of desert and canyon cut this world off from the rest of California and Las Vegas [Nev.]. To the northwest the contact between the outliers of Mormon culture and the Navaho and Ute reservations is determinative. On the east the edge of continuous plain farming separates the Western South from the Interior Southwest. The hardest borders to define are to the north and east of El Paso in Texas. In southern Colorado, the limits of the solid expansion of the Spanish Americans of northern New Mexico form the approximate line, while in Texas the cultural influence of El Paso dies rapidly to the east.

But not everyone agrees. Mabel Major and Rebecca Smith, in their book, *Southwest Heritage, A Literary History* (1938), included a map that does show Arizona, but also has Arkansas and Louisiana. In 1972, the University of New Mexico's T. M. Pearce, a Southwest bibliographer since 1933, said the area was composed of Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona. And as recently as 1980, the UNM's American Studies Department declared that "the Southwest is identified as that region encompassing New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Texas, and Oklahoma." But UNM has no corner on such chauvinistic geographical centrism. Tucson, Scottsdale, Albuquerque, Socorro, and numerous other places call themselves the "center of the Southwest."

Scholars from outside the region have endorsed similar parameters. In 1970, Yale University historian Howard Roberts Lamar used the term "far Southwest" to denote Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and most of Nevada. After discussing the matter for several pages, outsider historian Eugene W. Hollon said in his book, *The Southwest: Old and New* (1961), "the term 'Southwest' as hereinafter used refers only to the four large states of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona." But Hollon's book, as Larry Powell has pointed out, "is woefully neglectful of Arizona." Historian of the West, and of California in particular, John Caughey points out the most spacious—gargantuan, in fact—Southwest to date: "By implication, at least, Walter P. Webb . . . and Abraham G. Mezerik . . . come . . . to the conclusion that the Southwest is that part of the United States—about three-fourths [of the nation] . . . which is not the favored Northeast." This reference makes Caughey's own definition appear to be drastically pruned. The Southwest, Caughey wrote, "as I see it, stretches from central Oklahoma and Texas to southern California. Much of Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and northern Califor-

nia belong, so that it [the Southwest] embraces the lower left-hand quarter of the parallelogram that is the United States.”

More broadly popular and less directly involved sources have also failed to participate in the *National Geographic's* development of a Southwest definition. *U.S. News & World Report* magazine identifies New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana as its “Southwest,” leaving out Arizona, Colorado, and Utah entirely. The South-Western Publishing Co. has its home office in Cincinnati, Ohio, with branch offices in West Chicago, Illinois; Dallas, Texas; Pelham Manor, New York; Palo Alto, California; and Brighton, England. Fodor's “Southwest” travel guide includes as belonging to the region, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. In 1981, Max Apple edited a “Southwestern” anthology that included writers from Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona. In all of the sources emanating some distance from the region, Arizona comes up as the runt among the regional litter, with Texas being the favorite child. In view of the potentially influential and the broadly popular appeal of the *National Geographic*, perhaps some changes will take place soon.

Joel Garreau, also observing from outside the region (*The Nine Nations of North America*, 1981), has denoted a Southwest identity which is as silly as it is ignorant. Void of human sensibilities above the pop culture level, the book's appearance tells us that the regional books that traditionally unenlightened and geographically insensitive trade publishing houses send out still enjoy a strong mass market. Garreau, as have so many pop-culture writers, overemphasizes the Hispanic qualities of the region, and claims that Los Angeles is the region's capital.

Arnold C. Miller (*Ghost Towns of the Southwest*) suggests that the Southwest can be found where ghost towns exist. And the United States government has almost as many “Southwest” definitions as there are agencies and departments within the bureaucratic colossus. Like the blind men feeling the elephant, there are as many perceptions of the Southwest as there are people to perceive it.

Much of this disagreement is historical. The Library of Congress classification system observes that prior to the United States' war with Mexico, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri comprised the “Old Southwest.” It designates that part of the United States that roughly corresponds to the Old Spanish province of New Mexico, including Arizona, New Mexico, and the southern parts of Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and California as comprising the “New South-

west.” Generally speaking, between 1848 and the Civil War the term “Southwest” cartographically designated Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi. For many observers prior to 1900—and to many still today—the Southwest was simply part of the “Far West” or the “West.” Between 1865 and 1920, Charles Lummis notwithstanding, the expression usually referred to Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas. As late as 1935, two scholars, Rupert N. Richardson and Carl Coke Rister (both born in Texas), in their book, *The Greater Southwest*, wrote: “the Southwest or the Greater Southwest includes the country of the United States west of the eastern border of the Great Plains (about the ninety-eighth parallel) and south of the northern boundaries of the tier of states extending from Kansas to California,” and they then said that Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, and California constituted “the Greater Southwest.”

At the same time, in contrast to such broad inclusions, archaeologists Earl Morris and Alfred V. Kidder narrowed the dimensions of the Southwest greatly by emphasizing the rich pre-Columbian pueblo sites radiating out two hundred and fifty miles west, south, and east of the Four Corners area. Anthropologists, too, have tended to focus on a similar, relatively small locale. And most of those writers—ethnologists or otherwise—who focus tightly on the region honor, roughly, the lower one-fourth of Utah and the lower one-third of Colorado as part of their Southwest.

Some observers emphasize the Hispanic tradition. In 1921, one of New Mexico’s most celebrated artists, Gerald Cassidy, painted a combination map and mural on the wall of the Santa Fe Room in Santa Fe, New Mexico’s La Fonda, the Southwest’s most venerated hotel. With strong emphasis on conquistadores and the Catholic church, the mural includes Arizona minus its northwestern corner together with southeastern Utah, the southern one-sixth of Colorado, the Texas llano, a northeastern part of Sonora, a tiny northwestern piece of Chihuahua, and all of New Mexico.

Historian Herbert Eugene Bolton’s “Spanish Borderlands” delineated the Southwest as being made up of regions that had been conquered by, occupied by, and culturally influenced by Spain and Mexico. Bolton once wrote, in an offhand way that was quite literally parenthetical, that “the Southwest (the region from Louisiana to California)” constituted his scholarly demesne.

Erna Fergusson mentioned the Mexican states of Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila as part of her “broader” definition of the Southwest, but other people include such places as being part of the region’s heartland. The Elizabeth B. Steinheimer Collection of Children’s Materials on the Southwest, a bicultural collection of the Tucson Public Library, defines the Southwest geographically as including “all of Arizona, New Mexico, Sonora and Chihuahua, and parts of California, Colorado, Texas and Utah.” University of Arizona anthropologist Edward H. Spicer set the area even farther southward toward Hispanic influence: “This region extends from the southern Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico to the San Juan River in Utah, and from the Pecos River in New Mexico to the Gulf of California.” One United States Department of Agriculture document states: “We consider the natural Southwest region [to be] that area shared between the U.S. and adjacent Mexico from longitudes 103° to 118° and from latitude 37° 31’ to latitude 27°, including all or parts of the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and California and all or part of Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila.”

The late Southwest ethnologist Charles DiPeso said that he considered terms such as “The Southwest,” “The American Southwest,” “The Mexican Southwest,” “The Greater Southwest,” and other similar designations to be a “scientific embarrassment caused by cultural imperialism.” “Unfortunately,” he wrote, “some of these terms are well established in the literature even though they can be defined only in terms of modern political boundaries and consequently are of little use in cultural and geographical studies.” DiPeso specified a large region bounded by the 38th Parallel on the north (from Wichita, Kansas, to San Francisco, California), the Tropic of Cancer (23° 27’ N.L.) on the south, the 97th Meridian on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west. He called this region the “‘Gran Chichimeca,’ . . . an honorable term . . . used by pre-Hispanic Mesoamericans and Iberians alike” to constitute his Southwest. DiPeso posited that topography, aridity, and a common prehistoric culture tied this broad region, the Gran Chichimeca, together. “This region,” he wrote, “encompasses a unique combination of geographical and meteorological features—high mountain chains which contain five and sometimes as many as seven major biotic zones within a relatively small vertical land area, extremely localized rain, wind and thunderstorm patterns; and excessive diurnal and annual temperature

shifts.” DiPeso stated that this place “has always been a land of challenge—a harsh country of drastically changing moods which has constantly tested the mettle of man.”

And Mexican ethnologist Miguel León-Portilla, taking the Hispanic concept even further, wrote: “Most commonly, within an ethnohistorical frame, [the Southwest] is thought of as including the U.S. states of Arizona and New Mexico and the Mexican states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Chihuahua, and Durango.” Like most other things, regionalism can be quite relative, too.

In the same vein, another source—*Northern New Spain: A Research Guide*, by Thomas C. Barnes, Thomas H. Naylor, and Charles W. Polzer—extends the region even further than DiPeso’s or León-Portilla’s boundaries. This research guide points out that the subject “Spanish Colonial Studies of the Southwest,” contains “an intrinsic contradiction because there was no ‘Southwest’ in Spanish colonial times. . . . Mexicans still refer to the tier of northern [Mexican] states as ‘El Norte,’ although a vast part of the former colonial territory has now become part of the United States by conquest and purchase. The people of the United States customarily call the ceded territory the ‘Southwest.’” The guide goes on to say, “the two politically separate sectors have often been called the ‘greater Southwest.’ Students and scholars have long recognized that this extensive geographical zone is a region of analogous cultures. Whether ‘southwestern’ or ‘norteño,’ whether North American or Mexican, the region possesses distinct cultural features that lend meaning to the designation ‘Southwest’ or ‘El Norte.’ The meaning connotes more than a compass direction from earlier colonial centers. A final descriptive definition has not yet been given to this region. . . . The geographic region encompassed in this guide is bordered on the south by the 22nd parallel of north latitude, and on the north by the 38th. The eastern limit is the 94th meridian of west longitude; the western limit, the 123rd. . . . Such an extensive part of the North American continent ought to have a distinctive name, but neither usage nor history has given us one.” While *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide* does not make clear that this extravagant encompassment should be called “The American Southwest,” it does intend to identify an area where certain types of geographical features together with certain Indian and Hispanic cultural traits traditionally called “Southwestern” dominate both history and landscape.

At first, Southwest ethnologist Bertha P. Dutton begged the ques-

tion, and then turned around and became quite specific, despite an awkward attitude toward Southwestern cartography, for an admittedly self-serving reason:

The Southwest is an area with no specific limits or definite boundary, but for the purpose of culture studies, ancient and modern, it includes all of New Mexico and Arizona, the southwest corner of Colorado, southern Utah, southwestern [?] Nevada, and the California border of the Colorado River. The Greater Southwest adds the southern California Indians to the Pacific coast, [adds] western Texas and [then] dips down into northern Mexico on occasion.

In a way, just like Bertha Dutton, almost all of these writers, including, to a degree, D. W. Meinig, have employed regional designations that are conceptual, speculative, self-serving, subjective, and arbitrary. What they all lack concerning this identification problem is a methodology that uses more objective data and concrete—and consistently unique—identification factors.

Actually, several students of the American Southwest have made efforts to identify unique physical traits characteristic of the region. Ross Calvin, in his classic work *Sky Determines* (1934), focused on climatic factors, particularly aridity and its related topics: precipitation; native flora and fauna; crops; and underground water storage and recharge. From these considerations, he attempted to explain Indian, Hispanic, and Anglo economic, historic, and cultural patterns. Contrary to popular belief, as Calvin makes clear from the book's beginning, he actually is writing about New Mexico, and mostly about southwestern New Mexico at that, even though the term "Southwest" creeps into his language occasionally. Everything considered, however, Calvin's work is deep on romantic impressions, reflections, and speculations ("possibly," "seems," "probably," "maybe," "perhaps," "one wonders," and other weasel words), but is shallow on data. And he doesn't go far enough in any serious attempt to explain factually—that is to say, meteorologically—what causes the region's climate. Ultimately, Calvin's book stands simply as part of that great body of belles lettres which constitutes virtually all of the popular literature about the Southwest. The belletristes and other dilettantes take the region's conspicuous and dazzling physical traits and try to force them into a fanciful shape and substance both significant and profound.

In his treatise *Southwest* Meinig, a Syracuse University professor, at-

tempted to develop a much more documentable presentation on the subject. Now identified as being both “historical geography” and “geographical history,” the seminal book focuses on, in Meinig’s words, “the changing areal relationships of the several [Indian, Hispano, and Anglo] distinct social groups [of the Southwest], rather than upon contemporary patterns and problems of man and his use of the land.” Meinig persuades his readers rather well in his effort to support his belief that “the term ‘Southwest’ is of course an ethnocentric one.” While his treatment is somewhat narrow and brief, his methodology is a giant step forward.

More recently, in *The Arizona Atlas* (1981), two University of Arizona professors, Melvin E. Hecht and Richard W. Reeves, compare the “Traditional Southwest”—the states of Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona—with the “Contemporary Southwest,” “a more limited territory embracing Arizona, New Mexico, and the Rio Grande country of Texas near El Paso.” By superimposing maps developed by several Southwest scholars—Ruth F. Hale, “A Map of Vernacular Regions in America,” (1971); John W. Morris, *The Southwestern United States* (1970); D. W. Meinig *The Southwest: Three Peoples in Geographic Change, 1500–1970* (1970); Alvar W. Carlson, “A Bibliography of the Geographers’ Contributions to Understanding the American Southwest (Arizona and New Mexico)” (1972); Clifford M. Zierer, ed., *California and the Southwest* (1956); and Richard L. Nostrand, “The Hispanic-American Borderland: Delimitation of an American Culture Region” (1970)—Hecht and Reeves have created what they call a “coincidence of definitions.”

Hecht’s and Reeves’s overlaid map makes graphic an intensification of definitional agreement that creates a denser regional identity as more definitions overlap. This technique does, it would appear, move toward a consensus of defining a Southwest “heartland.” Its composite nature displays a feathering-out of more divergent views as one’s eye moves away from the center of the map’s dense core toward its less dense, fuzzier periphery. But this method is as troubling as it is satisfying. Canvassing opinions as a technique to establish a region’s heartland may be somewhat democratic and eclectic, but it is not necessarily valid or complete. And it still lacks a test of “objectivity.” Popularity polls do not of themselves establish knowledge.

Even more disconcerting about this issue of “defining the Southwest” is the failure of any writers—or artists or geographers or ethnologists—

to be anything more than one- or, occasionally, two-dimensional about it. The various disciplines remain Balkanized about the subject, a treatment not unlike the ten blind men feeling the elephant. This failure to be “crossdisciplinary” and “holistic” strongly characterizes the many diverse studies, popular as well as scholarly, of the region. Rarely do Southwestern historians reveal much familiarity with Southwestern geology or Southwestern novels. Rarely do Southwestern fiction writers seem to have any knowledge about—or any interest in—Southwestern demographics or Southwestern water law, John Nichols’s *The Milagro Beanfield War* notwithstanding.

How many Southwestern archaeologists have read Marguerite Noble’s classic *Filaree*? Arguably the finest novel ever written about Arizona, it ranks, too, as one of the best books on any subject ever written by any native-born Arizonan. Writers of Southwestern history should read Leslie Silko’s *Ceremony* if they care to get into something other than a paternalistic apologist’s orientation toward the region’s Native Americans. Luci Tapahonso’s poetry provides the same warts and wrinkles of contemporary Native American life. Southwestern geographers should read Rudolfo Anaya’s *Bless Me, Ultima* if they want to get another—and fuller—perspective concerning the difference between the Southwest’s basin and range area and the Llano Estacado, as well as a more intense understanding about the “presence” of the Pecos River.

Most of the discrete areas of Southwest concern, academic and popular alike, refuse or at least fail to connect the region’s reality with the forces, forms, and processes that do the most to dictate the region’s destiny, that is to say, its *political reality* and its *politics*. In *The Milagro Beanfield War*, for example, John Nichols reduces politics to the adolescent level of political understanding, with stereotyped greedy and brutish villain-buffoon developers pitted against the humble but wise and wily “good” Mother-Earth people. Frank Waters did a similar thing in *The Man Who Killed the Deer*.

There is little useful explanation of *real* political issues or dynamics in this kind of romantic literature, so that what we get are caricatures and fairy stories, designed to tug at our heartstrings and compel us to hiss the villains. In Edward Abbey’s *Desert Solitaire* we can sense strongly the passion Abbey feels for the fragile beauty of the region and the indignation he feels toward those people who would befoul, bludgeon, and whack away at the region’s dramatic but delicate primeval beauty. But in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, novelist Abbey shows the same simplistic pro-

clivities found in John Nichols's work. The slapstick comedy and the unlikely characters detract from the book's credibility.

Most popular Southwestern writers are not native to the region, and they appear to write in order to dazzle, to captivate, and to entertain their non-native readers. *The Milagro Beanfield War* and *The Monkey Wrench Gang* present romantically stereotyped Southwest circumstances, heroes, and villains so distant from approachable reality that the books generate little broad and positive public concern or political action. In effect, writers like Abbey and Nichols preach primarily to the fashionably converted, a marketplace with a readership so faddish and ephemeral that within a few years they are voting Republican and driving gas-guzzling road hogs.

More than anything else in serious scholarship about the Southwest, the lack of effort (laziness? spiteful reluctance? subject area chauvinism? obliviousness?) to understand and respect an interdisciplinary approach to the region stands out and arrests a curious person's attention. Perhaps the failure to recognize the limitations of discrete approaches is one key explanation as to why there is no agreement about the "Southwest's" exact location. What all of these various self-perceived "sensitive" and "thoughtful" and "scholarly" people have in common is an attraction to a mirage, a "romance" about the region, a romance custom-tailored to their own appetites and proclivities and background and training, together with the fantasies about the region that these influences engender. Among them are historians, essayists, ethnologists, journalists, editors, and other image perpetuators who see Southwest poverty with its grimly bizarre attendant qualities as something fatalistic and "quaint" and "tragic."

Not only are the various disciplinary and interest areas of study sharply categorical and often smothered with investigational overkill, but most of the published studies of the region are simplistic and intellectually sterile narratives with no well thought-out practical suggestions for improvement of the Southwest human condition about them. One would expect such a level of concern from the *belletristes*. But many of the "serious" anthropologists, historians, artists, essayists, fiction writers, and journalists appear to have learned very little provocative from all of this. And there is no thoughtfully integrated mapping of the environmental lessons to be learned or demographic patterns to be identified and understood. For them, the Southwest is a place only to be observed, described, loved and, in many cases, worshipped.

Without much argument one can state that there are several Southwesterns. There is a geometric Southwest, an aesthetic Southwest, and a political Southwest. We could read forever about the historical Southwest, the physiographic Southwest, the commercial Southwest, and the climatic Southwest. Volumes of journals, books, and raw data document the prehistoric Southwest, the contemporary Indian Southwest, and the bureaucratic Southwest. Browse in a university library and it will take you days, even weeks, to complete the sections on the Hispanic Southwest, the Anglo Southwest, the mythic Southwest, the biotic Southwest, and the literary Southwest. None of these various regions will be exactly like any other; yet there may be some agreement among the different categories of criteria, some kind of overlapping density of unity that gives the region a substantial degree of specificity. We *use* the term "Southwest"; surely this term doesn't always connote something altogether unfocused and mythical. To the contrary, carefully using comparisons, one sometimes can find a rather amazing agreement among all of these perspectives and perceptions. The obvious differences, at first apparently great, actually become less significant when closely and comparatively viewed. These similarities are not coincidental, nor are they artificially created by scholars and other folks who want to tidy up things.

#### DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY

##### *Regionalism: A Traditional Academic Subject*

The first major step toward a geographical regional concept appeared in the works of the German geographers Karl Ritter, in the 1850s, and Friedrich Ratzel, in the 1880s. Further interest in regionalism was revitalized around the turn of the century, again among the Germans. American historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who espoused the "frontier thesis," in 1920 said that as the frontier disappears and "the nation settles down to the conditions of an occupied land, there will be emphasized the sectional differences arising from unlike geographic regions." A now-classic book, *American Regionalism*, published in 1938 by Howard Odum and Harry Estill Moore, tried to show that regionalism "may be the key to a better understanding of the past and the richer development of the future theoretical study of our society, and to the practical planning of its new frontiers." In 1939, Richard Hartshorne

carefully advocated the identification of “regions” so that “we can . . . seek the most intelligent basis or bases” for dividing the world into manageable areas of study.

Historian Merrill Jensen, who in 1951 edited *Regionalism in America*, admitted that “the region is a concept that cannot be reduced to simple formulas” and that it “was plain that the concept of ‘region’ meant different things to different academic disciplines, to administrators of state and federal governments and to executives of great industrial organizations. In other words,” Jensen stated, “the nature of a ‘region’ varies with the needs, purposes, and standards of those using the concept.” Nonetheless, Jensen reminded the reader, the very complexity of a regional approach had a “utility both as a tool for research and as an approach to [the day-to-day] problems of public administration.”

By 1975, sociologist Nathan Frazer, writing the foreword for Raymond Gastil’s *Cultural Regions of the United States* and contrasting the times with the 1930s, lamented: “American regionalism, it seems, is not much studied these days or if studied is not much in the public eye or the consciousness of opinion-makers.” In the same book, Gastil, himself, argued that seeing our society from a regional point of view “may generate new approaches that will lead to [an] improved understanding of ourselves, and in some areas to new social and economic policies.”

In 1972, esteemed geographer John Fraser Hart wrote:

Regional geography, the skillful description of areas and places, is the highest form of the geographer’s art. A good regional geography can bring an area to life and help us understand and appreciate what it is like, as well as how it came to be. Each region is distinctive and must be understood in its own terms, rather than according to some preconceived checklist. The regional geographer must know the land in all its moods and seasons and be sensitive to the values, aspirations, and talents of the people who live in it.

However, good regional geography, Robert P. Larkin and Gary L. Peters more recently have pointed out, “is also a scarce commodity. All too often,” they say, “regional geography amounts to little more than a windy exposition that catalogs everything that exists in a particular place. Thus, the importance of regional research in recent decades has waned, and systematic studies have tended to dominate” the scholarly

geographic scene. “Despite changing attitudes and approaches to geographic inquiry,” they conclude, “the regional concept remains an important one.”

### *Bioregionalism*

In the past fifteen years an innovative, interdisciplinary, and “holistic” approach to regional studies has attracted a number of devotees. Known as “bioregionalism,” this concept identifies geographical regions as areas whose cohesiveness is determined by shared and interrelated physical and cultural traits, as opposed to the traditional and arbitrary definitions established by political boundaries and “popular culture” identities, such as those pop-culture regions identified by Joel Garreau.

The bioregionalists believe that “bioregionalism calls for human society to be more closely related to nature, and to be more conscious of its locale, or region, or life-place. . . . It is a proposal to ground human cultures within natural systems, to get to know one’s place intimately in order to fit human communities to the Earth, not distort the Earth to our demands.” These new geographers find bioregional distinctions to be based on climate, biotic patterns and similarities, watersheds, landforms, elevation and physiography, historical and prehistorical activities, shared spiritual presence, and “functional” demographic patterns. In this pursuit, bioregionalists develop analyses of developmental patterns of demographics, human ecology, economics, and politics as they are related to a bioregion’s history of natural resource use. In particular, they try to focus on a region’s “carrying capacity,” “cross-cultural conflicts,” and “quality of life” considerations. Students of bioregionalism examine the significance of such bioregional expressions as “point of critical deterioration” and “point of irrevocable deterioration.” They ask that human cultural behavior fit in with nature, and they call for political self-government with such bioregions.

About the need for a bioregional understanding, Kirkpatrick Sale has said:

the crucial and perhaps only all-encompassing task is to understand *place*, the immediate specific place where we live. The kinds of soils and rocks under our feet; the source of the waters we drink; the meaning of the different kinds of winds; the common

insects, birds, mammals, plants, and trees; the particular cycles of the seasons; the times to plant and harvest and forage—these are the things that are necessary to know. The limits of its resources; the carrying capacity of its lands and waters; the places where it must not be stressed; the places where its bounties can best be developed; the treasures it holds and the treasures it withholds—these are the things that must be understood. And the cultures of the people of the populations native to the land and of those who have grown up with it, the human social and economic arrangements shaped by and adapted to the geomorphic ones, in both urban and rural settings—these are the things that must be appreciated.

A bioregion “is governed by nature, not legislature,” says Sale. “The first law is that the face of the earth is organized not into artificial states but natural regions, and those regions, while varying greatly in size, are mostly much more limited than those defined by national boundaries.”

The bioregionalists attempt to present concerns and identities about a region in a way that respects the deeply felt but usually ignored perspectives of the region’s native people. As yet, native Southwesterners have had little to say about the region’s character and identity; to date and for the most part, the region’s identity has come from only tourists and immigrants.

Kirkpatrick Sale has stated that a bioregion is “a life-territory, a place defined by its life forms, its topography and its biota, rather than by human dictates.” He goes on to say that

In maps of physiographic provinces and natural vegetation and soil distribution and forest belts and climatic types and riverine systems and land-use variations and all the other natural features the experts have diligently charted you begin to see something almost (appropriately enough) organic. For it turns out that bioregions are not only of different sizes but often can be seen to be like Chinese boxes, one within another, forming a complex arrangement from the largest to the smallest, depending upon which natural characteristics are dominant.

I intend here, to some observable degree, to honor the sensitivity and the sensibilities of the bioregionalists.

*The Geometric Southwest*

If “regional studies” have any justification and validity at all, surely there must be some way to ascertain an identification and a definition of where the region is that we want to study—in this case, the “American Southwest.” Where is it? What is it? Should we be talking here only about “the contiguous United States” or even “the United States”? Should we acknowledge “impressions” or be limited to a specific and measurable physical geographic place?

Let’s assume that we *should* care about identifying the Southwest as a region.

On a daytime airline flight from, say, St. Louis to Los Angeles, if you have a seat by the window and are curious enough to look out, you cannot, as you travel through the sky, ignore the flat Great Plains below you. And, eventually, on a clear day—a decreasingly frequent condition—you can perceive ahead toward the west the Rocky Mountains rising up roughly and suddenly from the flat plains. Once you are over Las Vegas, New Mexico, there is no doubt that this rugged region is different. West of the Llano Estacado and the Pecos River tones of browns and grays more than greens and blues dominate the land’s surface hues. And from the airplane, you also know that you are over the Southwest when you can see the rivers flowing toward the south or west instead of toward the east, cutting down in serpentine cañons from the Rockies through the Rio Grande Trough; the Central New Mexico and Arizona Highlands; and the Colorado Plateau. Mountains, valleys, deserts, and plateaus—these landforms constitute the Southwest, not plains, littorals, swamps, and tundra. The region is simply and observably *there*.

While the American Southwest’s many definitions have varied widely in criteria, concept, and physical location, there are certain qualities associated with the region—empirical and measurable factors—that would, given the chance, receive a consensual endorsement. For instance, most people would agree that such physiographic features as rugged mountains, rocky canyons, dry gulches, and unusually high elevations are acceptable traits that characterize the Southwest. Arbitrarily recognizing such climatic qualities as clean, cloudless air, extreme aridity, high summer air temperatures, extreme diurnal (twenty-four-hour) temperature ranges, and a much greater amount of insolation (hours of sunshine per

year) than the North American average as reasonably valid Southwestern qualities won't draw much dissent, either. Normally measurable census-type features such as ethnicity, language classification, source of livelihood, and other data—factors that distinguish regions as well as neighborhoods—are “objective,” too. There are acceptable empirical departure points. However, it is not proposed here to ascertain “the American Southwest” by “objective” methods alone. “Perceptions” and “impressions,” most metaphysicians would concede, mean a lot. But let us start out with a mathematical and quantifiable methodology.

If seriously contemplated, the expression “American Southwest” implies certain very specific, observable, measurable, and graphic characteristics, including traits that are geographic, geometric, and directional. As one segment of the four quadrants of the compass, the Southwest has a location that can be determined simply by dividing the contiguous United States into four geometrically determined sections.

Cartographers have identified a spot less than a mile to the northwest of Lebanon, Kansas, as the geographical center of the “conterminous” or “contiguous” forty-eight United States. Lebanon lies at 39° 55' North Latitude (39° 55' N.) and at 98° 32' West Longitude (98° 32' W.). The number of square miles of the area east of the meridian equals that of the area to the west. Likewise, the region north of 39° 55' N. equals in size the area to the south. The intersection of these two lines creates four quadrants. But these four quadrants are by no means the same size. Due to the physiographic configuration of the United States, the northeast quadrant is much smaller in square miles than the southeast quadrant. Accordingly, the northwest quadrant conspicuously exceeds the southwestern quadrant's size.

So, by logical definition here, the Southwest of the United States, purely in the geometric sense, lies south of 39° 55' N. and west of 98° 32' W. For a start, anyway, these lines should serve as practical—and semantic—reference borders for the location of the American Southwest by providing specific and explicit boundaries and orientation rather than by offering an implied and vaguely identified “region” (see map 1). Any greater effort to employ this methodology of regional division quickly becomes futile if not absurd. For example, as map 2 shows, a hexadic division is patently inappropriate, and any further attempt to use inflexible parallels and meridians becomes even more useless.

The farthest extension westward of the United States' Southwestern quadrant reaches approximately the 124th Meridian W. at Cape Men-

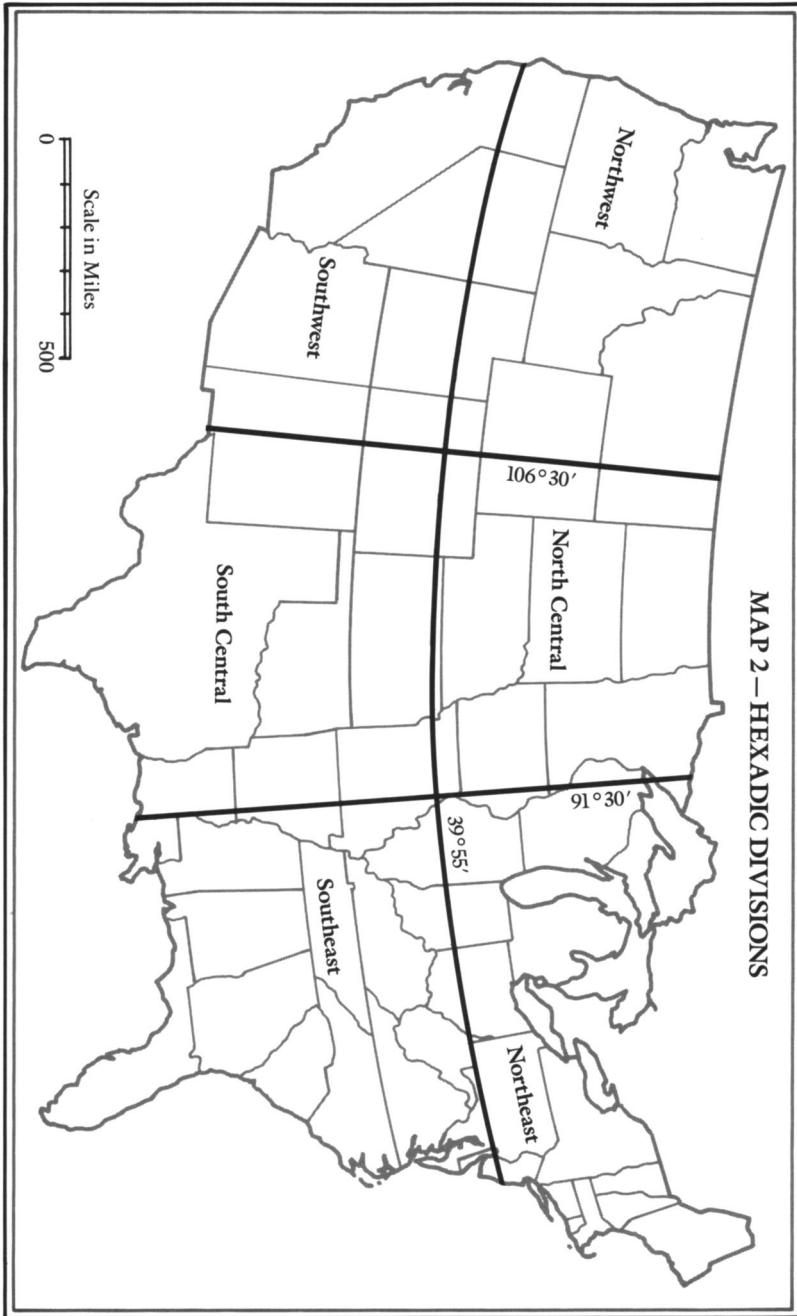
docino, California, a physiographic protrusion (124° 20' W.), while the region's southernmost point can be found near the extreme southern tip of the state of Texas, a political boundary, at 26° 10' N., a spot on the Rio Grande about halfway between the towns of Rio Grande City and McAllen. These vertical and horizontal boundaries, in turn, determine the quadrant's geometric center to be 111° 15' W. Longitude, 33° 00' N. Latitude, a place just a few miles east of Florence, Arizona. Many people probably would not find this location to be at all unreasonable (see map 3).

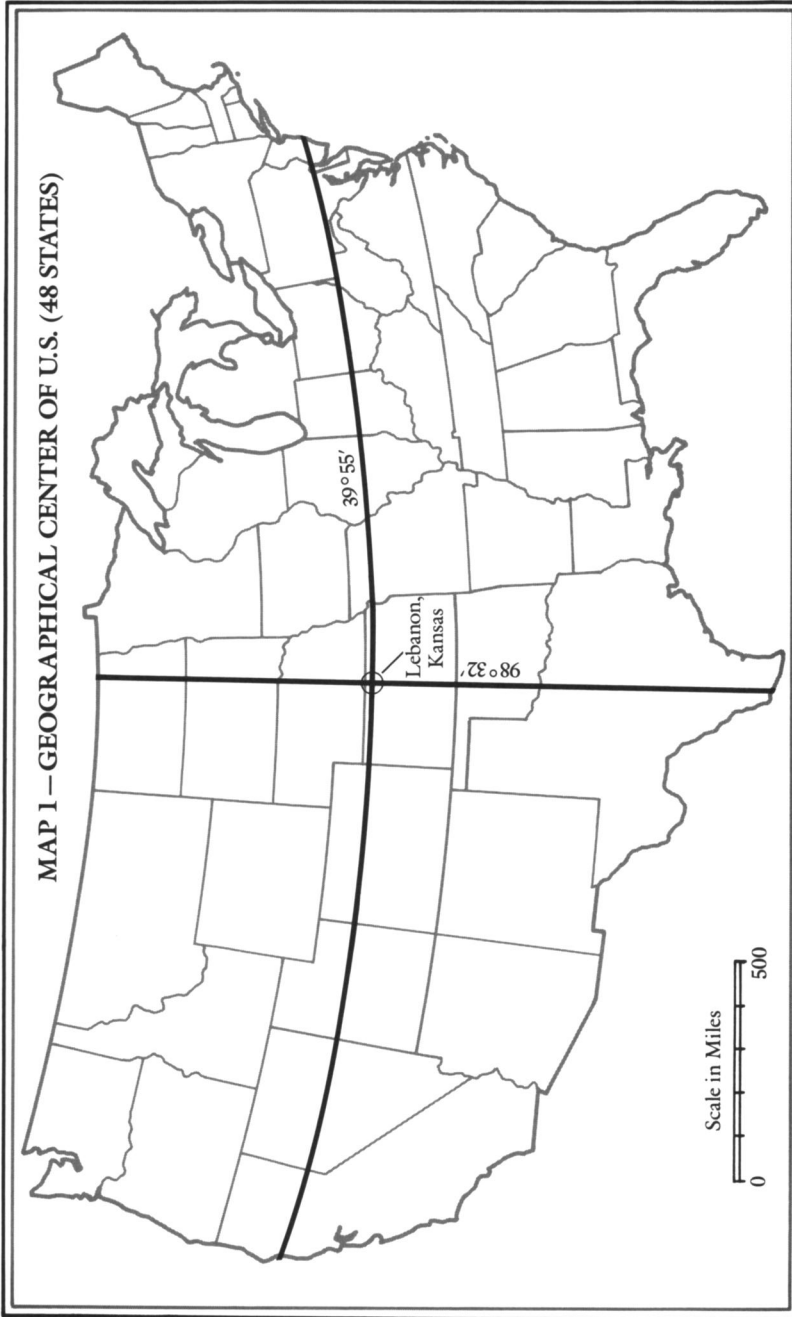
However, for most people concerned about this problem, the coordinates ascertained here must be quite a bit less than satisfying. In many ways, all four sides seem too broadly encompassing. Making the 26th Parallel the region's southern boundary would please Charlie DiPeso and Miguel León-Portilla—but very few other people. Protracted westward, this line would enclose most of northern Mexico, thus including almost as much Mexico as United States within the “Southwest,” and thereby discrediting the 26th Parallel's usefulness as a southern boundary for something “American,” that is, in this sense, “of the United States.” And we must admit few people would agree that a great chunk of the Pacific Ocean—no matter how desirable—belongs in the American Southwest. The same could be said of the California Pacific Ocean littoral or of California's Central Valley and the Sierra Nevada. Certainly, too, the argument to include the Great Plains within the Southwest is a weak one, as is the inclusion of Nevada's and Utah's Great Basin.

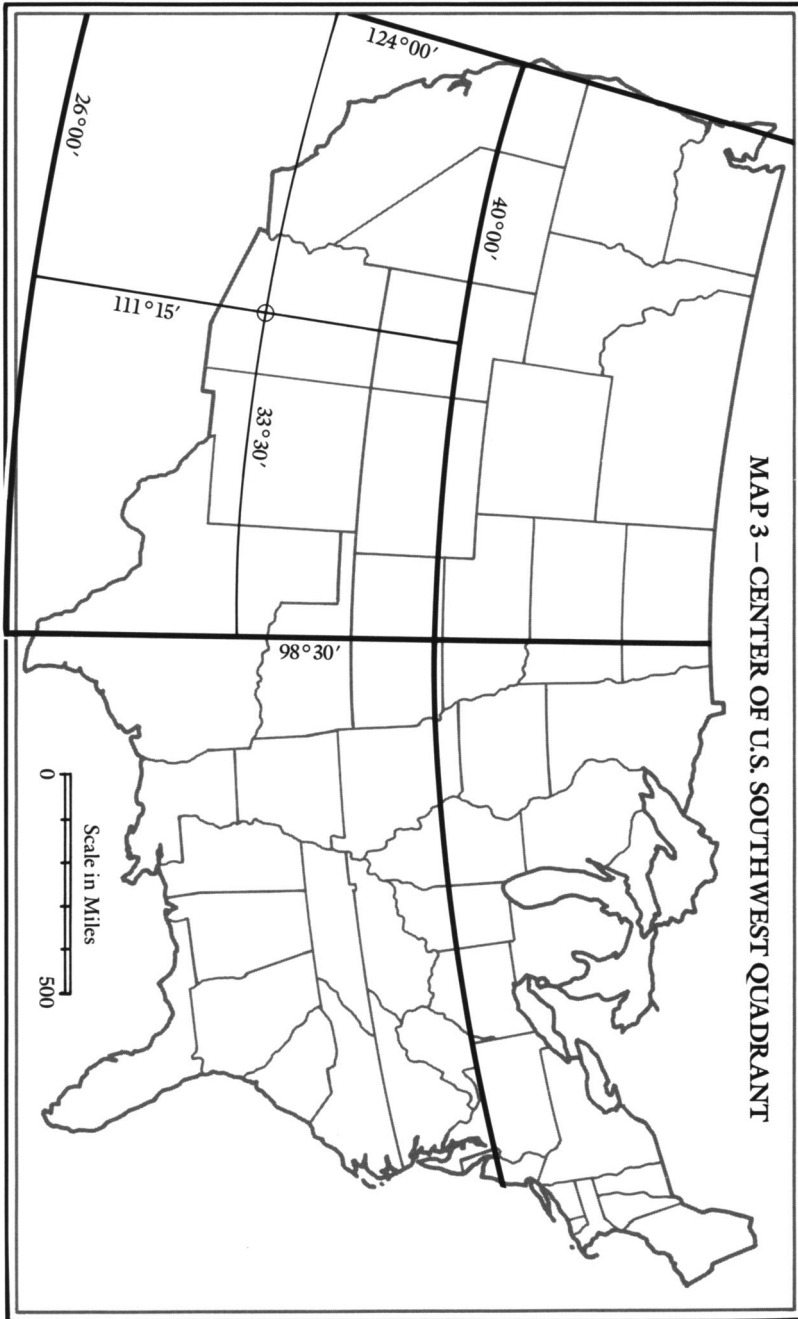
Everything considered, this geometrically determined Southwest falls far short of being satisfying. As D. W. Meinig has pointed out, there is “nothing significant in longitude and latitude *per se* for regional definition.” Geographically, Meinig has matter-of-factly observed:

The [quadrant] system is an arbitrary reticule fitted on a globe as a practical device to locate points and has no other intrinsic meaning. When used as an ostensibly handy reference for some significant regional feature it is usually misleading. The United States is roughly a rectangle and thus has a ‘southwest,’ but that is only significant in some more specific context.

For the moment, however, let us proceed with the geometrically determined Southwestern quadrant as only a starting place, a background, a “context,” as Meinig puts it, in which to refine the regional definition more precisely.





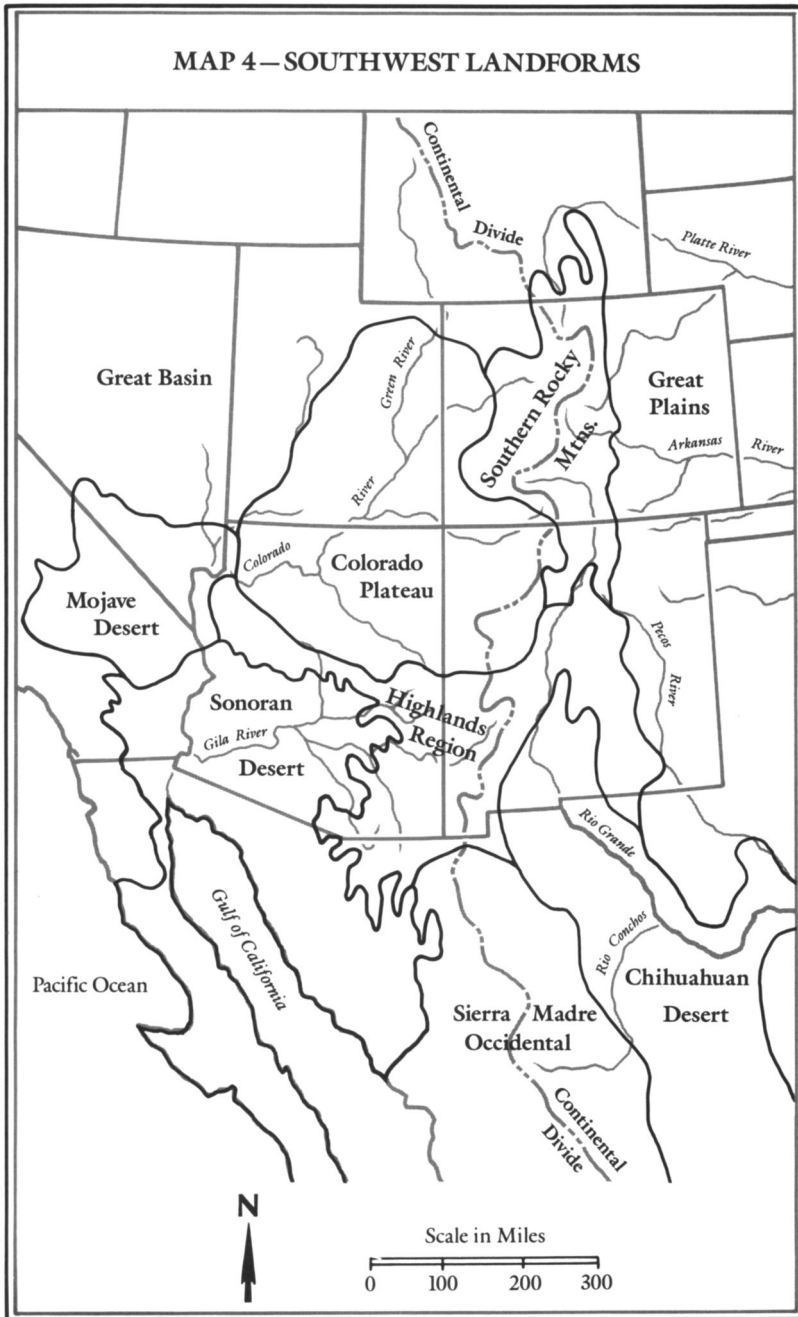


*The Physiographic Southwest*

Many of us have never felt any serious uncertainty about the American Southwest's locale. The Southwest has never existed in Mexico south of the Sonoran Desert or in California west of the Mohave Desert. Little "Southwestern" could be found north of the striking erosion features of the southern third of Utah or in Colorado north of the Arkansas River or in New Mexico east of the Pecos River. If we proceed with these confinements—all of which lie within the geometric Southwest—we can have an even more limited (if still quite general and somewhat vague) set of boundaries. More important, perhaps, it has always seemed to me that unique cultural traits exist only in this physiographic domain so circumscribed. Indeed, it also seemed to me that a cause-and-effect relationship, that is to say, some evidence of environmental determinism, might even possibly be at work here.

Which physiographic traits do characterize the "Southwest's" geography? Certainly not estuaries, swamps, tundras, rolling green hills, archipelagos, broad savannas, moors, coastal plains, clusters of natural lakes, prairies, seashores, lowlands, islands, or coral reefs. Although small bits and pieces of some of these features can be found in the Southwest, they make up the meager exceptions that accentuate the rule. Instead, most people would agree, the Southwest's physiography conspicuously includes high plateaus; steep, deep canyons; rugged mountains; deserts; and basin-and-range "transition" features. And little else. Such uncontestable Southwest features as the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, and Zion Canyon, together with other national parks and monuments such as Carlsbad Caverns, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Arches, Canyonlands, Death Valley, and Capitol Reef also belong, obviously, to the region. Other larger, broader physiographic features fall within the Southwestern quadrant, too: the Southern Rocky Mountains; the Colorado Plateau; the Mohave Desert; the Sonoran Desert; and the Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexican Highlands, as well as parts of northern Mexico's Sierra Madre Occidental and Chihuahuan Desert (see map 4).

The Southern Rocky Mountains, among the most massive in the United States, extend from north-central New Mexico northward into Colorado (35° N to 39° N.). These mountains rise abruptly west of the Great Plains (105° W.) to altitudes greater than fourteen thousand feet. The Continental Divide lies along the summit of the Southern Rockies, and this line is properly called the Great Divide, since it separates the



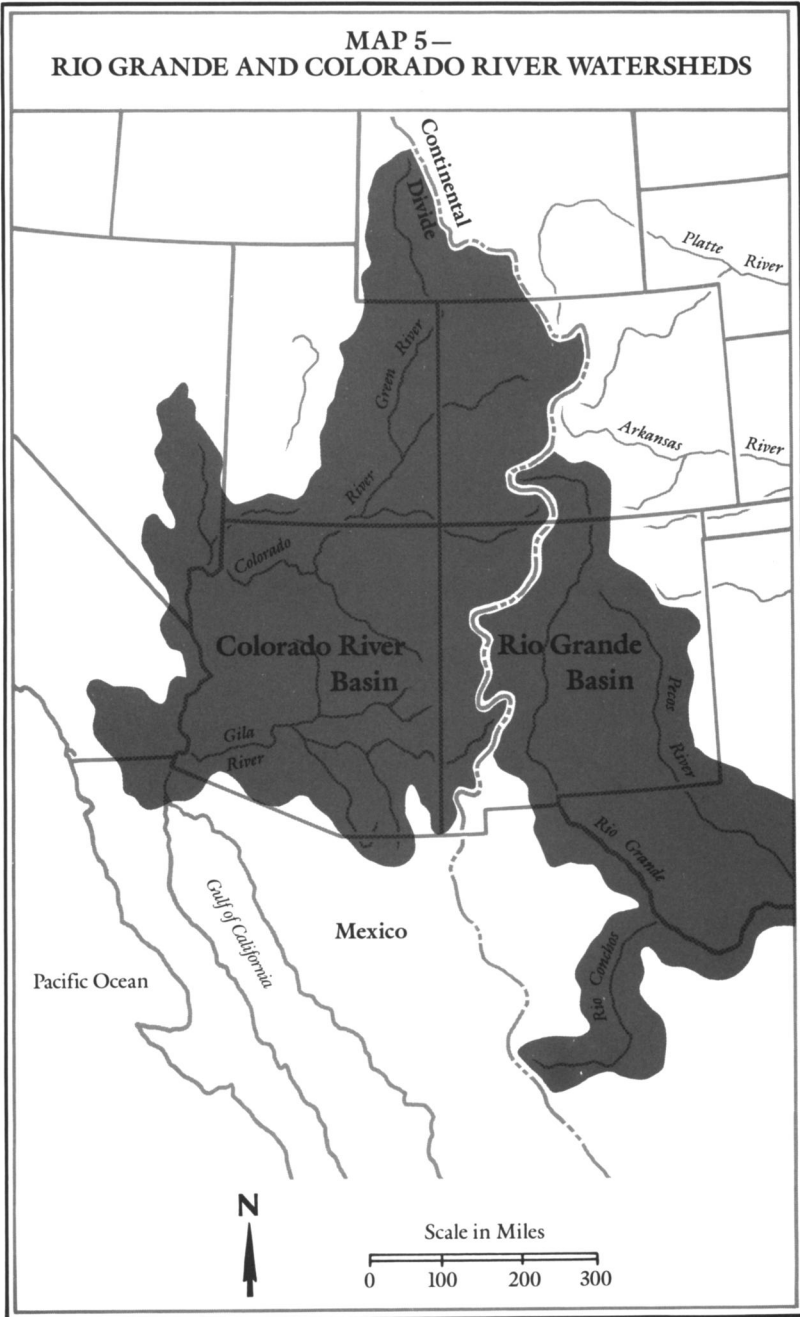
Atlantic and Pacific Ocean watersheds. Great anticlinal arches and intervening basins characterize the geological structures recurring most often in the Southern Rockies. Most of these structures resulted from an orogeny that probably started in early Cretaceous time and reached its peak in early Tertiary time. Erosion has exposed ancient Precambrian crystalline rocks in the central part of the mountains. Between the mountain ranges, Tertiary and Quaternary terrestrial sediments and volcanics have filled the basins.

In addition to providing runoff for the Arkansas River and its feeder system, which eventually empties into the Mississippi River, the Rockies' southeastern slopes, including the Jémez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains, drain into the Rio Grande and into this river's major tributary, the Pecos River. On the range's west side, the Colorado River and its secondary sources provide much of the drainage—and much of the useful water—for the Southwestern quarter of the United States.

*The Rio Grande and Colorado River Drainage Systems  
as the "Southwest"*

If we were to consider only the drainage systems for the Rio Grande and the Colorado River, a solid identification of the physical "Southwest" could be based on these geologic and hydrologic watershed patterns alone. Ethnologist Pliny Earle Goddard wrote in 1931, "The region which is called the Southwest . . . is a natural geographical division lying [mostly] south of the higher and more definite ranges of the Rocky Mountains. It is drained by the upper portion of the Rio Grande River and its tributary, the Pecos, and by the Colorado River and its three main eastern branches, the San Juan, the Little Colorado, and the Gila." As map 5 indicates, the entire Rio Grande drainage system and all but a small, northern part of the Colorado River system lie within the geometric Southwestern quadrant. Eliminating the Green River branch, which mainly lies north of the Southwestern quadrant, would put the remaining Colorado system entirely within the physiographic Southwest.

The Colorado River watershed is much larger and accepts much more precipitation than does the Rio Grande watershed, although it is true that great amounts of water in the Upper Colorado Basin are diverted across the Continental Divide to the Rockies' eastern rain shadow side. For almost a hundred years power politics have made possible this watershed manipulation in an effort to remedy the Denver area's aridity.



Starting in 1892 with the Grand Ditch, a number of dams, reservoirs, tunnels, and canals have been built to bring water over the Divide to the less rainy but more populated Rocky Mountain Front Range. Even though the Upper Colorado River Basin ecology has no doubt suffered considerably from this watershed manipulation, the Colorado River's hydrologic bowl remains well defined. Almost all of the Rio Grande drainage system lies within the physiographic Southwest. However, most of eastern New Mexico drains into the Arkansas River system, which belongs to the Great Plains Region, or it drains into closed basins within the Great Plains.

Quite simply, both the Colorado River and Rio Grande watersheds give *preciseness* to regional identification. Among the bioregionalists the most conspicuous and most often mentioned bioregion is the watershed. Drainage systems, says Peter Berg, "help to define and tie together the life of the bioregion . . . [and] the network of springs, creeks and rivers flowing together in a specific area exerts a dominant influence on all non-human life there; it is the basic designer of local life." Bioregionalist Judith Plant believes that communities seem "to most fervently gather around watershed protection activities . . . because water is absolutely fundamental to survival." And, she goes on to say, a watershed is "a great organizing tool, for it begins to define the natural boundaries of place."

To the west of the Southern Rocky Mountains lies the Colorado Plateau, which has an elevation that averages about five thousand feet above sea level, making this region the nation's highest plateau. The Southwest's largest, most conspicuous, and most dramatic physiographic area, the Colorado Plateau (between 34° and 40° 20' N.L.; 106° 30' and 113° 30' W.L.) possesses most of the spectacular canyons and rock formations for which the Southwest is noted. It covers almost half of the state of Utah and more than a third of Arizona, as well as large portions of Colorado and New Mexico. Along its western and southern edges rise mountains and escarpments that cast a rain shadow on the plateau, limiting precipitation in this physiographic region to an average total of less than six inches annually.

Thick sequences of predominantly sedimentary strata, many of them brilliantly colored and sculptured by local erosion into fascinating and beautiful landscape features, underlie the Colorado Plateau. An almost mile-thick section of these beds is exposed in the walls of the Grand Canyon. In addition to the abundant sedimentary rocks within the province, large areas of volcanic materials, principally lava flows, can be

found. The Colorado Plateau ranges in elevation from 5,000 feet to 11,000 feet above sea level.

Although the Colorado River and its tributaries flow through much of the Colorado Plateau, the gorges the rivers have cut and through which they flow in most places have left the streams too far below the surrounding level land surface to enable profitable irrigated agriculture. In addition, the plateau's high elevation narrows its annual growing season considerably. Until recently the scenery here was the region's most valuable economic asset. But in the last fifty years electric-generating plants (both hydro and fossil fuel), uranium mines, coal stripmines, oil wells, and natural gas deposits increasingly have brought income, at least temporarily, to the region's people.

Southwest of the Colorado Plateau, in a counterclockwise direction within the general limits of the Southwestern quadrant, lies the region physiographers have termed the Basin and Range Province. However, most people would recognize this area simply as "desert." The Sierra Nevada Range and the Pacific Border Province form the western boundary of the Basin and Range Province and, therefore, form the western border of the physiographic Southwest. Composed of nearly parallel block-faulted mountains and valleys, the Basin and Range Province includes the most extreme desert region of the Southwest—and of North America. The major desert valleys in the Basin and Range Province, which lie between the 109th and 120th Meridians and south of the 39th Parallel, have specific designations: the Mohave Desert (37° N. to 34° N.) and the Sonoran Desert (34° N. to 30° N.).

Weged between the Sonoran Desert on the west and on the south and the Colorado Plateau on the north is a region geologists and geographers call a "highlands" region. Located north of the 30th Parallel, most of this region is found in central and southeastern Arizona, where it is called the "transition" region, and in western and central New Mexico, where it is mainly covered by the Datil-Mogollon volcanic field. Similar but smaller landforms exist in northeastern Sonora and northwestern Chihuahua. South of the Mexican Highlands rises the extreme north end of the long geologic spine of northern Mexico—the Sierra Madre Occidental. Starting from the north at the 31st Parallel, for almost a thousand miles this range parallels from northwest to southeast the coastline of the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean. To the sierra's east, basin-and-range features reappear. This region, known as the Chihuahuan Desert, lies between the 26th and 34th Parallels and west of the 104th Meridian. Fingers of this desert extend north from Mexico

into parts of south-central New Mexico—such as the Tularosa Basin and the notorious Jornada del Muerto—as well as into that area of western Texas adjacent to the Rio Grande. Most of the Chihuahuan Desert lies above four thousand feet. New Mexico's interior highlands province, together with several basin-and-range areas, including the Rio Grande Rift Basin, the Sacramento Mountains Section, and the Pecos Valley Section, connect the Chihuahuan Desert with the Southern Rockies.

Contrary to much popular belief, the low desert of the region—which appears in so much stereotypical Southwest landscape imagery—comprises less than 10 percent of the physiographic Southwest. While much of the Sonoran Desert in Arizona lies below 1,000 feet, the rest of the state has an elevation that averages more than 4,000 feet. In New Mexico, except for a few square miles where the Pecos River flows across the state's southern border into Texas, the elevation everywhere is above 3,000 feet. More than half of New Mexico is more than a mile above sea level.

Physiographers usually designate that part of New Mexico found to the east of the Pecos River valley as belonging to the Great Plains. The grasslands situated in east-central New Mexico along the Texas border comprise an area called the Llano Estacado, or “Staked Plain.” Despite this Spanish name, however, geographers have found that topographically, economically, historically, and demographically the Llano Estacado has very little in common with the other regions of the Southwest discussed in this essay. A proper eastern physiographic boundary for the Southwest would be the Pecos River or, at most, the 104th Meridian.

In brief, then, the predominant characteristics of the physiographic United States—and, in addition, parts of Mexico—are, counterclockwise from the Great Plains, the Southern Rocky Mountains; the Colorado Plateau; the Mohave and Sonoran deserts; the Central Highlands; the northern Sierra Madre Occidental; and the northern Chihuahuan Desert. Rugged mountains and large rocks; sharp, steep canyons; irregular basins and valleys; wide deserts; high plateaus; small but high-elevation meadows and parks; and hydrologic playas dominate the physiographic Southwest. Quite obviously, America's physiographic Southwestern quadrant possesses distinctive and conspicuous landscape traits that give it a definite regional “identity.” Except for the extreme northerly part of the Southern Rocky Mountains and the Colorado Plateau, as well as the southern part of the Sierra Madre Occidental, all of the Southwestern landforms combined lie well within the 26° L.–39° L. north-south boundaries of the American southwest quadrant. As map 4 shows, the

physiographic Southwest clearly is situated between 104° and 119° West Latitude.

### *The Geologic and Climatic Southwest*

Awe-inspiring physiographic traits clearly stamp the uniqueness of the Southwest. But the region's climate, too, separates it from the rest of North America—or the world, some would say. Such climatic factors as the degree of cleanliness and crispness of the air, air temperature, temperature ranges, aridity, and insolation (hours of sunshine per year) are measurable factors that identify the region. Although Ross Calvin chose to tell us that “sky determines” the Southwest's unique geographic traits, a closer look would have enabled him to see that land is even more basic than sky. Land lured settlers, both prehistoric and since, to soil that was fertile and minerals that were valuable. Land determined the design and materials for housing and fortifications. Land determined travel and trade routes. Land as much as sky determined lifestyles and “carrying capacity.” And in many ways, land also determined the climate. But the land was “determined,” too.

The prevailing Southwest climatic pattern appears more standardized and, thus, more predictable than the climate of the remaining country. Most of North America, particularly the United States, experiences a general weather system made up of air masses that move from west to east across the continent. For example, most air-mass movement, including the moist air masses that deliver to the Southwest region its limited precipitation, rarely come to the region from the north, the northeast, or the east. Therefore, the windward and rainy sides of the Southwest's escarpments and mountains are the south and west sides, while land lying to the north, northeast, or east of these more highly elevated landforms experiences—suffers from, may be more accurate—the “rain shadow” effect. (However, much of the runoff in the Pecos River drainage system—the Rio Hondo Basin, for example—does precipitate on the eastern flanks of New Mexico's east-central highlands region.)

### *The Geology of the Physiographic Southwest*

To understand this phenomenon better, we need to examine the geologic forces in the Southwest that appear to have a strong impact on the region's climate and weather. Most geologists who study this region

agree that plate tectonics—the shifting of large, relatively thin segments of the earth’s crust—have done the most to create the Sierra Madre Occidental, the Rockies, the Colorado Plateau, and the other conspicuous and dramatic landforms of the Southwest. Specifically, the Pacific Plate and the North American Continental Plate have come in conflict and created tectonic forces that have formed mountain ranges and valleys, ridges, and depressions. Probably for more than two hundred million years the Pacific Plate has pushed, or “subducted,” eastward and underneath the North American Continental Plate, which has maintained a relatively inert but nonetheless resistant counterforce. In more recent geologic time, “strike-slip” motions have been more significant than subduction in shaping the Southwest’s physiography.

The overall effect of this two-plate confrontation of the earth’s crust has caused the North American plate to uplift and retreat, and, as it was forced back, to experience geologic “deformation,” a process whereby layers of rock compress, rise, fold, fall and, in some cases, extend, stretch, and separate. From this pressure contraposition and as a consequence of the retreat and wrinkling of the Continental Plate, tectonic activity has influenced profoundly all of the landforms of the western two-fifths of the United States.

These geologic dynamics, over the ages, shaped the Cascade and other Pacific Coast mountain ranges, the Sierra Nevadas, the Northern and Southern Rocky Mountains, the Colorado Plateau, and the Basin and Range (desert) areas of the Southwest. These geologic forces, including faulting, volcanic activity, and erosion have influenced the shaping of all of the region’s landforms and drainage systems and even a region of Southwest soils. Wallace H. Fuller says, “The southwestern United States [soils are] defined by the area. . . . [which] includes the plateaus, isolated mountain ranges, intermountain desert basins, and desert plains of western New Mexico, Arizona, southern and southeastern California.”

### *The Climate of the Physiographic Southwest*

The geologic evolution of the region explains and refines many of the physiographic Southwest’s climatic traits. The area’s predominant weather pattern—west to east—often features warm, moist air from the Pacific Ocean. However, upon encountering the various California mountain ranges, the moist air condenses and precipitates on the wind-

ward sides and the peaks of these mountains, creating a lee or east-side rain shadow. The physiographic Southwest's low hinterland desert regions, offering no cold air with which to chill and condense whatever moisture might remain in the Pacific Ocean air mass, stays dry and cloudless. Continuing to move northeastward and upon reaching the geologically uplifted regions in central Arizona, the moist air again condenses, this time falling upon the state's San Francisco Mountains or White Mountains, usually in the form of snow. Some of this moisture occasionally makes its way into the uplands of New Mexico, too.

This particular pattern characterizes the winter more than it does the summer months. From June until September, however, another system of moist air-mass movement takes place. This pattern features weather that brings moisture to the Southwest from the Gulf of Mexico by way of north-central Mexico. Essentially the same traits characterize the precipitation pattern here: moist air—mountain ranges—precipitation.

Obviously, geology has played a major role in shaping the demographics and lifestyles of the Southwest's inhabitants. Not only does the region's physiography strongly influence the area's aridity and precipitation traits, these landforms create the runoffs and rivers and alluvial soil that have made irrigation the dominant form of agriculture—and livelihood—for the region's people for so many centuries. Moreover, the geology of the Southwest has strongly influenced outsiders' interests in the region. The promise of rare and profitable metals drew the Spaniards to the area and did the most to hasten the Southwest's Anglo occupation in the nineteenth century. In this regard, the Spaniards were deeply disappointed—and the Anglos were well rewarded.

Local geological formations, it is true, strongly influence the climate of the physiographic Southwest. However, a combination of global factors also shapes the Southwest's particular climate, as is the case with most regions elsewhere on this planet. Northern hemispheric seasons and a west-to-east North American weather pattern, including winds predominantly from the west between 30 and 60 degrees north latitude, play an important part. Other global factors influencing the Southwest's climate include unique westerly dry littoral air masses together with common hemispheric marine and continental air masses. In addition, hemispheric tropical and arctic air-mass convergence patterns, the Coriolis effect, and the jet stream play important parts in shaping the region's weather patterns. It is, however, the peculiar combination and dynamic

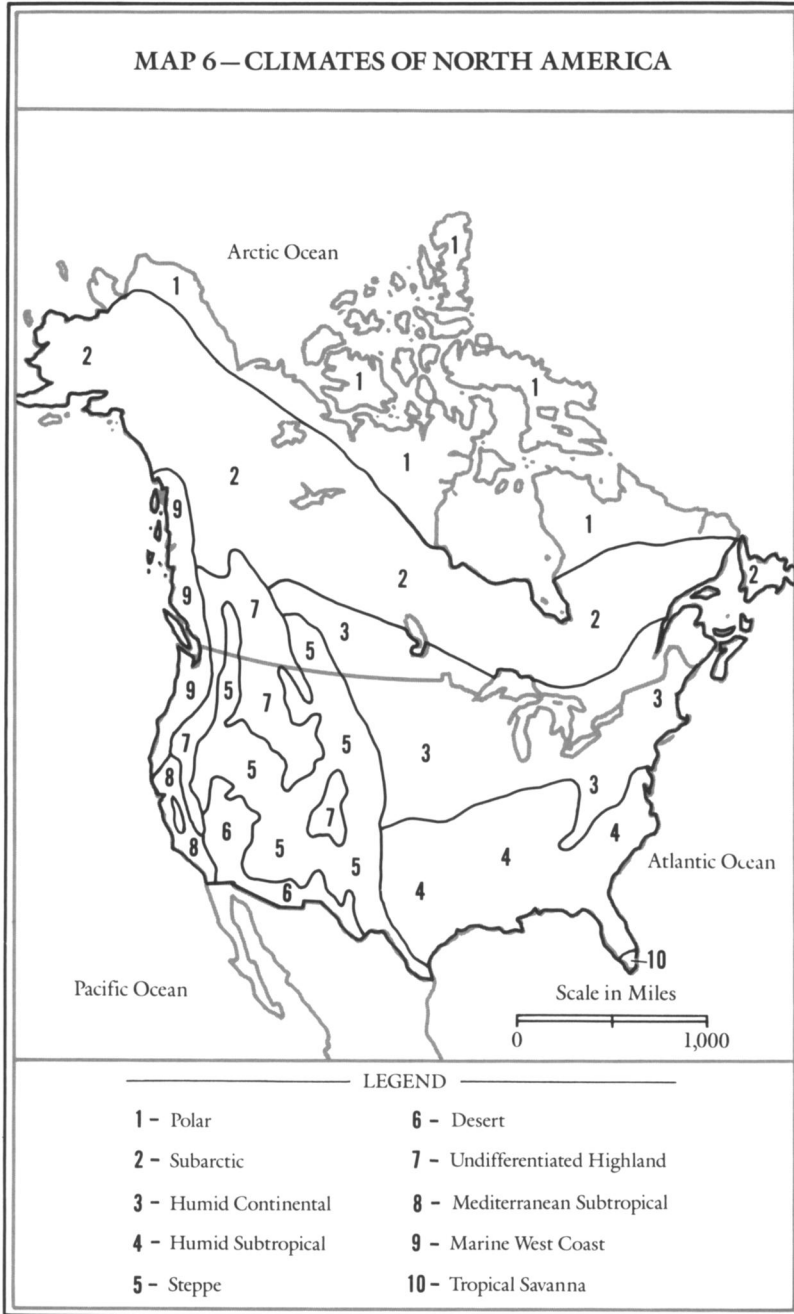
interaction of these factors that give America's physiographic Southwest its particular and singular climatic qualities.

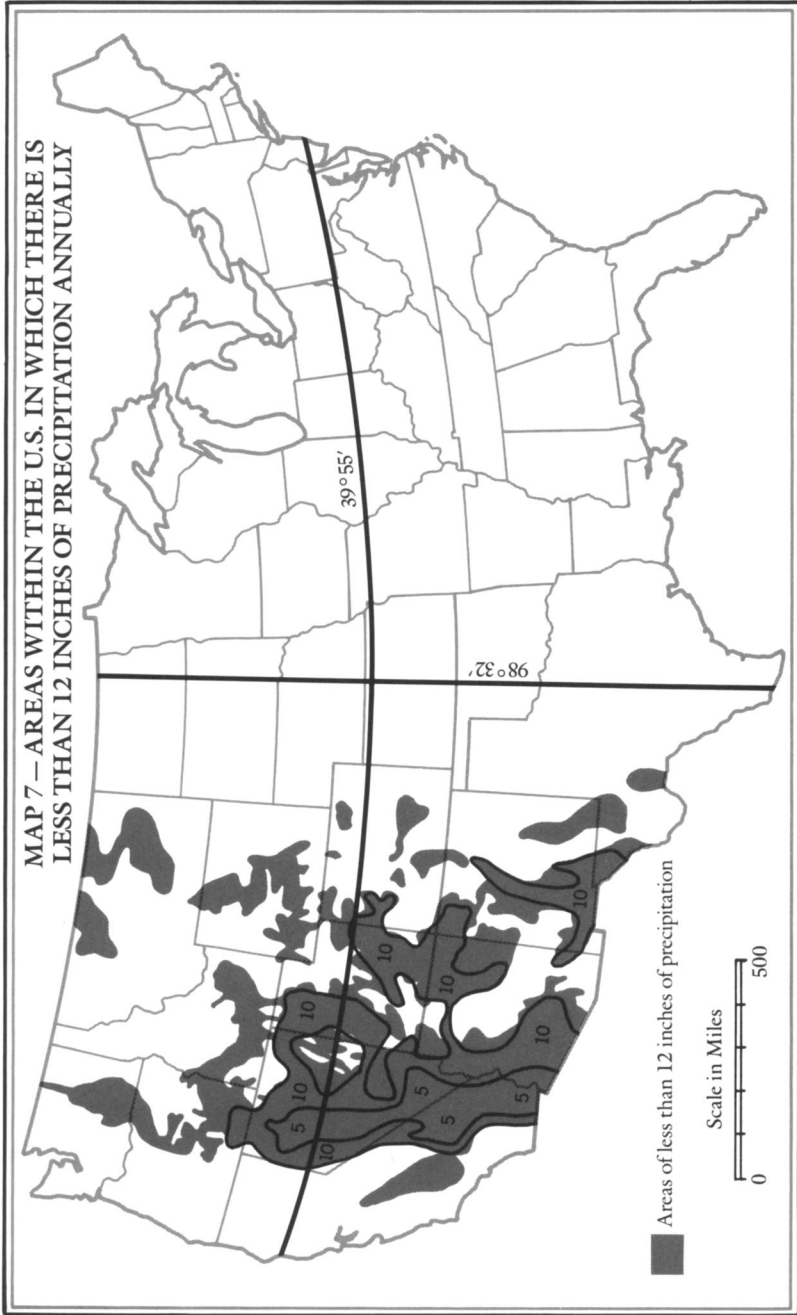
Of all the climatic traits associated with the physiographic Southwest, aridity is certainly the best known. Only within 105°–119° W.L. and 30°–40° N.L. can we find areas in which annual precipitation in North America averages less than eight inches annually (see maps 6 and 7).

For the most part the Southwest's hydrologic cycle is more large-scale than local, more "macro" than "micro." (The geologic influence on the region's climate is considered to be "micro" here.) While some local evaporation, convection, and condensation do figure into the summertime precipitation pattern, in general they do not play a dominant role. The moist air masses that make possible the area's precipitation originate hundreds or even thousands of miles away. It is interesting to note that despite the region's normal aridity and its substantial distance from an ocean, the Southwest's primary sources of precipitation are the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, with a small amount, it is true, from the Gulf of California, a branch of the Pacific.

The collision between warm, moist maritime air masses derived from these large water bodies and the drier and colder Southwest continental air mass, particularly at elevations over six thousand feet, creates most of the region's snowfall and rainfall, meager as those might be when compared with the more humid regions of the continent. For instance, a combination of these systems explains the quite regular "monsoon" system that moves into the Southwest from the Gulf of Mexico in mid to late summer. Moreover, in the wintertime, warm, moist air from the Pacific travels across California and, as it rises to ascend the Southwest's mountain ranges in an orographic manner it meets cold air, condenses, and falls—or, in the high country, it condenses, freezes, and falls. The Southwest has two precipitation seasons: December through January and July through August. However, most runoff from melting snow takes place in February and March.

Oftentimes a long-lasting stationary high-pressure zone off the coast of Southern California and Mexico's Baja California Norte diverts warm, moist Pacific Ocean air masses to either the north or south of the American Southwest, thus contributing to the region's lengthy periods of aridity. The dry air, in turn, lacking the ability to hold heat, contributes to both the annual and diurnal extremes in temperature, which also characterize the Southwest's particular climate. In addition, infrequent

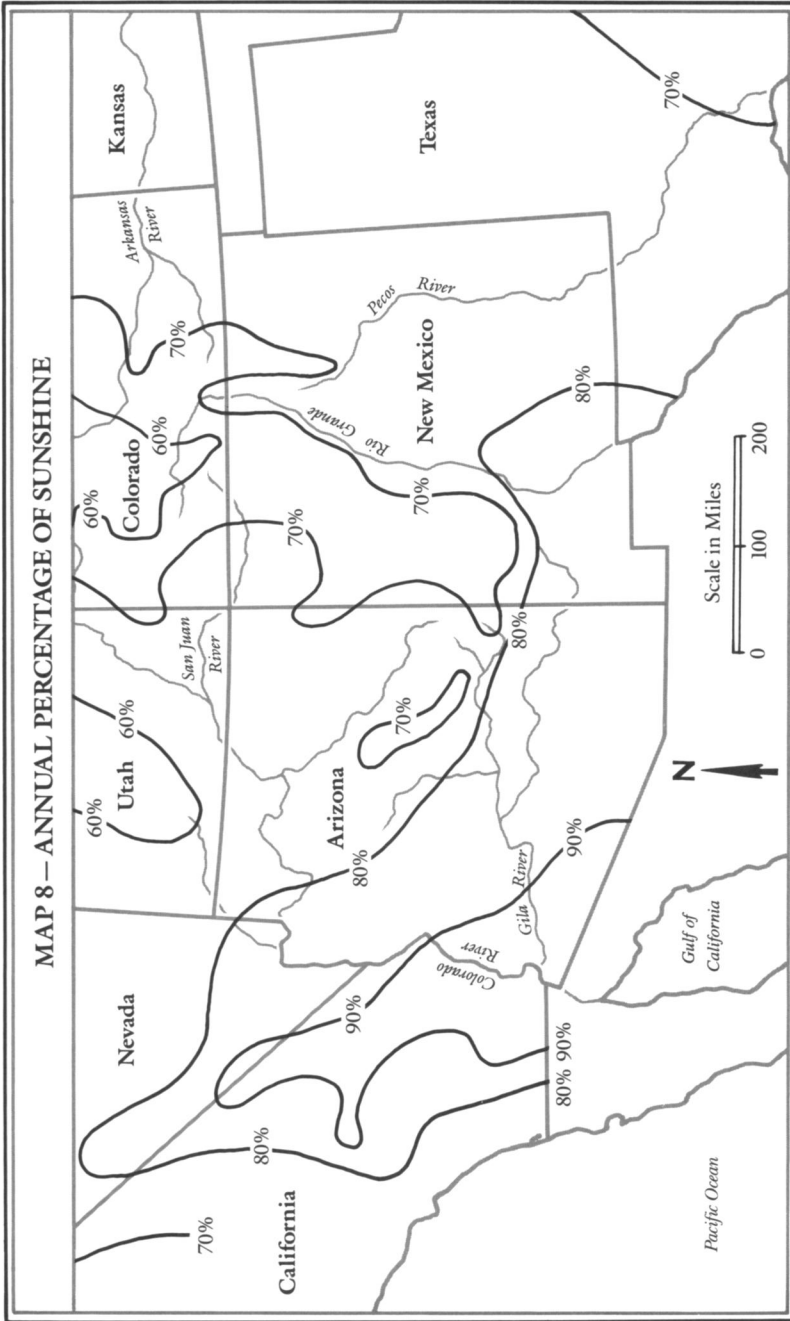


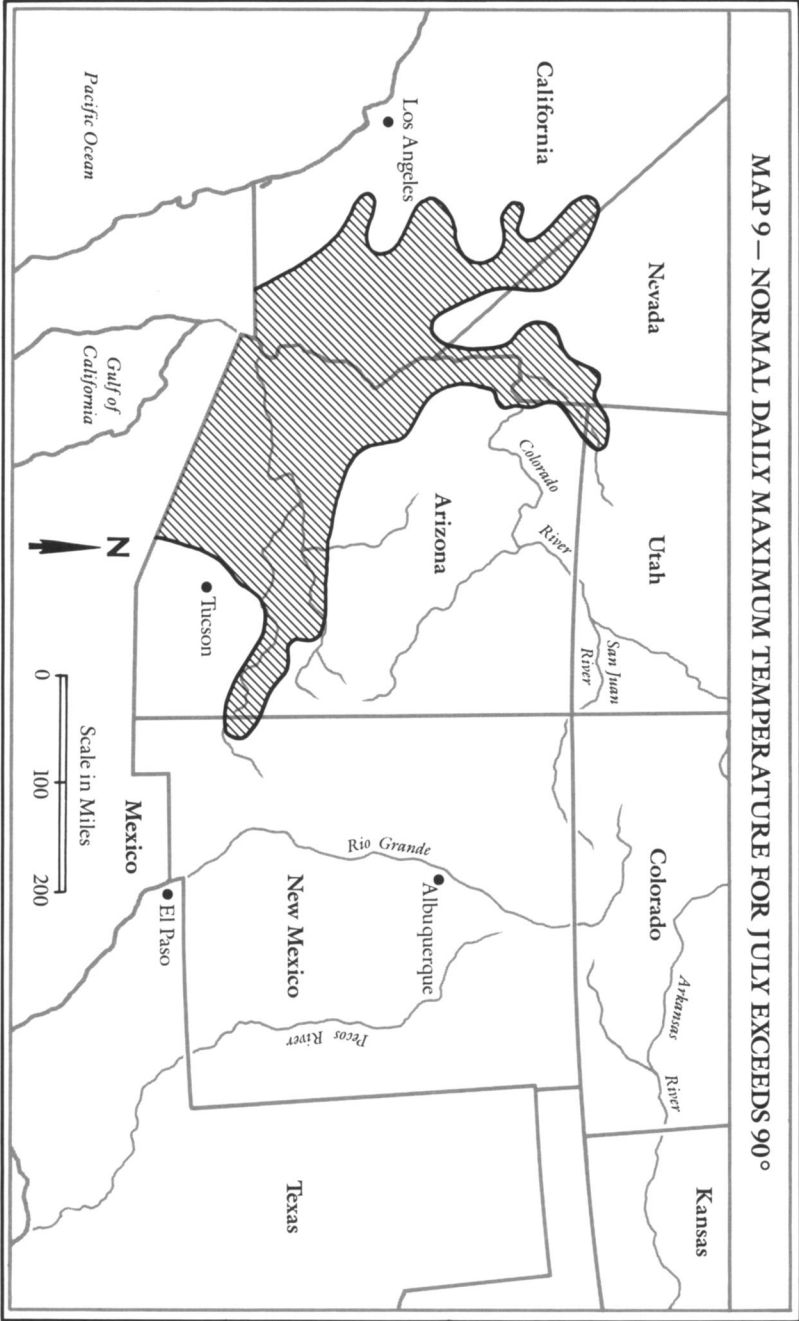


cyclonic storms in the Southwest give the region an unusually high level of seasonable weather and climate predictability, much more so than in the rest of the nation. The cyclonic tornadoes and hurricanes that occur in the various American regions east and northeast of the Southwest rarely appear here.

The American physiographic Southwest experiences a climate dominated by general weather characteristics that also explain the overall regional aridity of America west of the 100th Meridian (except for the very moist Pacific coastal belt north of San Francisco, California). However, only occasionally do the arctic air masses that strongly influence the climate of the nation's northwest and northeast quadrants drive far enough south to affect the Southwest's weather pattern directly. Meanwhile, the substantial low-pressure mid-continental air mass systems lying over the central part of North America are too far north and too far east to influence in any significant way the weather conditions of the Southwest. The mid-continental climatic system strongly affects those parts of Colorado and New Mexico east of the Rockies and the Pecos River. Here, as in the Great Plains states and other midwestern regions, the sky is less blue and more milky, the air is less fresh and clean, and the light is less brilliant and sparkling. Thus it is apparent that like the physiographic Southwest, the climatic Southwest is bounded on the east by the 104th Meridian.

The aridity, the insolation, the temperature of the region can be measured. Statistics show that the physiographic Southwest, indeed, does have more sunshine and less precipitation than its coastal and continental neighbors. It also possesses unique thermal characteristics (see maps 8 and 9). The two major states of the United States's Southwest—Arizona and New Mexico—share a similar climatic pattern, but within these general similarities each state has its own distinct climatic features. Both are "inland" climatic regions, separated by considerable distance from the two major sources of moist air masses that bring precipitation to the continental United States: the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Of the greatest local importance here, however, remains the fact that whatever warm, moist air that does eventually approach and travel across the Southwest is converted to precipitation primarily by encountering the cold air masses that lie above the region's mountains, highlands and, to a lesser degree, high plateaus. Were it not for this dramatic topography, the Southwest would be much more of a desert than it is. While some prehistoric and modern agriculture has relied on sufficient, timely, and





predictable precipitation, the region's pattern of scarce rainfall has not encouraged dry farming. However, all of the region's agrarian societies have discovered that whatever benefits they might gain in precipitation by farming the higher elevations, they give up with a shorter frost-free growing season. The precipitation pattern does provide sources of moisture for riparian irrigation. Streams, together with their feeder systems, such as the San Juan, Rio Grande, Gila, and Pecos rivers, have provided irrigation water for such sedentary prehistoric culture sites as Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon, Tyuonyi (Bandelier National Monument), Tuzigoot, Casa Grande, and Pueblo Grande, as well as the contemporary northern Rio Grande Valley Indian Pueblos. Prehistoric Indians and, later, the modern Pueblo Indians, Hispanos, and, still later, Anglos have all gained their livelihood from these irrigable riverine locations.

This set of geologic-climatic factors explains most of the human habitation patterns in the Southwest prior to the 1870s and has had a heavy hand in affecting human life in the region even to the present. Another geologic circumstance—nonferrous mining—explains further the demographic activity and settlement in other parts of the region. Actually, only a very few small and remote Southwestern places offered these magnets for human activity. Therefore, the very limited riparian areas and mineral belts determined the social and cultural traits of this region prior to World War II. After the war, the development of air conditioning, particularly for homes and automobiles, and a rapidly growing American affluence that enabled hordes of tourists, “snow birds,” retirees, and other immigrants from throughout the nation to come to the area, the Southwest's population soared. Yet the region's general aridity and brilliant, clear air, as well as the high temperatures found in its low deserts remain some of the Southwest's most recognizable—and desirable—traits, particularly in the age of interstate freeways, air conditioning, and affluent retirees and tourists. But the smoke, smog, pollens, dust, and other refuse of prosperity, with little opposition, gradually are gaining in the environmental single-winner sweepstakes race of the region. The Southwest's numerous basins, in particular, with their pollutant-entrapping physiography and natural inversion layers, are very vulnerable to environmental air-quality decay.

At least four geographical factors enable Arizona to enjoy a watershed condition more generous to the state than is the one found in New Mexico: a closer proximity to the Pacific Ocean than New Mexico has; a central mountainous area conducive to both orographic and convec-

tion precipitation; a more favorable location and elevation in terms of the warm, moist air masses that originate over the Gulf of Mexico; and an interstate river drainage system with characteristics that happen to be extremely useful for commercial agriculture as well as for flood control, water storage, recreation, and hydroelectric power generation.

Among the climatic source regions of air masses that influence Southwestern climate are the so-called continental polar, Pacific maritime polar, Pacific maritime tropical, Gulf of Mexico maritime tropical, and tropical continental. Together, the geology and climate of Arizona and New Mexico, as well as that of Southern California, extreme southern Nevada, southern Utah, southern Colorado, and the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua, create a physical geography unique to North America, and very nearly unique upon this globe. By forming outcroppings and catchment basins as well as influencing precipitation and temperature patterns, the region's particular landforms and their consequent climatic conditions shape the Southwest's economic characteristics and demographic traits. Precipitation, freezing temperatures, wind, and other erosion factors of this region help to establish and support, among other things, river systems, underground water aquifers, rich alluvial soils, and mineral outcroppings. In turn, these physical features help to explain the human activity, both prehistoric and historic, that characterizes the region.

Although unique, the climatic Southwest appears to be less well circumscribed than is the physiographic Southwest. A sharp border—the 104th Meridian—does distinguish the western margin of the Great Plains, and there does seem to be a clear “core” of Southwest insolation, temperature, and precipitation statistics. But many of these features can be found extending into much of Nevada and Utah as well as into the Mexican states of Sonora and Baja California Norte. Certain Southwest climatic traits can also be found in the Rio Grande region of southwest Texas and the eastern part of Chihuahua, Mexico.

If one superimposes the various climatic data of the region, however, a center of intensification of Southwest climatic traits can be identified. This center, at 33° N.L. and 114° W.L., a point about forty miles northeast of Yuma, Arizona, marks the heart of several broadly acceptable Southwestern climatic qualities, having the highest mean total hours of sunshine, both monthly and annually; the highest percentage of possible sunshine, monthly and annually; the highest mean daily solar radiation, monthly and annually; the highest normal daily maximum temperature

for one month (July); and the largest area in North America in which there is less than twelve inches of precipitation annually. As the radius from the region's climatic center expands, the intensity of the various traits deteriorates unequally. However, the intensity of each of the various traits is very pronounced within 104°–117° W.L. and 29°–38° N.L., and so establishes boundaries which seem appropriate enough to use as delineations to encompass the “climatic Southwest.” Overall, both the physiographic and climatic Southwest are rather sharply defined—and they are strikingly similar.

Biologists have identified their Southwest, too. Botanist Francis H. Elmore delineates an area roughly within the physiographic Southwest but shifted about one hundred miles to the east to encompass less of California and more of New Mexico, while Natt N. Dodge includes the Great Basin Desert, the Mojave Desert, Sonoran Desert, and the Chihuahuan Desert in his book *Flowers of the Southwest Deserts*. In *Reptiles and Amphibians of the American Southwest*, M. M. Heymann finds the region, except for a bit of far western Texas, to be located entirely within the physiographic Southwest (see map 10).

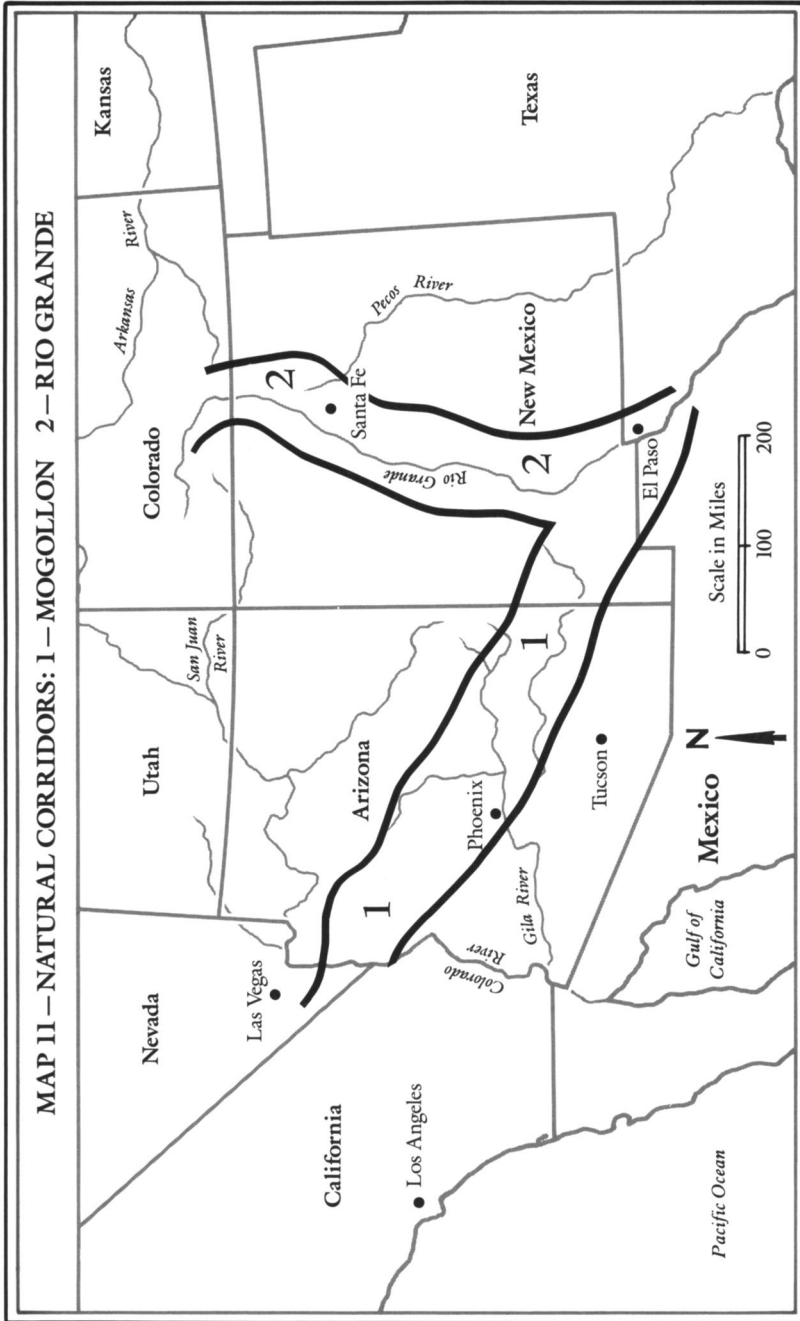
#### GEOGRAPHIC FOCAL AREAS OF THE SOUTHWEST

Two features of the region most clearly exemplify the Southwest's geologic-climatic-demographic circumstances. These features constitute two “natural geographic corridors” or focal areas concerning the relationship between people and the Southwest's physical environment: Arizona's Mogollon Rim Corridor and New Mexico's Rio Grande Rift Corridor (see map 11).

##### *The Mogollon Rim Corridor*

Arizona's magnificent Grand Canyon may be the number-one geological wonder of the world, but the Mogollon Rim, an escarpment running in a northwest-to-southeast diagonal line fifty to one hundred and fifty miles south of the canyon, serves, by far, as the most purposeful Arizona geologic feature. The Pacific Plate and the North American Continental Plate tectonics have wrinkled and stretched Arizona's geologic crust, forming the state's mountain ranges and valleys, ridges and depressions, and mineral outcroppings. The Mogollon Rim is an





extended and uniform geologic monocline or fold consequent to the region's plate tectonics, which formed it about thirty million years ago. The fold has eroded in such a way as to create a three hundred-mile-long escarpment that has retreated north-northeastward in an impressive uniformity at a pace of about six hundred feet every million years. Along this rim, evidence of geologically recent volcanic activity is plentiful and dominates the landscape for hundreds of miles. The San Francisco Mountains, including Humphrey's Peak, Arizona's highest (12,633 feet), are among these volcanic creations.

The rim's influences dramatically illustrate the causal relationships between Southwest landforms and the region's climate and human activity. The rim's existence explains many local weather events, and its drainage system accounts, in a direct way, for the state's most significant runoff patterns and other hydrologic drainage characteristics, including erosion, alluvial soil types and deposits, hydroelectric energy, aquatic recreation, biotic qualities, floods, and irrigation. These hydrologic conditions made possible the settlement of and today serve the needs of the sprawling and rapidly growing megalopolis of Phoenix, with its proximate Maricopa County satellite cities. The Mogollon Rim's influence also accounts for the climatic features of the Colorado Plateau and the highland regions of Arizona and New Mexico.

In the summertime, moisture-laden warm air masses originate over the Gulf of Mexico, move westward between the 20th and 30th Parallels, and curve toward the northwest above the Mexican Sierra Madre Oriental and Sierra Madre Occidental. Some of these air masses follow the Rio Grande and Pecos River valleys of New Mexico northward upstream, where they eventually meet with colder air. This convergence combines with convection dynamics to create precipitation on the east side of the two valleys' western flanks. Other much greater moist air masses at first go farther westward and then, due to the Coriolis effect and air-mass convergence pressure, deflect northeastward over southeastern and east-central Arizona and southwestern and west-central New Mexico. When these moist air masses reach the Mogollon Rim, they rise and meet the rim's higher and drier but also colder air masses. Here the Gulf of Mexico-born moist air condenses, releasing most of its burden on the southwestern, windward side of the rim.

In this orographic process, the Mogollon Rim also casts a rain shadow on thousands of square miles of northern Arizona and western

New Mexico, thereby producing an effect which helps explain the aridity of the Colorado Plateau in northeastern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico. Moreover, in the summertime, this continuous infusion of oceanic moist air contributes to daily convection patterns. In the warm mornings of July and August, precipitation from the previous day evaporates and ascends by convection, thereby also pushing up the moist air masses moving in from the south. By mid-afternoon, upon reaching the dry cold air above the rim, the warm moist air condenses and falls. The now-colder air cools off the ground, by late afternoon or early evening the skies clear, and the diurnal pattern starts all over again. In the higher elevations this diurnal process may start earlier and last longer and generate a greater amount of precipitation. Eventually the evaporation and air pressure involved in this process move moist air eastward, passing over northeastern Arizona and western New Mexico in masses that do not intensely condense again until they reach the higher elevations of central New Mexico. In the meantime, however, the substantial Mogollon Rim drainage toward the west and southwest has been established.

The Little Colorado River—which drains the rim's leeward side and flows in a southeast-to-northwest direction into the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River—possesses a catchment system which draws and conducts very little water from its very large watershed area. Due to the rain shadow effect on the Mogollon Rim leeward side, the Little Colorado usually is no more than a trickle, and often is even dry. Because there is not enough moisture to penetrate the ground and leach out the high salt content in this watershed's soil, a strong alkaline concentration characterizes the Little Colorado's runoff water.

In the White Mountains, an area with the highest elevations in the Mogollon Rim monsoon pattern, can be found Arizona's wettest precipitation rates—more than forty inches annually, as opposed to Phoenix with about eight inches or Yuma with less than four. The windward and high precipitation side of the Mogollon Rim accounts for most of the runoff in the Lower Colorado River's drainage basin. Heavy rainfall on the Rim's windward escarpment, particularly in July and August, drains into the Black River, the White River, and the Verde River.

These three streams are the primary perennial tributaries of the Salt River, Arizona's most bountiful water source, which provides water for the highly populated Phoenix metropolitan and agrarian areas. In even greater quantity, considerable winter precipitation that originates over

the Pacific Ocean falls on the rim in the form of snow. In February, March, and April the snow's melt-off occasionally creates serious flood conditions, particularly along the Salt River in and around Phoenix.

Hydrologically, the Salt is a tributary of the Gila River, which empties into the Colorado River near Yuma. But only during infrequent—but unpredictable and occasionally devastating—flood periods does runoff water advance downstream past the dams built on the Salt's system. In addition, the Gila system rises in that part of the Mogollon Rim located in western New Mexico, and it includes another and smaller Mogollon Rim tributary, the San Francisco River, which also originates in western New Mexico. Almost all of Arizona lies within the Colorado River watershed.

The natural geographic corridor created by the Colorado Uplift and its Mogollon Rim escarpment has made possible Arizona's mining industry, its irrigation projects, and most of the state's hydroelectric power including that from Hoover Dam, Glen Canyon Dam, and Roosevelt Dam. Altogether, eleven dams located on the Verde (Bartlett and Horseshoe), Salt (Roosevelt, Horse Mesa, Mormon Flat, Stewart Mountain, Granite Reef), and Gila (Coolidge, Hayden-Ashurst, Gillespie, Painted Rock) rivers, not counting those on the Colorado River, control the rim's runoff, impounding and diverting the water to provide flood control and lakes for water storage and recreation. This hydrologic pattern has been a source of much twentieth-century political and legal trouble for Arizona, including years of litigation with the state of California over rights for the water which falls in Arizona as a consequence of the hydrologic activity associated with the Mogollon Rim.

Because the Mogollon Rim monoclinical corridor is such an integrated feature of the obvious heartland of this region, its intrinsic nature as well as its geographic influence should, logically, be considered a "core feature" of the "Southwest." Prehistoric cultures flourished and endured due to the soil and water made possible by the Mogollon Rim. Historically, the rim comprises part of the intimidating *tierra incógnita y despojado* (unknown and unpopulated land) that sixteenth-century Spanish explorers such as Fr. Marcos de Niza and Francisco Vázquez de Coronado had to penetrate in order to reach the Southwest's heartland.

For late nineteenth-century American mineral seekers, the rim's erosion exposed gold, silver, and copper ores, the primary explanation for settlement in the region from 1870 to 1900. More than 90 percent of Arizona's highly profitable mining activity has taken place within the

Walker-Texas lineament, which runs from Reno, Nevada, to Silver City, New Mexico, and of which the Mogollon Rim is a part. The rim's eroded soil, spread broadly along the Salt and Gila rivers' floodplains, and the rim's precipitation runoff makes possible south-central Arizona's agriculture and its domestic water supply, thus enabling industrial and urban development. The high-altitude and comparatively well-watered Colorado uplift, at least close to the rim, makes possible a prosperous lumber industry that takes advantage of the largest stand of Ponderosa pine trees in the world, and the rim provides cool summer retreats for refugees from the torrid summers of the low desert areas. Boating, tubing, fishing, water-skiing, and numerous other aquatic activities are all made possible by the influence of the Mogollon Rim on the region's hydrologic system. The Mogollon Rim and its associated features constitute a true fundamental and unique regional component, central to any definition of the "Southwest."

### *The Rio Grande Rift Corridor*

In many ways, in terms of human occupation, the role of the Rio Grande Rift has been even more significant for New Mexico than the Mogollon Rim has been for Arizona. Unlike the Mogollon Rim, however, the Rio Grande Rift is a depression in the earth's crust rather than an uplift. Geologically, a rift takes place when the earth's crust is extended or stretched so that, eventually, it separates or sags. In either case, a geologic depression is formed. The Rio Grande Rift is a "spreading center," and like the Rocky Mountains and the Mogollon Rim, was formed as a natural result of the Southwest's tectonic activity. The Rift developed five to ten million years ago.

The Southern Rocky Mountains reach southward from central Colorado into north-central New Mexico. Between several ranges of these mountains lie the basins of the northern Rio Grande Rift. One of these basins, the San Luis Valley, includes a substantial part of south-central Colorado and extends southward to New Mexico's Española Valley. At its southern boundary, the Española Basin connects with the Albuquerque Basin. Continuing southward and extending in an almost exact north-south direction, the Rift lies within the Mexican Highland Section and the Sacramento Landform Section, and extends down into Texas and Chihuahua. Surrounded by such dry and rugged land forms as the Colorado Plateau and the Basin and Range Province, the Rio

Grande Rift provides a course for the Rio Grande that serves as a long, narrow oasis and travelway for this part of the Southwest. It has provided a transportation, development, and survival corridor for thousands of years.

New Mexico ranks as one of the most arid of the nation's fifty states. Ninety percent of the state averages less than twenty inches of precipitation per year, and most of this precipitation takes place in the state's extreme high elevation areas. More remote than Arizona from the sources of warm, moist air masses—the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico—New Mexico depends more than does Arizona on precipitation resulting from local convection patterns and less on moist air-mass intrusion. In order to reach the state, moist air masses must travel great distances during which they give up much moisture through both air-mass convergence and orographic-convergence processes. This situation constitutes a precipitation pattern less generous and less dependable than the one found in Arizona. Most West Coast winter storms pass to the north of New Mexico. In addition, high-pressure conditions in the wintertime dominate the state and inhibit storm development. New Mexico's wettest season, the monsoons, lasts from July through September; it receives most of its moisture from air masses created in the Gulf of Mexico.

New Mexico has fewer demographically useful perennial streams than does Arizona. Both the San Juan River basin, in New Mexico's extreme northwest corner, and the Arkansas River basin with its two main New Mexico-born feeder streams, the Cimarron and Canadian rivers in the extreme northeast corner of the state, drain runoff from the Southern Rockies away from and out of the state. In a like manner, the Gila River, which rises in New Mexico's far west-central drainage area—the Mogollon Mountains and the Pinos Altos Range—supplies Arizona with more New Mexico runoff water. So, ironically, New Mexico, extremely arid and runoff-poor to begin with, loses much of its internally generated precipitation to states such as Arizona, Oklahoma, and Texas. However, an agreement exists that allows New Mexico to draw off some Colorado River drainage-basin water into the Chama River in order to compensate for water the state loses to the Colorado River watershed elsewhere. There are then, for all practical purposes, only two importantly useful rivers in New Mexico: the Rio Grande and its major sub-stream, the Pecos River, both of which can be very puny at times.

In most places the Rio Grande's course does not possess the rapid descent or "head" of water flow that enables the water impoundment

and gravity-induced pressure to enable large-scale corporate hydroelectric developments, such as those that characterize the Colorado River system. Only one hydroelectric station, that at Elephant Butte Dam, generates power for New Mexico, and only one percent of New Mexico's electrical energy comes from this generating operation. One site on the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, where it appears the topography might be favorable to dam-building—the Rio Grande Gorge a few miles west of Taos—lacks bedrock formations suitable to found and buttress the dam. What is more, the heavy deposit of silt carried down from the river's upper reaches would accumulate rapidly in the dam's lake. These negative factors have thus far precluded construction at this location.

New Mexico agriculture suffers from these limitations of the Rio Grande, too. Even though in many places the fertile soil of the Rio Grande's floodplain makes possible irrigated agriculture, the descending elevations needed for large-scale, gravity-flow irrigation such as is found in Arizona do not exist. The number of acres in irrigated cultivation in the two states are not significantly different. But, due to its high elevation, the Rio Grande Valley lacks the necessary growing season and prolonged high temperatures needed for crop variety, the high-volume and biseasonal or long-season productivity that would match the agricultural productivity found in Arizona's Salt River Valley. Yet, for all of these limitations, the Rio Grande Valley produces a substantial variety of crops suited to the valley's conditions—and to New Mexican dietary preferences.

Down through the ages and in its own ways the Rio Grande Rift has served its human occupants faithfully and well. For many thousands of years trade and travel routes have always, we can be sure, followed this river's course. New Mexico's past and present are closely related to the Rio Grande Valley. Small-scale and local irrigation made possible by this geologic trough has always been important to New Mexico's inhabitants. Prehistoric people in the upper Rio Grande's basins and in the valleys of the river's tributaries used stream diversion and field channeling for centuries to grow their crops. During their centuries in the Rio Grande Valley, Hispanics have utilized the river's water to cultivate vineyards; orchards; certain vegetables like chilis, corn, beans (staples for the Hispanic diet); pecans; and livestock food. Due to a longer and warmer growing season, crop yields are greater in the southern than in the northern part of the Rio Grande Valley. Except for locations on the Llano Estacado, the majority of New Mexico's feedlots and bonded beef pack-

ers are found in the Rio Grande Valley. More than half the citizens of New Mexico live within twenty miles east or west of the Rio Grande. The close proximity of El Paso, Texas, intensifies the demographic significance of the Rio Grande.

Topographical elevations decrease and annual precipitation rapidly increases from the Llano Estacado escarpment toward the east; in fact, so much so that, unlike within the climatic Southwest, growers dry-farm on the Llano Estacado near the Texas border, the only large area in New Mexico enjoying the necessary seasonal precipitation and minimum-duration growing season to allow this type of agriculture on large scale. Here, as in the rest of the Great Plains with which the Llano is properly classified, farmers depend on direct precipitation to grow sorghum, cotton, corn, wheat, and alfalfa. This dry-farming area differs greatly from the "typical Southwest" agriculture areas. It seems fair to say that the eastern New Mexico precipitation line which marks an increase in rainfall as elevation declines—as opposed to the conventional Southwestern precipitation pattern—also marks the eastern boundary of the Southwest.

By comparison with Arizona, New Mexico is an economically poor state. New Mexico lacks the physical resources and other attractions that make Arizona much more prosperous. Arizona's mineral wealth, due again to its geologic past, has brought that state great income in the past hundred years, despite the fact that most of the profits from Arizona's mines have wound up in the hands of eastern corporate stockowners. Arizona's low desert offers a warm winter climate that tourists, retirees, and "high-tech" industry find so attractive, giving the state a more extravagant and luxurious image than New Mexico possesses. Arizona's superior irrigation water sources and broad, fertile, warm, low-altitude river valleys—the Salt, the Gila, the Santa Cruz, and the Colorado—enable year-round and abundant commercial crops.

However, physiographically and climatically the two regions possess more similarities than differences and in many ways appear to be complementary. The Walker-Texas geological lineament extends into New Mexico, and here this geology, as it does in Arizona, exposes mineral-bearing ore, primarily copper. This feature makes possible New Mexico's richest mining area, the Silver City-Santa Rita region, in the state's southwest corner. In sum, both states strongly evidence those geologic-climatic patterns which identify them as being a solid part of the unique geographic region called the "Southwest."

### *Environmental Determinism*

The concept of “environmental determinism,” sometimes called “environmentalism” which is oftentimes confused with another and more recent use of that word,<sup>1</sup> originated in classical Greece. Hippocrates presented an argument that human character was “determined” by environmental influences. Down through the Middle Ages philosophers and scholars argued similarly. Age of Reason intellectuals such as Montesquieu believed political behavior to be the consequence of climate. In more modern times, the nineteenth-century writer Victor Cousins asserted that if you gave him a map of a country that “I pledge myself to tell you, a priori, . . . what part that country will play in history, not by accident, but of necessity; not one epoch, but in all epochs.” The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset wrote: “Show me the place in which you live, and I will tell you who you are.”

Ellsworth Huntington’s early twentieth-century works earned him the reputation as the modern spokesman for environmental determinism. Huntington argued that people who lived in the tropics, with their monotonous and enervating heat, would be doomed forever to relative poverty, and he argued that “the geographical distribution of health depends on climate and weather more than on any other single factor.” In the 1950s Thomas G. Taylor stated that the role of humans is to study “the character of the environment . . . so that [they] can best follow the plan ‘determined’ by nature.”

In the 1930s and 1940s such scholars as Richard Hartshorne and Robert Platt strongly challenged this kind of deterministic thought. The environmentalism debate continues, with the skeptics apparently holding the higher ground. Genes, physical skills, religious values, education, technology, cultural traditions, outside influences, political ideologies, conquest, and many other factors not directly influenced by the immediate physical environment, these men say, shape the human condition. Somewhere in the middle, the truth, no doubt, can be found.

Obviously one’s environment does dictate one’s behavior and beliefs in at least a few ways. It is clear that certain physical regional determinants—in particular, the geologic and climatic ones—have strongly influenced human activity and habitation in the Southwest. The region’s

1. Over the past thirty years “environmentalism” has also popularly become a term associated with the worldwide “human ecology” issue.

unique and complementary geological, climatic and hydrologic factors have, over thousands of years, affected travel and transportation, mining, agriculture and other economic features of the Southwest. These influences appear to fall into two categories: inclusive factors (those traits that have enabled enduring human habitation) and exclusive factors (those traits that have discouraged or prevented human habitation).

### *Inclusive Factors*

The Southwest's environmental inclusive factors, ironically enough, are the most demanding in terms of human survival. Situations in which there are limited useful survival resources necessary to support people—water, fertile soil, warm temperatures—actually demand and stimulate “sedentary” (as ethnologists term nonmigrant cultural groups) societies. Just as sophisticated “cradles of civilization” such as early Egypt and Mesopotamia developed in arid but riparian circumstances, so in a similar way and for the same reasons did the pueblo and other stationary and communitarian cultures of the Southwest rise and maintain relative permanence.

Because the region's aridity makes dry-farming in the Southwest so difficult, up until the middle of the twentieth century irrigation played a dominant role in determining whether or not humans could survive here. An irrigation economy requires—or allows, whichever way one wishes to perceive it—people to develop permanent abodes and plan their economic and other survival styles on a predictable and year-round schedule of cyclical activities. At times, probably aided by “sun calendars” such as those found at Chaco Canyon and other sites, prehistoric peoples learned to chart, anticipate, and prepare for the changing seasons. The persistent irrigation economies established during the region's prehistoric period continued to survive only if the indigenous peoples implemented, over a long period of trial and error, certain organized, disciplined, and stable patterns of life. To understand further this region's way of life, one needs to remember that the key requirements for irrigated crop cultivation—suitable water, soil, and temperature—were limited to only a tiny portion of the entire land surface of the Southwest (see map 12).

These same survival traits have characterized more recent and currently extant Pueblo cultures as well as the region's older Hispanic settlements. And so, for example, the early Spanish settlers of the high-eleva-



tion Rio Arriba area of north-central New Mexico and south-central Colorado discovered and accommodated the same geographical conditions that characterized the region's older cultures: irrigation and permanence. While the Rio Arriba may at times seem harsh and forbidding, particularly in the winter, the larger streams and small creeks in this area, including the Pecos River, the Rio Chama, and the Rio Grande, do provide both small and large riverine areas which have supplied *acequias* to irrigated Hispanic *plazas* and *placitas* for many generations now.

### *Exclusive Factors*

Exclusive physical determinants have characterized the Southwest, too. Factors that discouraged human habitation within the region are conspicuous—and, in some cases, identical to inclusive factors. The rugged topography and hot, dry climate made new settlement and development within the region difficult. Isolated and entrenched pueblos, both pre- and post-Columbian, could not only protect themselves well from plundering marauders, but could also hold out against long-term siege, drought, and deprivation. Actually, archaeologists have found little evidence that such warfare ever took place. In fact, peaceful trade and commerce appear to be the dominant traits of the Pueblo peoples. The climate and geology and consequent carrying capacity were simply on the side of the long-established permanent inhabitants.

These ensconced residents of the land did not escape territorial threats from challengers, the new would-be occupants of the limited areas of subsistence. If the entrenched residents became too complacent in the defense of their territory, they would lose out to the more desperate invaders. Despite recurrent feast and famine surges, the population would increase very little because, for the most part, the region possessed such a predictable, demanding and inelastic carrying capacity. The magnificent "Chaco Phenomenon" began to collapse after a century of serious droughts that began in 1030. By the middle of the twelfth century few of the Chaco pueblos remained in use. Eventually, for reasons not yet altogether clear to archaeologists, by the year 1400 most of the Southwest Indian settlements today designated as "prehistoric" had been abandoned. But not all of them. Such Pueblo cultures as Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, and several groups in the Upper Rio Grande Valley have persisted to the present day.

The sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century explorers and conquerors met considerable resistance from the unsuspecting—and technologically overmatched—remaining Pueblo Indians during the original Spanish *entradas* into the Pueblo region of the northern Rio Grande Valley. Eventually, however, the Spaniards prevailed. Using their superior tactics and weaponry, they were able to occupy much Indian territory. But these colonials discovered the reality of the indigenes' defensive strength when in 1680 the Pueblo Indians rose up and drove the Spanish southward to El Paso del Norte. While it is true that twelve years later the New Mexico pueblos capitulated to Diego de Vargas and his re-occupation forces, the Hopi of northern Arizona, a collection of clans normally noted for their peaceful behavior, closed the door on De Vargas, and he had to retreat shamefaced back to Santa Fe. Later, in 1700, after two priests had reopened the Catholic church at the Hopi's most eastward village, Awatobi, warriors from the other Hopi villages to the west sacked Awatobi, killed them, leveled the church, and took the Awatobi Hopi into captivity. The Spanish showed their respect for such exclusivity, and did not again attempt to colonize Northern Arizona. In 1837, sixteen years after Mexico had won its freedom from Spain, the northern Rio Grande Pueblo Indians again arose in revolt and seized control of the New Mexican government at Santa Fe. But six months later the Mexicans regained their rule. Anglo-Americans, too, had to overcome exclusivity. In 1846, during the United States' war with Mexico, American troops occupied northern New Mexico. Sensing a degree of Anglo situational vulnerability, local Indians allied with some remaining Mexican loyalists and in January 1847 rose up and, exploiting the advantages of the area's topography, took control of strategic positions. Quickly, the numerically inferior but militarily superior American forces quelled the rebellion.

Earlier, native groups other than the Pueblos resisted conquest, too. Several different tribes of Apache Indians in what is today southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, as well as Comanche Indians in east-central New Mexico, made Hispanic penetration and settlement of the Southwest ever more hazardous and difficult. Eventually, of course, the Spanish did endure if not prevail, but only in small, isolated, and very defensible pockets of their own, primarily in the Rio Arriba section of northern New Mexico. The Pueblo Indians and the Hispanics, except for the initial conquests by the Spanish and a few short-lived uprisings



by the Indians, have lived in peaceful coexistence for three hundred years.

Throughout the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries, the Southwest's canyons and mountains, its deserts and volcanic malpais, together with the region's remoteness, scorching sun, and barren, waterless "wasteland" offered little encouragement for settlement by Anglos and other Europeans. With no usefully navigable rivers other than the quite peripheral Colorado and only a very few wagon trails suitable for transportation, the region discouraged travel and settlement. In New Mexico, Spanish and Mexican enclaves existed more or less unmolested, except by occasional Indian raids and the snooping of a few curious *americanos* such as Zebulon Pike and the Patties. Arizona, on the other hand, due to its still more formidable geography, experienced even less Hispanic and Anglo-European intrusion prior to the late nineteenth century.

Not until the railroads became a part of the region were Anglo-European immigrants able to feel comfortable and secure enough to settle the inhospitable region. The small and isolated Indian and Hispanic riparian pockets continued their economic and social traditions relatively unmolested, even though by the 1860s Anglo immigrants recognized the region's commercial potential for irrigated agriculture. The Southwest's few colonial mining outposts constituted the only substantial magnets for Anglo newcomers, although by the turn of the century numerous "lungers" (respiratory victims such as tuberculars) and other health seekers discovered the region's salubrious dry air and warm days. Commercial agrarian activities in the region grew rapidly after the development of the Salt River Project in the early 1900s, but not until the post-World War II years, thanks to the advent of refrigeration and an affluent national economy, could the region's hitherto forbidding traits be overcome in a way to make the area an attractive one in which to live. In other words, both inclusive and exclusive factors simultaneously played a role in shaping the Southwest's demographics down until the late nineteenth century. By the 1890s the impact of the Industrial Revolution and a rapidly growing United States altered or made more bearable the environmental circumstances. So great was this technological influence that many of the older selective traits of physical geography no longer played such an important role in shaping the economic and cultural characteristics of the Southwest. In addition, these changes dramatically increased the Southwest's attractiveness and carrying capacity.

As the roads and railroads developed, concurrent with the exploration and occupation by the Americans, the United States' political hegemony in the nation's developing physiographic Southwest, increasingly reinforced by a growing military, commercial, and industrial presence, created a new kind of economic, political, and cultural exclusiveness. Such national policies as the Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny, together with imperially large railroad and mining corporations, sealed off the region to free and open occupancy by non-American people. As a consequence of this exclusive colonial attitude on the part of the United States "government" (i.e., Wall Street), Arizona–New Mexico became the last region within the contiguous United States to acquire statehood. With these diverse yet integrated qualities exclusivity isolated the Southwest from the rest of the world and gave it a special identity and a special reputation, a reputation at times more mythical than observable.

*"Formalism" vs. "Functionalism"*

Essential to the concept of environmental determinism is the issue of free will. This concern addresses the question of to what degree humans can willfully and predictably bring about desired effects through the use of empirical reasoning followed by enlightened and deliberate action. The country of Mexico is a good case in point. From Mexico's example one can argue that a region can effectively deny itself environmental influences and opportunities if other circumstances affect it so. Mexico's natural assets—its climate, location, physical resources, and proximity to international markets, particularly the United States—favor a strong agricultural and industrial base which would enable a moderately high carrying capacity. Even with consideration of today's skyrocketing population, the free-will argument would claim that Mexico possesses the natural assets to support a prosperous and affluent society, although that capability, due to increasing population, is rapidly becoming more elusive and improbable. But ever since winning its independence from Spain in 1821 Mexico has stubbornly refused to capitalize on this opportunity. Instead, despite a history of economic and political discontent, the country continues to wallow in its cultural legacy of fatalism, religious mysticism, status-quo inertia, fascination with death, illiteracy, poverty, disease, high birth rate, relatively short life expectancy, corrupt and inefficient politics at all levels, an extreme and rigidly stratified soci-

ety, and economic and cultural ennui. These traits, as the Mexican writer Octavio Paz has explained to us, at once hide and make manifest the Mexican culture's "labyrinth of solitude." It could be argued that Mexico's fecund semitropical environment offers a cornucopia of edibles and wearables that discourages planning, stockpiling, scientific agriculture, and the like because there is "enough" for everyone the way it is. In reality, of course, there is not enough productivity for everyone to live above the poverty line, and millions of Mexicans live below that line, living far short of what could be their maximum life expectancy if the resources and manpower of Mexico were more carefully and intelligently understood and organized and husbanded.

Mexico's standard of living and quality of life are, then, not so much determined by climate and other environmental factors, as by the country's cultural traditions, most of which were brought to Mexico from Spain. (To be sure, many conspicuous—as well as shadowy—vestiges of prehistoric culture appear there, too.) In this regard, it would appear that Mexico never did obtain its independence from imperial Spain. This example illustrates another method with which scholars interpret regional demographics. This method draws its criteria from considerations that attempt to determine to which degree a region might be a product tied to and "determined" by its cultural traditions. If a region's cultural qualities seem to be inflexible and archaic, the region is said to be a product of "formalism"; if cultural traditions frequently yield to "pragmatic" experiment and change, the region is said to be "functional." In this respect, the United States and Mexico approach antipodal extremes.

The same contrasts, although not so dramatically pronounced, characterize the Southwest's two primary states, Arizona, the New England colony, and New Mexico, the Spanish one. In New Mexico, some powerful vestiges of early Spanish colonialism pervade much of that state's society. Certain modern cultural habits display this formalism. The Indian Pueblos of the upper Rio Grande Valley, for example, still appear much the way they did four hundred years ago when the conquistadores first entered the region. Among the Hispanic population, the riparian and agrarian *plazas* and *placitas* with their *acequias* and *casas adobes*, now increasingly moribund, have changed little in the past three hundred years. Up until the second third of the twentieth century, oxcarts, antiquated grain mills, primitive tools, and other "quaint" features of pre-Industrial Revolution technology were conspicuous in many parts of

the state. Since the founding of the atomic laboratories at Los Alamos in 1942, however, the state has found a place in the vanguard of the American high-tech mainstream.

Catholicism's strong presence can still be felt in the more highly populated northern half of New Mexico. The state did not keep pace in the area of public education and other reforms within the United States during the mid-nineteenth century. Strong extended-family ties, relatively low levels of literacy, and a lack of political concern or sensitivity have kept alive this area's traditional Hispanic culture. Paradoxically, the old authoritarian rule of Spain and church during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, after the withdrawal of centralized Catholic church and Spanish colonial authoritarianism, developed local religious and political institutions that were, respectively, lay- and populist-dominated. While Catholic leaders reappeared in New Mexico, populist politics characterize New Mexico to this day.

In this regard, Arizona differs dramatically from its sister to the east. "Traditions" have meant little in this state. Instead, the "Tradition of the New" has provided the perspectives and procedures needed to control and exploit a region which for the most part appeared to be a useless wasteland prior to the 1880s. Arizona's character quite clearly reflects a practical and "functional" orientation. Anglo-Americans, representing mainly the colonial interests of San Francisco, Washington, New York, and Boston, exploited Arizona's natural resources to help develop the Industrial Revolution in America. The state was industrial before it was agricultural. Arizona's economy developed out of the investment of big eastern capital, the application of advanced technology, and the extraction of great mineral wealth together with a highly industrialized and commercialized agriculture.

While it is true that Arizona, too, has Native Americans—more, by far, than any other state in the Union—these Indians live in more isolated regions than do their New Mexico cousins, and for the most part are removed from conspicuous view. They are removed, too, from the warp and woof of the Arizona political and economic fabric.

Some of Arizona's political institutions grew out of the congregational seeds sown by New England Yankees, whose own heritage goes back to the Puritan concept and ideal of self-government. Whatever "democracy" can be found in this state was brought here by eastern colonists, not forged on the "frontier." For the most part, however, the

Yankee businessman's concept of using politics ("pragmatic functionalism") to serve "special interests" has characterized the dominant nature of Arizona's politics. While it is true that the state has always been a colony of the East and of California, certain permissive New England sparks of reform—women's rights, public education, tolerance for misfits and various religious groups, including the Mormons—have flickered and even flamed from time to time. While ecclesiastic authority has characterized New Mexico from the days of Fr. Marco de Niza, Coronado, and other *conquistadores*, only in the latter half of the twentieth century has organized, denominational religion achieved and maintained a potent presence in Arizona. And the influence of religious values and attitudes in Arizona remains quite inconspicuous if compared with neighbors such as Utah or Texas. Only after World War II did the state manifest the religious, political, and cultural conservatism that marks it today.

Due to the ability of improving technology—such as refrigeration—to mitigate the state's more forbidding traits, Arizona has attracted high-paying high-tech industries and a large and growing population of affluent retirees. By employing "functionalism" the state has made the land not only habitable, but seductively so. And the state's climate and its mineral resources still generate significant revenue. Thus Arizona is the more "functionally altered" of the two states. Its most operant and determining factor was the Industrial Revolution, while in New Mexico, until World War II, the formalistic legacy of Hispanic conquest did the most to stamp the economics and culture of that part of the Southwest. The cultural and technological influences forced upon the natural environment compel us to limit significantly the still conspicuous and in many lesser ways the substantially valid "environmental determinism" application.

#### UNIQUE CULTURAL TRADITIONS

The physiographic Southwest houses cultural traits that give it a unique regional identity. Several very distinctive and conspicuous ethnological features dominate the region. Evidence of prehistoric Amerindians, in particular the "sedentary" people who established "permanent" homes and who enjoyed a high level of prehistoric social organization and food-obtaining technology, are unique to this area. These people developed advanced architectural styles as well as highly refined crafts-

manship in pottery, fabrics, basketry, and jewelry. No place else within the United States contains such impressive remnants of prehistoric culture.

In the Southwest can be found the United States' largest number of contemporary Native Americans. Many of these people still live on "reservations" in their traditional pueblos, hogans and wickiups. Moreover, a certain set of well-documented nineteenth- and twentieth-century American Indian linguistic patterns are unique to the region, too. In other words, the physiographic Southwest features a distinct, substantial, and highly visible American Indian population, both prehistoric and contemporary.

No other region within the United States possesses such an old and conspicuous vestige of sixteenth- to nineteenth-century Spanish empire influence than does the Southwest. Dating back to 1539, the impact of Hispanic occupation can be seen throughout the region, particularly in the upper Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. As part of the area's cultural landscape, a growing Hispano-Mexican population and social presence continues to become increasingly potent and visible.

### *Prehistoric Indigenes*

Culturally speaking, in many ways the Southwest has been a contradiction. Although the region possesses physical traits which appear inhospitable, even repulsive, to hominid habitation and subsistence, it contains some of the oldest records of human occupation on this planet. Relics of material culture hint that humans may have existed within the physiographic and climatic Southwest for more than twenty-five thousand years. For most of this period, these people lived in caves and hunted animals, many species of which no longer exist. Over ten thousand years ago there were already distinct *groups* of people in the Southwest, some of whom were primarily hunters and others of whom were largely dependent on wild plants for food. Displaying sparse but convincing evidence, archaeologists have identified several very old sites of human habitation within the Southwest. Archaeologists refer to these particular groups of people, who lived in this region prior to about two thousand years ago, as "Ancient Cultures" or the "Archaic Period" (see map 13). Several of the more celebrated of these cultural sites, such as the renowned Folsom and Clovis cultures, both in New Mexico, lie on the periphery of the physiographic Southwest. These sites give substance to



the argument that humans lived in the Southwest more than fourteen thousand years ago. Other ancient cultures associated with such places as the Gypsum Cave, Tabeguache Cave, Sandia Cave, and Cochise sites, are located clearly within the physiographic region. Ethnologists believe that the Cochise culture, made up of people living in what is now southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico, began more than ten thousand years ago and lasted until 500 B.C. or later.

During the past two thousand years prehistoric societies developed within the Southwest that ethnologists understand more substantially and more accurately than they understand the Ancient Cultures. Moreover, much of this more recent cultural development, archaeologists have determined, was surprisingly well organized and quite advanced. Many of the prehistoric Indians who left evidence of having occupied the region during the past two thousand years lived in durable masonry villages called "pueblos," from the Spanish word for "town" or "village." For archaeological research focusing on this time period, the Southwest has become one of the most intensively excavated parts of the New World.

As early as 1845, several other explorers and travelers reported seeing what appeared to be abandoned Indian pueblos. In 1849, U.S. Army Lt. James Simpson became the first Anglo to express a strong curiosity about prehistoric ruins in the Southwest when he visited Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. The nineteenth century French-American guide and trapper Antoine Leroux recorded seeing what appeared to be prehistoric Indian ruins in central Arizona when he came through the region in May 1854. Leroux has been credited with being the first white man to identify and report such antiquities. Later, more professionally trained and committed scholars such as Adolph Bandelier, the "Father of Southwestern Archaeology" (1881), Jesse Walter Fewkes (1891), and Frederick Webb Hodge (1893) undertook scientific studies of Southwestern pueblo sites and published their findings in scholarly journals. This group of scholars was succeeded by still another era of archaeologists: Alfred V. Kidder (1910), Earl H. Morris (1925), Charles A. Amsden (1927), and Emil W. Haury (1931+). These people and many others like them formed a close family of researchers which eventually developed a classification or taxonomy of prehistoric "traditions":

1. The Anasazi Tradition: This group of prehistoric Indians lived in the high plateau country of the San Juan, Little Colorado, and upper Rio Grande valleys. Relying primarily upon the dry-farming of corn,

they also used natural runoff from springs and the heads of streams to water other crops. They quite possibly first inhabited this general region about the time of Christ and have continued down to the present day. Most ethnologists believe that the modern Southwest Pueblo Indians descended from the Anasazi. The Anasazi far surpassed the other Indians of the Southwest in their design of architectural forms.

2. **The Hohokam Tradition:** Located along the lower Gila River valley in south-central Arizona, the Hohokam (from a Pima Indian word for “those who have vanished”), who cultivated corn and beans, are best known for their skillfully engineered canals and ditches. They used the waters of the Salt and Gila rivers to irrigate their crops. Possibly descendants of the Cochise culture, they came to Arizona sometime prior to A.D. 600. Ethnologists think it is possible that the Hohokam may have been the ancestors of the modern-day Pima and Tohono O’odham (Papago) peoples.

3. **The Mogollon Tradition:** Though not so advanced as either the Anasazi or the Hohokam traditions, the Mogollon culture deserves recognition because it appears to be the Southwest prehistoric group which offers the earliest evidence of intensive horticulture, a durable material culture, and a settled mode of life. These people occupied the Upper Gila River and Mimbres Valley areas from about 300 B.C. to A.D. 1100. They, too, may have descended from the Cochise Culture, and, like the Anasazi, they relied upon the natural runoff of water from the area’s mountain streams to grow their crops.

4. **The Sinagua Tradition:** This culture arose in the lower part of the Little Colorado Valley, near the San Francisco Mountains area. It included Indians who developed riverine pueblos in central Arizona’s Verde Valley, the northernmost outpost of the Hohokam and the southwesternmost extension of the Anasazi. The origin of these people is unclear, as is the explanation for their departure. The dates of the Sinagua people range from A.D. 400 to 1400. A blend of Hohokam irrigation methods and Anasazi Pueblo architecture characterized the Verde Valley culture. For reasons not yet explained, the Anasazi and Sinagua Pueblo peoples made an abrupt departure around A.D. 1425.

5. **The Patayan Tradition:** Also known as the “Yuman” culture, these people lived in the Colorado River Valley below the Grand Canyon. The few found artifacts indicate that this group may have endured as long as fifteen hundred years. Little of this society remains. Patayan is the only Southwest sedentary culture which lacked permanent houses, for these

people lived in brush huts which have not survived the ravages of time and the overflow of the Colorado River. This group probably was ancestral to the modern Yuman-speaking tribes of the lower Colorado River and lower Gila River valleys.

Except for the top half of the "Northern Peripheral" group and a slice of the "Eastern Peripheral" group, all of these prehistoric peoples lived within the area designated in this essay as the "physiographic Southwest." The expression "peripheral" speaks for itself.

### *Contemporary Native Americans*

No place else within the United States contains such impressive remnants of prehistoric culture as does the Southwest. The nation's largest number of contemporary Native Americans can be found in the physiographic Southwest, too. Their concentration is more intense and they have experienced a lesser amount of assimilation and acculturation into the Anglo society than have their ethnic counterparts in other regions of the country. Edward H. Spicer, in his regional classic *Cycles of Conquest*, articulated the impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest between 1533 and 1960. He found that in this region "there were many different trends and counter-trends with respect to the acceptance and rejection of what the conquerors offered as a new and superior way of life."

Spicer discovered that "where the land and other resources were regarded as undesirable by the invaders or where, through a variety of circumstances ranging from exceptional tribal cohesion to unusual natural barriers, the natives were able to resist successfully, the processes of extermination and cultural absorption did not take place." By forming and protecting cultural islands in the midst of the European societies expanding around them, these Indian groups, with some mutations and adaptations, extended the survival of their original culture. This condition may also be attributed to the fact that toward the end of the "frontier" period, United States Indian policy became more protective of Southwestern Indians. Moreover, territorial size and distances from Anglo-American influences played a role in this enclave phenomenon. By far the greatest number of square miles in the United States set aside for Native American reservations can be found in the Southwest.

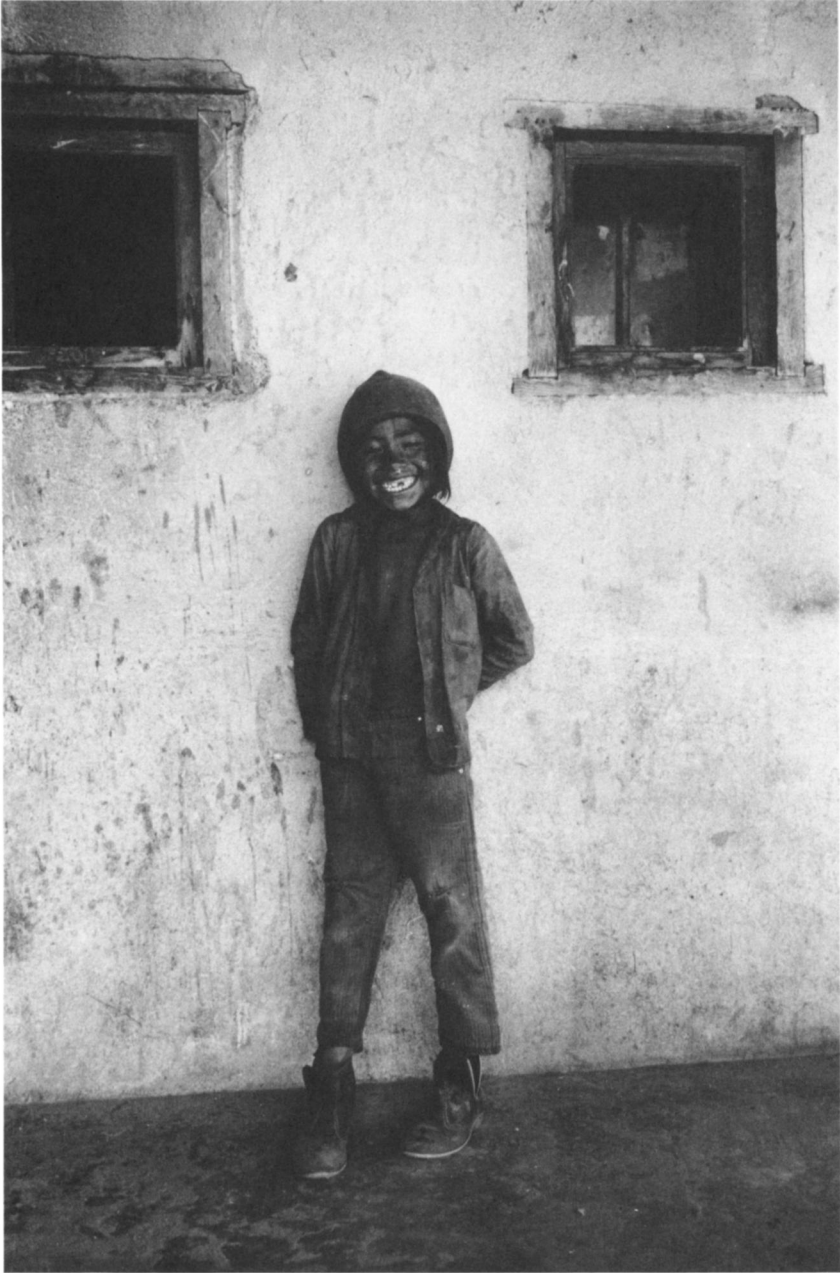
Southwestern maps clearly show a clustering within the physiographic Southwest of tribes with similar forms of subsistence methods



and common linguistic traditions. The integrity of these patterns corresponds closely to the Southwest's physiographic and climatic borders. Nowhere else in the United States do Indian tribes maintain their ethnic identity and membership so strongly as do those within the boundaries of the physiographic and climatic Southwest. Starting in the northwestern corner of Arizona and the southwestern corner of Utah, in a counterclockwise direction, live the Southern Paiute, the Havasupai, the Hualapai, the Mohave and the Chemehuevi tribes. Yuma Indians can still be found near the Arizona town which is their namesake, on both sides of the Colorado River. To the east of the Yumas live the Tohono O'odham. In central Arizona, the Yavapai make up a small tribe that lives in scattered settlements along the Verde River. Actually, the Yavapai have intermixed with Tonto and other peoples from the Western Apache group. South of these and north of the Tohono O'odham are the Maricopa and Pima tribes. The Tohono O'odham also live in northern Sonora, Mexico, while in the central part of Sonora can be found the Seri, Opata, and Jova tribes. Further south in Sonora are the Yaqui, Lower Pima, and Mayo. In west-central Chihuahua, the Tarahumara tribe is widely spread. Like the pueblos, most of these Indian societies derive their livelihood primarily from intensive agriculture supplemented by chickens, sheep, and other domesticated animals, as well as wild game and edible natural vegetation.

Except for the Southwest's various pueblo groups, almost all of the remaining Indians of the region are made up of some branch of the Apache peoples: in east-central Arizona the San Carlos and White Mountain Apaches, in southeast Arizona and southwest New Mexico the Chiricahua Apaches, and in southwest-central New Mexico and the horn of west Texas isolated communities of Mescalero Apaches. In extreme north-central New Mexico lives a small tribe of Jicarilla Apaches. The Navajo—North America's largest and most concentrated group of Native Americans—are cousins of the Apaches. Their reservation, primarily located in Arizona, spreads also into parts of New Mexico, Colorado and Utah. Several contemporary pueblo tribes occupy sites in New Mexico's northern Rio Grande Valley. Their remarkable and unique retention of relative indigenous purity, both cultural and genetic, sets this cluster of Southwest Indian tribes apart from other ethnic groups, including Native Americans located elsewhere in North America.

Ethnologists believe that in pre-Columbian times at least two thousand distinct Indian languages existed in the Western Hemisphere, ac-



counting for about one-third of the languages of the world. By employing sophisticated techniques to determine how much a language has changed through time, linguists have also been able to demonstrate genetic connections between Indian groups previously thought to be separate. Such study continues to reveal many explanations about the prehistoric migration patterns and cultural evolution of the Southwest Indian peoples. Parts of the largest single language group in pre-Columbian North America, the Uto-Aztecan language family, still can be found extending in a long irregular tract from southern Idaho to central Mexico, and on to Panama in scattered pockets. The Uto-Aztecan languages are thought to have had a single parent tongue about five thousand years ago and to have spread from a central homeland in southeastern California and western Arizona. The language spread eastward and to the south, probably within the last two thousand years. It reached Texas about A.D. 1700 and the Valley of Mexico not long after A.D. 1200. Uto-Aztecan speakers display the greatest cultural divergence of any language in the southwest quadrant. The Uto-Aztecan also dominates the physiographic Southwest's language pattern. The Hopi, Pima, Tohono O'odham, Yaqui, Tarahumara, Southern Paiute, Ute, and Chemehuevi, as well as lesser languages, belong to this family.

A Southwestern island of seven languages belonging to the Athapaskan linguistic family lies within the broader Uto-Aztecan group. Studies demonstrate that the several Athapaskan dialects within the Southwest all belong to various Apache tribes. This group makes up the latest language incursion; the Athapascans penetrated the Uto-Aztecan societies about four hundred years ago. Within the more recently claimed Athapaskan territory lies an even smaller island collection of dialects which make up another subgroup of the Aztec-Tanoan family. These include the Tiwa, Tewa, Towa, and Kiowa languages. Several somewhat anomalous and as yet ancestrally unexplained language enclaves called "isolates" are found in the physiographic Southwest, too. The Zuni Language Isolate appears to belong to the Penutian Phylum, while the Keres Language Isolate and the Tarascan Language Isolate have as yet undetermined phylum affiliations. The Seri Language Isolate shows a link with the Hokan Phylum.

Clearly there are linguistic patterns and concentrations that can be labeled "Southwest." This physiographic region features a distinctive, substantial, and highly visible American Indian population, both prehistoric and contemporary.

*The Historic Southwest*

The history of the Southwest, that is to say, the documented record of the explorers and settlers of this region, began with the Spaniards in Mexico during the second quarter of the sixteenth century. For years the gold-hungry Spaniards had talked about the legend of “El Dorado” and the “Seven Cities of Gold.” In 1538 a Spanish explorer, Cabeza de Vaca, and three companions including a black Moorish slave, Estevánico de Dorantes, stumbled into northern Mexico. They told a bizarre story. They claimed that after being shipwrecked, they wandered for four years through the North American areas where Texas and possibly southern New Mexico are today. While they did not claim personally to have seen cities of gold and “people who wore cotton,” the stories they had heard about such things during their wanderings fired the curiosity and fantasies and ambitions of Spanish authorities clear up to the level of the Viceroy of New Spain, Don Antonio de Mendoza. To head an expedition northward into the “Tierra Nueva Norte” to investigate Cabeza de Vaca’s report, Mendoza chose a Franciscan priest, Fray Marcos de Niza. This *entrada* was less than totally successful.

According to his *relación* sent to the viceroy, Fr. Marcos, together with Estevánico, left the New Spain province of Culiacán on Friday, March 19, 1539, with the goal in mind of, to use Herbert E. Bolton’s words, “piercing the northern Mystery.” After several days, Fr. Marcos sent Estevánico ahead of the main party with some Indians to reconnoiter the country and to send back periodic reports. Fr. Marcos never saw his companion again. Four days later, the first of Estevánico’s messengers sent back to the friar arrived to say that ahead of De Niza lay a province of seven very great cities, and the first city was named Cíbola. The advance party’s subsequent messages continued to heighten the friar’s expectations. On a day in late May—Fr. Marcos is imprecise about the date—a grieved and exhausted Indian who had been with Estevánico met the priest and told him that the people of Cíbola had killed the black man. Ignoring an angry warning from the lord of Cíbola to turn back, Estevánico had defied the chief and strode into his doom. Some stories say he had been impolitic and boorish. After reflecting upon his guide’s fate, Fr. Marcos decided to risk a look. Most historians agree that the village he glimpsed from a distance was Hawikuh, at that time the southwesternmost pueblo of Zuñi.

After the fiasco at Hawikuh, Fray Marcos hastened back to Mexico to

make his report to Mendoza. This report led to Don Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's entrada in 1540. Coronado's two-year excursion, which included visits to new lands but also much misery and no gold, left the Spanish less than enthusiastic about further expeditions to the north. However, forty years later, an expedition up the Río del Norte (Rio Grande), a more direct route to northern New Mexico, led by Fray Agustín Rodríguez and Captain Francisco Chamuscado rekindled Spanish curiosity.

In 1582–83, a Spanish rancher from southern Chihuahua, Antonio de Espejo, brought another expedition northward along the Río del Norte. Hearing of great mines to the west, Espejo went to Zuni and then to the Hopi villages. Friendly Hopis led him westward to the mines where Jerome, Arizona, is today. Finding only copper and other nonprecious metal ores, Espejo hastened back to the Rio Grande and home to Mexico. Despite the consistent failure to find rare metals, rumors stemming from these explorations fueled and intensified the belief that gold and other riches existed to the north of Mexico. Together with the prospects for converting the native Indian population to Catholicism, the lust for mineral wealth continued to provoke forays into this region.

As a consequence of the avaricious appetite but consistently futile quest for riches (a testimony to the human capability for maintaining hope despite persistent disappointment) and a messianic compulsion to recruit Indians for Christianity, Spaniards during the next two hundred and eighty years made numerous entradas into the Southwest. Despite some frustration in failing to proselytize Indians and discover quick wealth, the Spanish did successfully establish missions for the Indians. They also founded a few small and isolated communities that have persisted—a few have grown, many are moribund, some are abandoned—down to the present time. The development of the Santa Barbara and Parral mining districts in the Valle de San Bartolomé, Chihuahua, created important and permanent bases for the explorations northward and must be considered as part of the cultural Southwest. The same could be said for the capitals of Sonora—San Juan Bautista, Arizpe, and later, Ures—places that were also part of the history of Arizona.

In the late sixteenth century, popular pressure and curiosity influenced the Spanish civil authorities to consider colonization of New Mexico. Following several unauthorized, even illegal, Spanish colonizing efforts, in 1595 the viceroy licensed Don Juan de Oñate to establish Spanish colonies in New Mexico and designated him the first governor

of Northern New Spain. Moving into the upper Rio Grande Valley, Oñate founded a colonial settlement and then proceeded to explore the region for mineral wealth and other resources. He or his representatives traveled east to the Great Plains and west to the Gulf of California. Under Oñate's protection, Franciscan priests founded a number of missions.

During the seventeenth century, efforts to build up the settlement of the northern Rio Grande Valley continued. By 1680 more than twenty-five missions had been established in the province of New Mexico. That year, however, the Pueblo Indians staged a revolt and drove the Hispanics south down the Rio Grande back to El Paso. Led by Don Diego de Vargas, the Spaniards successfully reoccupied the upper Rio Grande Valley in 1692 and then commenced to extend their colonization outward. During this period, led by such people as Fr. Eusebio Francisco Kino, Hispanics settled in what is today northern Sonora and southern Arizona, especially that part of Arizona included later in the Gadsden Purchase of 1853.

Over the past sixty to seventy years certain historians of the Southwest have come to call this region the "Spanish Borderlands." The origin of this term has been attributed to Herbert Bolton, but a generation earlier, historian Hubert Howe Bancroft laid the foundation for this perspective. Scholars influenced by Bolton, however, have magnified the significance of this point of view greatly, probably beyond Bolton's expectations, as an interpretive school of American history. This school argues that Spanish entradas and settlement greatly influenced the Southwestern United States. Moreover, borderlands scholars contend, the Spanish brought culture and enlightenment to the region and improved the quality of life which the indigenous peoples had known prior to the time of the Spanish invasion. These historians tell us that even though the conquistadores murdered, tortured, and enslaved the Indians, robbed them of their self-determination and traditions, forced Catholicism upon them, and brutally punished those who were recalcitrant, the indigenes benefitted greatly from this experience.

Early in the eighteenth century, Franciscan priests and lay colonists founded missions and presidios in southern Texas, and during the last quarter of the century did the same in California. This Catholic order established a number of missions and presidios close to the Pacific coast extending from San Diego as far north as San Francisco. After the successful revolution against Spain which ended with Mexico's independence in 1821, the new government issued orders to the Catholic church

to secularize its activities. This meant that the missions had to be closed by 1834. The relationship between the colonial Hispanics of Northern New Spain and the Spanish and Mexican religious and political authorities had always been distant and tenuous. These relationships declined further, and, in many cases by 1840, had already disappeared. The Hispanic presence in California declined dramatically during the second half of the nineteenth century. In New Mexico, between 1800 and 1850, the small, scattered, and isolated Spanish colonial pockets became self-governing enclaves with little direct contact with either Spain or Mexico. At times these communities were guided and governed only by local chapters of a religious and somewhat secret fraternal organization, the Penitente Brotherhood. This tradition of local sovereignty changed drastically after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, when the United States quickly occupied and began to dominate completely the Southwest's Spanish-descended residents.

Prior to 1848, due to overpopulation, many northern New Mexico Hispanics made several unsuccessful efforts to settle in southern Colorado. But starting in 1851, northern New Mexico Hispanics migrated to the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado to establish permanent communities, and then began to spread eastward through La Veta and Raton passes to Trinidad and on through the Cucharas and Huerfano river basins to Pueblo, Colorado. Up until 1900, small numbers of Mexican and New Mexican Hispanics continued to migrate to other parts of the Southwest and West. Hispanic influence in Arizona, as it is popularly understood, has been greatly exaggerated. Most of the Spanish occupation of this state prior to the twentieth century was tentative at best and remained confined to a very few intermittently occupied missions and presidios in the Santa Cruz Valley in Arizona's extreme south-central area. Farther north, the Hopi effectively shut out the Spanish after the year 1700, and almost all of central and northern Arizona remained *tierra incógnita y despoblado* for all non-Indians up until the last third of the nineteenth century, when Anglo miners, most of them Protestants, settled in the territory's middle regions.

In fact, few enduring remnants of Hispanic occupation existed in Arizona after 1859. Federal census figures for 1860, 1864, and 1870 show many Hispanic names in the region, but a large portion of these people were Papago, Pima, Maricopa, and Apache Indians. Immigrants from New Mexico and Mexico who came to work for the Yankees constituted most of the rest. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century

Anglo soldiers and miners in several Arizona mining towns and army camps found Mexican women for partners, as spouses and otherwise, and mining companies in Morenci, Arizona, imported mestizo workers from Sonora and Chihuahua. But these demographics show no cultural continuity of Hispanic influence in Arizona.

Regarding the Hispanic influence in Southern California, Carey McWilliams wrote in 1946, "Aside from a few items which had been incorporated into the dominant cultural pattern, the Spanish influence appeared to have been completely obliterated. Certainly the dominant Anglo-American cultural pattern had not been modified except in a few minor respects." On this subject, McWilliams quoted California-born (1855) Harvard philosopher Josiah Royce:

No one who has grown up in California can be under an illusion as to the small extent to which the American character, as here exemplified, has been really altered by foreign intercourse, large as the foreign population has always remained. The foreign influence has never been for the American community at large, in California, more than skin-deep. . . . You cannot call a community of Americans foreign in disposition merely because its amusements have a foreign look.

More broadly interpreted, Royce is telling us a painful truth: substantive, significant, and conspicuous evidence of Hispanic impact on the Southwest is only incidental. Yet the scarce vestigial traces of the Spanish occupation of California fit a romantic image more than did anything in New Mexico.

The Hispanic legacy found perpetuation in oblique ways, too. In their role as culture brokers, the Southwest's Anglo-American imagemakers in several ways used variations on the Hispanic model in shaping both Anglo clichés and Indian ones. In addition to creating an Hispanic tradition as it suited Charles Lummis and Helen Hunt Jackson, the Southwest imagemakers found in the Spanish hacienda and vaquero models for the ranch and cowboy romance. In the meantime, Anglo traders used Hispanic craftsmen to teach the Southwest Indians how to shape silver jewelry and to spin, dye, and weave woolen rugs and blankets.

As Richard Nostrand has written, "Not until the twentieth century did Hispanic numbers [in the Southwest] soar." But this was a different migration. Between 1900 and 1959, more than one million Mexican nationals immigrated to the United States. Some Spanish-borderlands

scholars seem to ignore the relatively recent arrival of most Spanish-surnamed people, and use the human geography of this larger and more recent Hispanic population to buttress their argument that Spain and Mexico have had a powerful influence upon this region.

Current demographic statistics do not provoke any great revision in determining that area which we can call the "Hispanic Southwest." Place names in southern Texas and California suggest a rich and enduring Hispanic heritage in those two states. But following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, hordes of white Americans rushed into these Hispanic areas of Texas, and, even though white Americans totally dominated these parts of Texas, they continued to use many existing Spanish place names. Most of California's Spanish place names were designated by Anglo real estate developers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in an attempt to capitalize commercially on the state's romance that visitors and newcomers to the region found so "quaint" and attractive. A meaningful cultural presence of Hispanic traditions cannot be derived merely from Spanish place names. And other qualifications—primarily physiographic, climatic, and prehistoric—preclude Texas and California from being placed within "the Southwest."

#### THE ANGLO-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

##### *Political Corridors*

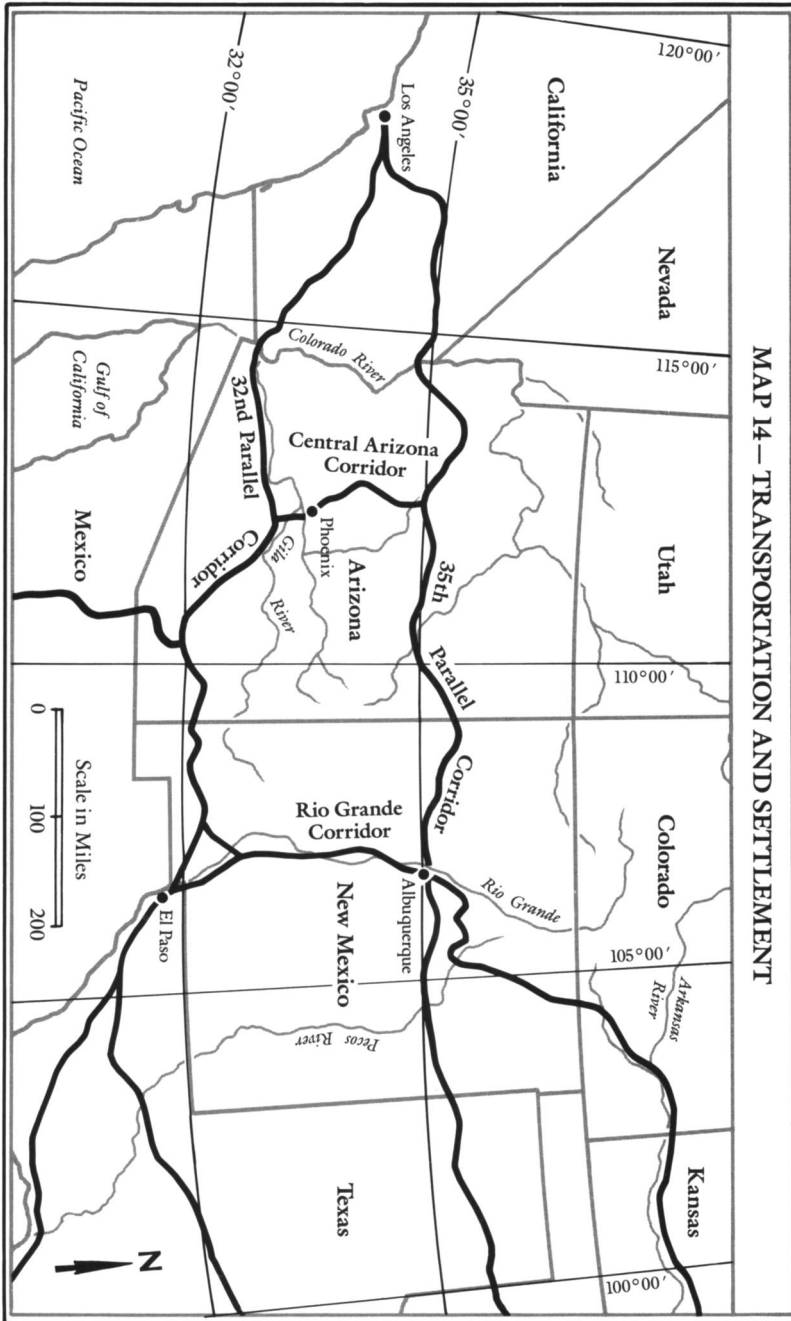
In order to overcome the formidable physical discouragements to travel presented by the rugged Southwestern landscape, Anglo-American newcomers and visitors to the region had to discover and use routes that for centuries had offered the least resistance to human efforts to journey about the region. These courses included the Rio Grande River route, also known as El Camino Real and, later, the Chihuahua–Santa Fe Trail, with its infamous Jornada del Muerto cut-off; east-west trails from California through north-central Arizona, including the Palatkwapi Trail, to the pueblos of the Four Corners area and past Inscription Rock to Santa Fe; other east-west routes such as the Gila Trail in southern New Mexico and southern Arizona; and north-south trails within Arizona. During this time settlers and travelers developed and used the Santa Fe Trail; the Pecos River route, also known as the Goodnight-Loving Trail; and the Old Spanish Trail through southern Utah, which skirted the Grand Can-

yon and other forbidding landforms. D. W. Meinig has shown that by the late nineteenth century, Anglo-American settlement in and development of the Southwest region increasingly became connected to transportation corridors, corridors that oftentimes were determined more by political than topographical influences (see map 14).

Up until the Mexican War, only a few Americans—explorers, soldiers, trappers, and merchants—had visited the Southwest. There simply was no sense in it. Hot, vast, remote from other centers of habitation; rugged, waterless, a place filled with unfriendly Indians, together with superficially hospitable but resentful and suspicious Hispanics, the region lacked enough attractions to encourage danger-filled American intrusions there. During the war with Mexico, General Stephen Kearny invaded northern New Mexico via the Raton route of the Santa Fe Trail. Meeting little resistance, Kearny established Ft. Marcy at Santa Fe in 1846 to assert American control and to protect the frontier settlements nearby. He then continued on down the Rio Grande, crossed over westward to the Gila River, and went on to California, using, essentially, the old Gila Trail. During the war, expeditions led by Colonel Philip St. George Cooke and Colonel Alexander Doniphan also explored the region.

Soon after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Americans wasted no time in developing plans to exploit the region. To learn more about the place, Lt. James Simpson went to reconnoiter Navajo land in 1849, and in 1851 the Army Corps of Engineers sent Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves out to find a suitable route on which to build a wagon road from Fort Smith, Arkansas through Zuni to California. During the next few years, due to the region's physiography, climate and hostile Indians, Anglo-American immigration into New Mexico and Arizona by Americans remained minimal. To protect travelers, miners, and other settlers from the Indians, the United States government began to locate army posts at key sites. By the time the Civil War had started, more than twenty manned forts had been established within the physiographic Southwest. In the meantime, however, American east-to-west travel ambitions quickly became more grandiose.

An American national interest in a transcontinental railroad system manifested itself as early as 1832 when *The Emigrant*, a weekly newspaper published at Ann Arbor, Michigan, suggested that the country should begin to make plans for an East Coast-to-West Coast railway. In early 1845, Asa Whitney, a New York businessman and China trader,



proposed to Congress that the government grant a sixty-mile-wide strip between Lake Superior and the Oregon country to any company willing to risk construction. But little broad interest could be found before 1848. That year, two dramatic and historically important but coincidental events took place only nine days apart: the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, California, on January 24, and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending the War with Mexico, on February 2. Each of these events, of course, had a profoundly significant impact on the subsequent demographic development of the Southwest. And each complemented the other: travelers to California needed transportation routes and the newly acquired territory offered places for these routes.

The perception that the nation needed a transcontinental railroad gained broad support after the middle 1850s, and few people of influence opposed the idea that the United States government had to provide major financial aid to such a project. But a route had to be determined. Regional influences became fervid. The growing antagonistic sectionalist expansionism of the period fueled route rivalries: northerners wanted a railroad from Missouri via Wyoming's South Pass to Portland, Oregon, or to San Francisco, California; southerners demanded a New Orleans-to-Southern California line, or, at least, a route that would follow the Canadian or Red rivers in north Texas.

Under the tenth and eleventh sections of the Military Appropriation Act, approved March 3, 1853, the United States Congress appropriated \$150,000 to the War Department to conduct such explorations and surveys "as might be deemed necessary in order to ascertain the most practical and economical route for a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean." Several possible rights-of-way were debated. Interested parties gained serious consideration for routes that would follow the 45th, 42nd, 37th, 35th, and 32nd parallels. Southerners led by United States Secretary of War Jefferson Davis aggressively sought land for a southern (32° N.) transcontinental railroad. With this objective in mind as well as several other considerations, United States Minister to Mexico James Gadsden signed a treaty with Mexico on December 30 agreeing to buy the appropriate lands south of the Gila River in New Mexico and Arizona for ten million dollars. The U.S. Congress ratified the treaty on June 30, 1854. To explore the various United States southwest quadrant routes, in 1853 the U.S. Army sent Lt. John W. Gunnison to explore the 38th and 39th, Lt. Amiel W. Whipple the 35th, and Lt. John G. Parke the 32nd-parallel routes.

The railroad survey's findings went to Congress in 1855. These recommendations showed that four routes seemed practical. Included among them was a route along the Red River to Southern California and another line across southern Texas and the Gila Valley, also to Southern California. In 1859, a Kansas corporation received a charter authorizing it to build a track to connect Atchison, Kansas, with that state's capital, Topeka. In 1863 the federal government awarded the corporation a land grant which permitted the company to extend its track on to Santa Fe, in New Mexico Territory.

But due to the nation's preoccupation with the Civil War and the attendant high construction costs, work on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (the "Santa Fe") did not continue until 1868. In 1873, the line reached La Junta, Colorado. That year the company found itself in stiff competition with the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad for expansion into the Southwest. The Panic of 1873 stopped construction by both lines for three years, but the better financed Kansas railroad pressed on over one of the disputed routes and pushed its track through Raton Pass, on the Colorado–New Mexico border. On January 1, 1879, the Santa Fe reached Las Vegas, New Mexico. The following year the AT&SF bought another struggling line, the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad, and this purchase gave the Santa Fe a right of way to connect St. Louis with California. Workers completed this link in 1883.

In the meantime, the Texas and Pacific Railroad, which had been chartered in 1871, began to build westward along the 32nd Parallel to Yuma where it was to meet the tracks of the Southern Pacific Railroad. But by 1877 the Texas and Pacific was bankrupt and unable to proceed. Desperate to create a southern linkup, the Southern Pacific, without federal financial aid but with charters obtained from the Arizona and New Mexico territorial governments, continued construction eastward rapidly. In 1882 the two roads joined, and a year later the Southern Pacific secured its own line across Texas (see map 14).

To a remarkable degree, the railroads used the old routes, which seems only natural. The 35th-Parallel route roughly followed the old Indian and Spanish trails, while the 32nd often tracked the Old Gila Trail. But at times this was more coincidence than planning. Though well explored before any decisions had been made, the 35th-Parallel route was politically determined (with a nod to being "practicable and economical") in Washington and, we can assume, in New York City as well, as was the 32nd-Parallel route. Later, in the early twentieth century,

paved highways and national interstates would shadow the earlier railroad routes. And so these political factors determined the regional linkage and developmental demographic corridors that characterize the Southwest today.

It would be easy to demonstrate that the goals and activities of the Southwest's Anglo conquerors paralleled the Spanish ones. Both types lusted for gold, murdered and abused the natives, hyperbolized their "adventures" and maintained a "colonial" environment. But this explanation would ignore certain less conspicuous contrasts. The Spanish colonists were tied to the crown and the church and, thus, were more thoroughly "colonial." Both English and Spanish colonists sought wealth and power, but true to the English tradition in the New World, the Anglos also sought sanctuary. Despite founding many permanent settlements in the Southwest, most Spaniards in Northern New Spain possessed a primary objective to serve both church and crown, to exploit rumored great wealth and return to Mexico, even to the mother country, to live in splendor. If they did remain in the New World, it was, in many cases, due more to inordinate substantial success—or, more likely, the extreme and humiliating lack of it—in realizing the region's riches than due to an original intention to remain there permanently.

To the contrary, starting on the main North American continental east coast in 1607, most of the Anglo settlements in the New World were established in order to escape the power of the crown and the church, which were one and the same in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. Starting in Virginia and Massachusetts, the Anglo-American colonials established a settlement pattern which maintained general constancy as long as there was real estate to occupy—either peacefully or not. These people expected to remain here, to establish new governments, and to develop agriculture and commerce. Simply stated, the Spanish colonials were imperialists, while their English colonial counterparts were expatriates. Whatever similarities one might find in the Anglo and Hispanic settlements in the Southwest, closely viewed they were but superficial and transient.

While Arizona and New Mexico may have possessed routes to California for gold and silver seekers, it was only a matter of time before these barren areas became known for their own sake. The Anglo-American presence occurred last in the Southwest's demographic evolution, but the disruptive substance of the physical and cultural impact of this presence has been many times greater in one century than all the region's

other inhabitants had effected in tens of centuries. And the Anglo presence has done the least to adapt to the region; instead it has forced the region to adapt to traditional Anglo purposes. They did more to exploit and tame the physical challenges of the region; they established absentee owned and controlled corporate industry, corporate irrigation, corporate trade, corporate transportation. When the region had become even more docile and domesticated, health seekers, tourists, and retirees moved into the area. Mines, "reclamation" projects, freeways, dams, railroads, pipelines, canals, smelters, cities and suburbs, deforestation, and watershed manipulation testify to this exploitive and manipulative process. The Anglo culture has made little attempt to adapt to the region's physical qualities. Phoenix's manicured Indiana-type residential landscapes, multilake housing and commercial "developments," "Big Surf," and the fountain at Fountain Hills attest to that. Instead, the Industrial Revolution made the unpromising and vast land productive by creating a demand for copper to make electrical wiring for refrigerated railroad cars in which to ship Arizona agribusiness produce. Swimming pools—thousands of them, and air conditioning, whole malls of it—have made the Arizona heat tolerable. Heavy investment capital from outside the Southwest has made possible hydroelectric generating stations, huge copper mines and state-of-the-art smelters, real estate capital, corporate agriculture, building construction, and "clean" manufacturing plants. The out-of-state investors have been well repaid in profits.

#### SOUTHWESTERN CULTURAL IMAGERY

Arizona cliches more than New Mexico's grab the Southwestern physical-image spotlight: the Grand Canyon with its always-intimidating scale and grandeur, the Sonoran Desert with its hackneyed saguaro cacti, Monument Valley with its surreal mittens, Sedona with its verdure and red rocks. But probably no other factor so clearly stamps the Southwest as does its well known—and uniquely interwoven—cultural images. In this arena, New Mexico has provided the greater visibility. That state does more to exhibit the peculiar and absorbing cultural imagery that has earned the Southwest its greatest worldwide attention.

In a short but trenchant study of novelist Zane Grey, Ann Ronald, a scholar specializing in Western American literature, tells us: "Ultimately we read [Zane Grey's] books not because he tells us about life, but be-



cause he does not.” The popularity of Grey—a disenchanted Ohio dentist, smitten by what he perceived to be the vitality of the American Southwest in contrast with the blasé and jaded East—has for more than seventy-five years symbolized a great and enduring escapist romance certain easterners have felt about the Southwest, a romance which they lovingly and elaborately have tatted for themselves for more than a hundred years now.

Before 1884 just about everyone, writers and readers alike, in the nation and throughout the world understood this region to be a vast physical and cultural desert, repulsive and dangerous and totally without attraction other than a few very minor discoveries of its storied mineral wealth. Early understanding of the region tended to be a negative one. The account by Joseph Rowsee Peyton, who in 1773 endured weeks of miserable captivity and deprivation by the Spanish, notified Anglos as to how welcome they were in the Southwest. The Spanish captured and detained in 1807 U.S. Army officer Zebulon Pike, who, it’s true, may have contrived his experience with the Spanish for investigative purposes. In San Diego, California, Mexicans liberated from Spain but utilizing the Spanish tradition toward unwelcome Americanos incarcerated the American trapper and explorer James Ohio Pattie in 1828.

These early Anglo-American visitors perceived the Hispanic culture of the Southwest to be bizarre, uninhibited, and, behind the ceremony and graciousness, basically crude. Despite whatever respect and admiration these early observers might have had for the region’s peoples, they portrayed Hispanic cultural traditions as wantonly colorful, carnivalesque, and amusingly strange. For novelist Mayne Reid, who visited the area and who, for awhile, was married to a wealthy Mexican aristocrat, the Hispanics were every bit as brutal as the bloodthirsty Indians. For all the visiting Anglos the Southwest’s “cultural” features seemed more like a sleazy sideshow than the main attraction.

Few of the Anglo visitors before 1884 wrote anything positive about the inhabitants of the American Southwest. Travelers returning to civilization described the Indians as being filthy, lying, stupid, bloodthirsty, and treacherous. A few visitors such as Josiah Gregg (1844), George F. Ruxton (1849), William Davis (1857), Frank Edwards (1847), James Ohio Pattie (1826), Michael Box (1869), and J. Ross Browne (1869) found the Hispanics of the region colorful and garrulous—but hardly to be admired for their high level of refinement. Other reporters like Samuel Cozzens (1874), Hiram Hodge (1877), and Richard Hinton

(1878) had little good to say about the weather or the flora and the fauna, but did report favorably on the trapping and mining opportunities in the Southwest; only the moneymaking possibilities received positive treatment. But these unflattering evaluations were soon to be revised by other visitors, and the region's moneymaking opportunities would, to these later visitors and immigrants, be seen as a curse.

In one year's time the older negative images changed dramatically. 1884 proved to be a watershed year for Southwest imagery. The newly available fast and easy transportation to the region made possible by the completion of both the Southern Pacific and Atlantic & Pacific railroads played a role in this rapid conceptual metamorphosis, as did the 1884 publication of Helen Hunt Jackson's classic novel *Ramona*. But the long-range impact of Charles Lummis's 1884–85 "tramp across the continent" observations contributed much more to a new antimaterialistic perspective. Thanks to Lummis, within sixteen years a reputed Southwest regional *zeitgeist* of adventure and enchantment became broadly public, and a "Southwest genre" had been spawned which has continued to the present day. Southwest books of all kinds—history, anthropology, fiction, natural science, poetry, adventure, and discovery—soon flourished and were full of praise for the region and its people. In retrospect, Lummis's role in this particular conceptual development appears dramatically dominant. Between 1884 and 1900, Charles (he preferred the baronial "Don Carlos") Lummis did more by far than anyone else at any time in identifying and publishing this romantic Southwest genre. Lummis's role represented a major cornerstone in the development of America's cultural self-awareness.

As early as 1880, numerous old-line New England Anglo-Saxon Protestant elitists displayed a despondency born out of frustration due to what appeared to them to be the failure of American idealism. These same people, historian Richard Hofstadter has noted, comprised the "Mugwumps" ("Independents," they called themselves), who were unhappy with the selection of James G. Blaine, the "Grandee of Graft," as the 1884 Republican presidential nominee.<sup>2</sup> They considered Blaine to

2. The word "Mugwump" first appeared in 1872 in the Indianapolis *Sentinel*. The term's origin is hazy; some claim it was an Algonquin Indian word meaning "Big Chief." So in March 1884, the New York *Sun* used the term to ridicule the snooty, self-appointed Brahmin intellectuals of the Republican Party's liberal wing. Certain tongue-in-cheek historians say the Mugwump is a mythical bird who straddles the political and ideological fence with his "mug" on one side and his "wump" on the other.

be darkly tarnished by the era's economic and political corruption. The Mugwumps bolted the Republican party at the June 1884 presidential nominating convention in Chicago and gave their support to Grover Cleveland and the Democratic ticket. Led by George W. Curtis, publisher of *Harper's Weekly*, and Edwin L. Godkin of *The Nation*, the Mugwumps directed their political energies toward revisions of the "abominable" tariff, the hard-money policy, and the U.S. civil service "spoils system," as well as other reforms. In particular, they deplored the corrupt politics of the Gilded Age's "Robber Barons," whom they felt manipulated the entire American political, economic, and social system all the way from the local precinct to the nation's presidency.

Hofstadter described the Mugwump as a person or a descendant of a family of "moderate means," who up until 1870 "could command much deference and exert much influence." "Down to 1850, and even later," Mugwump Henry Adams wistfully remembered, "New England society [and, therefore, by implication, the *essence* of American society] was still directed by the professions." In the post-Civil War period, all of this leadership changed hands. The advance of the westward frontier, the growth of big cities and great industrial plants, the expansion of the railroads, and the emergence of corporate America eclipsed the old society and the old order. As the older order deteriorated, the traditional New England "statesmen" and other leaders, both men and women of old families, college-educated with deep ancestral roots in their professions, businesses, and communities and with a tradition of patrician noblesse oblige, increasingly found themselves excluded from the decisionmaking of American society. During this time the nouveau riche—the Jay Goulds, the John D. Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, Harrimans, Carnegies, and Morgans—viewed as vulgar and corrupt and obnoxiously materialistic by the old-line families, replaced the Mugwump preeminence in American politics and society.

After the appearance of this late-nineteenth-century Gilded Age, with its ruthlessly aggressive parvenus, the Mugwumps, especially those from New England, found themselves helpless, impotent, and bitter. They lamented the loss of the reform spirit and their loss of stewardship opportunities, but, most of all, they deplored the disappearance of the deference that previously had been accorded to them in their roles as political, social, and intellectual Brahmins, an elite group that had enjoyed cultural dominance in American life. In dozens of Eastern cities and towns, Hofstadter points out, the old gentry found itself "overshad-

owed and edged aside in the making of basic political and economic decisions." By 1880 the Mugwumps "were less important, and they knew it."

The Mugwumps flourished most conspicuously around Boston, and, Hofstadter noted, one sensed "among them the prominence of the cultural ideas and traditions of New England, and behind those, of old England. . . . They tended to look to New England's history for literary, cultural and political models and for examples of moral idealism." The novelists among them—William Dean Howells, Henry Blake Fuller, and Robert Herrick—portrayed the industrial barons as *nouveau-riche* boors who were "devoid of refinement or any sense of noblesse." Basically conservative and believers in Social Darwinism as well as *laissez-faire* economics, the Mugwumps increasingly found their beliefs and their status at cross-purposes. What were they to do?

For a long time these proper Bostonians had known about the opportunities found in reactionary regional romanticism for an escape from the materialistic national atmosphere created by unbridled capitalistic plutocracy. Despite their traditional purported distaste for unchecked consanguine aristocratic society and their avowed abhorrence of slavery, the old-line northerners (and southerners, too) had discovered and delighted in the misty, feudalistic Sir Walter Scott—Lost Cause mythology of the antebellum South, which they ingested as an antidote to the dyspepsia of nineteenth-century runaway American cultural and moral deterioration.

Actually, it was Northern romantics, themselves, who originated and perpetuated these fantasies. In *Cavalier and Yankee*, William R. Taylor examined the pre-Civil War national and regional circumstances which encouraged, and even provoked, Southern regional mythmaking and eventually enabled the South to find a comfortable identity with an image that was contrary to the American mainstream of cultural development and yet provided an honorable, if mythical, baronial way of life. They savored this feudal society with its visions of magnolias and colonnades, cotton fields and courtly plantation balls, gentle womanhood and a chivalric code, and they devoured the baronial genre spawned by northerner John Pendleton Kennedy in his novel *Swallow Barn*, published in 1832. "It was obvious from the beginning," said Taylor in *Cavalier and Yankee*, "that *Swallow Barn* was a city man's somewhat patronizing argument for the parochialism of the country." *Swallow Barn* and its Lost Cause literary descendants gave the northern city people,

long before the Civil War and the great industrial onslaught, a fanciful escape from the growing frenetic whirlwind of buying and selling and the bitter perplexities of business. This antebellum mystique of earthiness and gracious baronial society characterized the popular conception of the South past the Civil War and well into the twentieth century. *Gone with the Wind* may have been its apotheosis. However, as early as 1880 the Boston Mugwumps needed and were searching for some other unspoiled American region where they could act out, if only vicariously, their genteel, feudalistic dreams.

Even more than they had done for much of the nineteenth century, the post-1884 Mugwumps wrote off the East as a loss and sought a reaffirmation of Rousseau's and Thoreau's contention that humankind strongly needed a closeness to "wildness" and "nature" and "open space" in order to achieve social stability, cultural "balance," and personal tranquility. It was out of this escapist tradition, within this late nineteenth century context, and toward this Arcadian idyll that the Mugwumps derived their motives and objectives for reestablishing the American identity as a wild, bucolic, exotic, vital, enchanting, and innocent pastorate. In this regard, they searched for the "ideal" landscape. Traditional conceptions of romantic, pastoral Utopias usually possessed more verdure than what the Southwest had to offer. But Southwest "wasteland" Edens did not lack precedent. In the legends of Western Civilization, other Mediterranean and arid climes had also offered their mythical Arcadias. The agrarian oases of the Rio Grande Valley and other verdant spots of the Southwest fit comfortably into the historically idealized Anglo-Saxon concept of paradise. Thus the northeastern United States Mugwumps looked southwestward for an unspoiled American region where they could stage their genteel back-to-nature fantasies. Here, too, they could satisfy their desire for a reactionary agrarian alternative to growing American urban-industrial capitalism. And, they thought, it was a place absent of plutocrats in which they could regain their deserved deference.

True, the white men who pioneered the nation's frontier developed a much different impression of "primitive" cultures. Up until the 1880s the pioneers saw the American Indian as a vicious and bloodthirsty savage. Nonetheless, among the Boston Mugwump literati an earlier and continued sympathy for classical primitivism inspired Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *Hiawatha* (1855) just as it supported the earlier Indian heroics found in James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*. Young

Mugwumps of this period had read Capt. Mayne Reid's broadly popular adventure stories set in the far Southwest. Reid's *The Scalp Hunters* (1851) and *The White Chief* (1860), it is true, portrayed bloodthirsty Indian savagery, and depicted cowardice, treachery, and viciousness among Southwest Hispanics. Nevertheless, despite Reid's negative descriptions, the Mugwumps thought more like Cooper, Thoreau, and Longfellow. Moreover, by 1884, virtually no solid vestige of frontier Indian barbarism remained, and most visitors felt no need to become combative or alarmed or even wary. Instead, they found themselves "charmed" by all the "primitive" peoples they encountered in the Southwest.

There was, of course, a Mugwump mind long before 1884. However, prosperous and well-educated early English colonists in North America, particularly in the Boston area, hated Spain. This antagonism was based on racial, religious, and economic factors, some real, some imagined. The Spanish New World's size and power and its entrenched circumstances caused New England colonists to have anxieties about territorial conflicts as well as anxieties about political and economic hegemony in the New World. In fact, Puritans like Cotton Mather and Samuel Sewall wanted to gain physical control of Mexico. In addition, the British colonists in America had heard about, perhaps had even read, Bartolomé de las Casas's bloodchilling stories of "La Leyenda Negra," first published in 1552, and they had heard about the terrors of the Spanish Inquisition.

These colonists also hated Catholicism, which they perceived as being the progenitor of and no different from their worst nemesis, the Church of England. They felt that indirectly but still powerfully the Catholic church had forced their exodus from England; to them New England was founded as a refuge from the very principles for which Spain stood. Moreover, as fundamental Calvinists, the English colonists in North America saw themselves as being ethnically, socially, intellectually, and cosmically purer, and, therefore, more elevated than anyone else. John Winthrop wasn't being fancifully hyperbolic when in 1630 he stated his conviction: "We shall be as a city upon a hill." Most of all, the New England colonists resented the fact that the Spanish had seized and occupied the richer, warmer lands south of the British colonies.

These antagonisms were strongly felt, but before 1800 there was a general American ignorance of Spain and Latin America. However, literary historian Stanley Williams has said that in the minds of these Anglo colonists there was a powerful "unconscious" sense of the proximity of

Hispanic America, and they felt that continuing frontier expansion, both British and Spanish, inevitably had to lead to some kind of broad and serious conflict. These concerns, although subtle and inarticulate, were very compelling and eventually led to the planned examinations of Spanish culture by such nineteenth-century American Hispanophiles—and Mugwump progenitors—as Washington Irving, George Ticknor, and William Hickling Prescott.

Although Americans continued to feel a basic and underlying superiority toward, contempt for, and suspicion of Spain, both the nation and the empire, “Castles in Spain” as a metaphor remained a staple and pleasant American symbol that connoted feudal finery and gallantry and gauzy dreams of some pure and courageous chivalric decency and domestic contentment. Historian Williams states that this “mood was to linger on, more or less related to the dream of the noble savage, through Prescott’s graphic *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, and through the sentimental novels of William Gilmore Simms and Robert Montgomery Bird.” More important, this mood would make a heavy impact on the way in which New England Mugwumps perceived the American Southwest after this region had been taken from Mexico.

What, specifically, were the Mugwump-created Southwest images? Certainly not the topography and the climate. These Southwest traits defy and preclude any kind of romantic hyperbole. In what form, then, did the popular Southwest fantasies appear? Specifically, the visions were cultural and societal ones. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many European and American intellectuals, liberals and conservatives alike, tended to see “primitivism” as a virtue. This notion held that societies simpler than those found in Western Civilization are more fulfilling, more virtuous, and happier than “sophisticated” ones. “Such a state of existence,” P. Richard Metcalf has written, “was held to be a desirable alternative to the discontents and debilitations of contemporary . . . society.” Henry David Thoreau’s essays gave descriptions and arguments for this point of view, and many Mugwump minds found arguments such as Thoreau’s to be seductive alternatives to “too much civilization.” Thus the Mugwumps turned toward the last region left within the continental United States in which to find a rescue from their discontent.

In their attempt to escape to the Southwest, the Mugwumps blended their appetite for primitivism with their hankering for Sir Walter Scott’s



baronial model, and between 1884 and 1943 developed three very popular cultural images. Paul Horgan called them the “Heroic Triad”:

1. *The Mission/Hacienda Hispanic image*, made up of Old World aristocrats living the indolent, simple, and gracious life in an ambiance of casas and courtyards, mission bells and quaint adobe houses, halcyon days and starry nights; in places old—mission or small town or hacienda—populated with kindly friars, dashing caballeros, venerable dons and charming, beautiful señoritas and happy, childlike frolicking villagers; with a heroic history of conquistadores and fanciful Castilian refinement and gentility and hospitality (“mi casa es su casa”), but whose way of life was being pulled up by the roots by greedy gringos. And the vigas and whitewashed stucco walls of its churches and houses and other buildings suggested something timeless and classically Mediterranean.

2. *The Noble Savage image*, consisting of dignified and mystical Southwestern Indians who for years had been misunderstood, condemned, and scourged for being “bloodthirsty savages” by insensitive Anglos who spoke with “forked tongue”; the Southwest imagemakers depicted the Noble Savages as forgiving people, who were patient, gracious, trusting, trustworthy, moderate, disciplined (it was, of course, the evil white man who was responsible for the Indians’ tragic use of, even susceptibility to, fire-water), circumspect, contemplative and wise, as well as highly moral, transcendent with cosmic connections, primitive but civil; a people betrayed and abused by greedy and arrogant Anglo money-makers, but who remain stoic, loyal, and loving.

3. *The Cowboy/Ranch image*, characterized by a large, Anglo baronial cattle spread with “cowboys,” centaur figures who were legendary descendants of feudal knights by way of pioneer frontiersmen, who seldom work (at least not visibly); hard, lean, tall, free-spirited, laconic, living lightly, each his “own man” and living by an inflexible chivalric code; a loner, nomadic, always “moving on,” the cowboy represented honor, justice, rugged individualism, nonmaterialism, anti-urban industrialism and served as a symbol of absolute innocence, goodness, and courage. Fundamental to both Antebellum and Southwest imagery is the manorial model. In some ways the Cowboy/Ranch image was a cultural mutation derived from the Mission/Hacienda model, both of them being feudalistic images, and, therefore, very acceptably contrary to the urban-industrial America that Mugwumps found so obnoxious. (Today millionaires who buy ranches and play at being both *patrón* and cowboy

make a mockery of the genuine hardscrabble life that still characterizes the real ranching people of the region.)

The most influential and most obvious originator of the glorious and quaint Mission/Hacienda image was Helen Hunt Jackson, an authentic Massachusetts Mugwump. As the well-bred daughter of a New England professor of rhetoric and languages, Jackson displayed obvious romantic influences of Thoreau, Cooper, and Longfellow. Early in her life she developed a strong interest in history, and she possessed a literary talent characterized by a fiery imagination. Between January and April 1880 she created a whirlwind of petitions, articles, tracts, letters, and data reports. Out of this frenzy of energy and indignation she wrote *A Century of Dishonor*, a polemical exposé that dramatized the United States's fork-tongued Indian policy. In 1884, she published a touching, melodramatic novel, *Ramona*, which became, in many ways, the manifesto for two images of the Southwest: the gallant but fated Hispanic aristocrat, and the wise and dignified but abused Indian. Helen Hunt Jackson intended *Ramona* to be a *political* book, to be her own expression of disgust toward the corrupt morass of Gilded Age values. If one stands back and views them both, Jackson's *Century of Dishonor* serves as a foundation of and prelude to *Ramona*. In both books she dramatizes the way in which Americans brutalized the red man. While Jackson set the locale of the novel in coastal Southern California, she identified sharply two of the three images which became associated with the region's hinterlands. But it is hard to understand how Jackson could hate the Anglo imperialists so much and at the same time admire the descendants—both institutions and people—of the arrogant and cruel conquistadores.

*Ramona* enjoyed immediate popularity, but Jackson did not live to see its full impact on the American scene. She died less than a year following its publication. However, her cause, now eagerly supported by a growing Mugwump constituency, continued to be promoted by a man who did more than anyone else to shape further the Mugwump image of the Southwest—Charles Fletcher Lummis. His work would dramatize, give greater detail to, and spread farther all three of the Southwest images, but especially the Noble Savage and the Aristocratic Hispanic ones.

Lummis's background and personal traits stamped him as the quintessential Mugwump. Born in 1859 in Lynn, Massachusetts, to a father who was a minister and a professor of Latin and Greek, Lummis attended

Harvard University. In 1884, upon accepting a job offer to be city editor for the *Los Angeles Times*, Lummis walked from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Los Angeles. During the “tramp,” as he called it, he became deeply possessed by the local cultural characteristics of the Hispanic and Indian people he saw in southern Colorado, northern New Mexico, and northern Arizona.

After his arrival in Los Angeles, Lummis traveled extensively in Arizona and New Mexico and became fascinated by all of the Southwest’s cultural characteristics. He reported on Indian wars and archaeological expeditions, became increasingly interested in United States policies toward Native Americans, and wrote about the Spanish occupation of the New World. He spent much time out-of-doors exploring Indian ruins, discovering scenic trails, and visiting natural wonders such as the Grand Canyon. He worked endless hours crusading for the preservation of both cultural antiquities and the natural environment.

Within a few more years, a “Southwest genre” had been established. While well-received Southwest books of all kinds flourished, Southwest cultural imagery within the context of Southwest physiographic imagery found its highest form in the literary novel. Even before *Ramona* appeared in the bookstores in 1884, such skilled Southwest adventure writers as Mayne Reid (*The Scalp-Hunters* [1851] and *The White Chief* [1860]), Gustave Aimard (*The Trail Hunter* [1863]), and Harry Castlemon (*Frank at Don Carlos’ Rancho* [1871]) had acquired an ardent if youthful following. By the turn of the century, Southwest novelists like Charles King (*The Colonel’s Daughter* [1882] and *Sunset Pass* [1890]), Henry Brinkerhoff (*Nah-nee-tu* [1886]), Elizabeth Champney (*Great Grandmother’s Girls* [1888]), Adolph Bandelier (*The Delight Makers* [1890]), and Constance G. DuBois (*A Soul in Bronze* [1898]) enjoyed a wide American audience.<sup>3</sup>

Early in the 1900s, novelists Mary Austin, Eugene Manlove Rhodes, Zane Grey, Henry Knibbs, Harold Bell Wright, Elizabeth Baker Bohan, Edmund Mitchell, Rose Ellerbe, and dozens more focused on the Southwest and the region’s cultural imagery. Of 170 novels written about the Southwest between 1884 and 1943, except for those relatively few which were set in Coastal California, all had locales within the core (31°

3. By definition here, a “Southwestern book” possesses a setting within the physiographic domain put forth in this essay and includes rugged, dramatic, vast, and sunny landscape; noble/brutal Indians; aristocratic, childlike Hispanics and Charles Lummis’s “centaur figure,” the classic romantic Cowboy.

30' N.—37° N., 105° W.—115° 30' W.) of the physiographic and climatic Southwest. Boxed in by Mormon Country and the Rocky Mountains on the north, the Llano Estacado on the east, Mexico on the south, and the Mojave Desert on the west, the novels have settings which strictly conform to the cultural, physiographic, and climatic traits which the reading public craved. For the most part, these Southwest fiction writers ignored any presence in the region of corporate mining, industry, banking, or any aspect of capitalistic-urban-industrial America. A novelist has the prerogative to locate a story anywhere that she or he chooses. Given this freedom, the writer sets a fictional Southwest in those places which the novels' authors and readers find the most fancifully appealing. Thus a marketplace setting determines those parts of the region that fiction lovers like to read about as being "the most Southwestern." It should be no surprise that the spectacular Southwestern physiography and Southwestern novels' settings are similar: the state of nature does, at times, equal the state of mind.

While other regions of the Western Hemisphere had known the Hispanic, the Cowboy, and the Noble Savage, it was the Southwest's splendid setting with its determinant environmental context together with the region's peculiar demographic mix that dictated cultural traits and activities and which, somehow, created a unique cultural transmutation. Land, sky, and people combined alchemically to create an almost hallucinogenic "Land of Enchantment" for the self-professed New England intellectual/aesthetic/spiritual patricians. Never mind that apart from some obvious superficial accuracies it was 90 percent fantasy; the easterners had found in the Southwest a new vitality for America—and a new romance for themselves. In Southwestern "hospitality" (that is to say, generosity and courtesy and warmth—"mi casa es su casa"—and make-believe baronial traditions), these culturemakers found an antidote to their own and Max Weber's distastefully cold and calculating, New England "Protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism."

The Mugwump Southwest dreamspinners shared certain characteristics. Most were highly literate and well educated with comparatively genteel and "culturally sensitive" parents. Their childhood home life, in many cases, appears to have been centered on the prevailing nineteenth-century bourgeois cultural and religious ethos, an atmosphere which psychologists and historians alike have recognized as often being intense, superficially polite, calculatedly genteel, and intellectually superficial. Restless, energetic, displaced from their native homes, Southwest-

ern imagemakers had a compelling desire to seek issues, crusades, and causes. Displaying a variety of unstable qualities—marital unrest, hypochondria, religious extremism, behavioral eccentricities—several of these people apparently suffered a neurotic or at least a highly anxious temperament.

Few of the Mugwump Southwest romantics besides Lummis had any great factual knowledge of the period of exploration and discovery by the Spanish in the New World. Little more did they understand the Spanish occupation. Even Lummis's historical interpretations are not to be taken very seriously. His praise of the Hispanic legacy in the Southwest, *Our Spanish Pioneers*, was nothing other than regional promotion-ism. The Mugwump books and articles were popularized fantasies of the region. In the spirit of nineteenth-century romanticism, they were able to assert themselves creatively and, to a degree, perhaps, unload the frustrations that had accrued from a more rigid and a more competitive background.

Although they may have pretended otherwise, the Southwest-enraptured Mugwumps were not truly part of the Boston "Brahmin" cultural elite. As historian Richard Hofstadter says, the Mugwump literary taste eschewed, as he put it, the "sensuous reality" of "such first class" native minds as Herman Melville or Edgar Allan Poe for the more romantic yet "second-rate" writers such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and James Russell Lowell. While the Mugwumps would never admit it—or, worse, understand it—their literary idols definitely occupied a niche that was a couple of cuts below the more "certified" intellectual Brahmins of the time such as Henry Adams, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., or Henry James. Mentally bourgeois—in all the pejorative senses of that expression—and second-raters in their native milieu, the Southwest-loving Mugwumps became self-styled and self-appointed cultural potentates in a raw land which they found newly emerged from the frontier, a land that provided the romantic raw materials and products for the fantasy-culture brought about by their needs, conditioning, and frustration and by the commercialistic opportunities and psychological attitudes of the time.

After 1884, "Southwestern literature," including "serious scholarly" monographs, satisfied the same entertainment appetite that Disneyland and television's "Dallas" do today. Over the last one hundred years, the Mugwumps and their descendant imagemakers have ignored the technological and demographic realities which dominated the economic and political nature of the region: highly industrialized mines and smelters,

labor-management warfare, powerful energy-generating turbines, political radicalism, corporate-irrigated agriculture and big-business stock-raising. These romantic people refused to acknowledge the existence of or at least the significance and sophistication of such definitely urban Southwest areas as El Paso, Tucson, Phoenix, and Albuquerque. The truth is, although the tunnel-visioned Mugwump mind refused to acknowledge it, in many ways late nineteenth century technology and urban industrialism gripped the Southwest more than it gripped New England. Railroads, smelters, hydroelectric systems—these were the region's realities. And look what came of it. Where were the first nuclear bombs built? Where was the first one tested?

To fight their frustrations and satisfy their self-centered, feudal, effete, and puerile fantasies, the Mugwumps brought to the Southwest at least three types of “cultural colonialism”: a WASP, crude, romantic, and simplistic remodeling of the imagery of the Southwest's indigenous population—Indians, Hispanics, the Marlboro Man—into the heroic Triad fantasy; the baggage of East Coast respectability and gentility: dictionaries, fashionable dress including button-down Oxford cloth shirts and tweed jackets, china, pianos, “cocktails,” crystal, silver dinnerware, “academics,” continental manners, genteel refinement (the schoolmarm and other “Gentle Tamers”), “felicitous” arrogance, and the arbitrary judgment by a Mugwump “establishment” of what was and what wasn't “authentic Southwestern imagery,” depending on their own capricious, self-serving, self-created, and manipulated fashionable nature of the Southwest's “true zeitgeist.” Mugwump “riverrunners” have about as authentic a “wilderness experience” going down the Colorado River as they would have taking a boat ride in Disneyland's “Pirates of the Caribbean,” except at Disneyland you don't have to eat gourmet food and you don't have to pack out your shit in a plastic bag.

Today's Mugwumps have a hard time deciding whether the Southwest is a botanical garden, a zoo, an amusement park, or a scenic backdrop for a TV automobile commercial. These self-certain culture arbiters would no more want to read something that would contradict their fantasies than a fanatical creationist would want to read biographies about Charles Darwin or a smug Republican would want to read *Das Kapital*. And no native-born Arizonan would find compelling or charming a radical Jewess from New York or an “environmentally sensitive” Mormon cowboy, such as the caricatures found in Ed Abbey's tourist classic *The Monkey Wrench Gang*.

The years 1942–43, many students of Southwest culture agree, mark the end of the Southwest's "Golden Age," the region's *fin de siècle*, so to speak, of the formative and most vital period of the "Heroic Triad" genre. World War II both generally and specifically brought an end to the innocence and isolation that had characterized the milieu which produced the classic Southwest romantic cultural imagery. Faraway Bataan and Corregidor and right-at-home military airfields, Los Alamos, and the Trinity Site had, with very little resistance, pulled the region into, indeed, the vanguard of the American mainstream. When artist Cady Wells returned to Santa Fe after the war, he put his adobe house up for sale "to get away from atomic energy."

This is not to say that the Southwest's traditional and "classic" romantic imagery is dead. Far from that. But there are no new variations on the old themes ("adult" westerns). Very few "western" or "cowboy" motion pictures and TV shows are being produced these days; those that do appear frequently flop with the critics and at the box office or in the television ratings. But there are still powerful vestigial influences that remain well entrenched in popular culture such as the recent films *Dances with Wolves* and *The Milagro Beanfield War*.

In the fanciful "feudal" and agrarian/pastoral—and ultrareactionary—alternative to the urban industrial mainstream lie the forces behind the mythology which yet today dominates the literary and artistic imagery associated with the Southwest. Louis L'Amour novels, Marlboro Man cigarette advertising, the Cowboy Artists of America, "Santa Fe" architecture and furniture, cowboy boots and Stetson hats still generate millions of dollars in sales each year. The Southwest images' infantile and escapist "innocence" can be found in serious scholarly circles as well as in popular entertainment. This innocence permeates the Spanish Borderlands school of historiography with its ethical relativism. "Innocence" colors strongly the preferential and not altogether subtle patronizing "self-determination" attitudes and policies shown toward Southwestern Indians by ethnologists and sociologists.

Where is the "innocence" in Peter MacDonald's rule of the "Navajo Nation" or in the desire of the Hopi who want to build a motel on the top of Second or Third Mesa or in the plans of the Hualapai Indian tribe that wants to create a new lake in the Grand Canyon to commercialize their reservation? If they had possessed the technology and the opportunity, the "sensitive" and "moderate" Hopi, too, no doubt, would have built dams and freeways. While the romantics would have us





believe otherwise, we do not know that the Amerinds and the Hispanics “loved” the land. But they did no doubt show a healthy “respect” toward the land in the same practical way a worker in Anglo society respects his boss or employer: ready to take advantage of the situation when an opportunity arises.

For modern-day Southwestern writers, the romance has only become a little more profane, and, to be oxymoronic, a little more “realistic.” But the values and indignation remain the same. Ed Abbey acknowledges his debt to Zane Grey. Like Grey, to Abbey nature is benign if not innocent—a protected child’s perspective of it. But these immigrant writers never had to battle nature in order to survive. For the natives, nature is something to conquer, or at least something to try to make your peace with, to tolerate, and, maybe, to endure. And if you can’t do that, as is the protagonist’s case in the contemporary Southwestern classic *Filaree*, you get out, you leave. In this 1979 novel by native Arizonan Marguerite Noble, overpowering hardships force the book’s main character, Melissa Baker, and her brutish husband, Ben, to abandon their hardscrabble life in central Arizona’s rugged Tonto Basin, he to Texas, she to California. The story is, of course, an anomaly of the Southwest genre. Its realism, both in terms of human conflict with nature and humans’ conflict with one another, ignores and belies the cliché. Critically acclaimed, the book is not, understandably, making Marguerite Noble rich.

The region’s natural innocence in conflict with Anglo exploitation characterizes the serious treatment literature professors display toward such romantic “Southwest” writers as Oliver LaFarge, Frank Waters, and Tony Hillerman. (What Southwestern literature really needs is a good dose of Ambrose Bierce or Theodore Dreiser.) Judges external to the region (Random House, Houghton Mifflin, Devon-Adair, Little Brown, Scribners, *The New York Times*) determine, in what amounts to gross and condescending “cultural colonialism,” that literature about the Southwest which is “acceptable” and “good” and that which deserves a reject notice. The eastern-based Pulitzer Prize committee, for instance, decided for the Southwest—and for the world—that Oliver LaFarge’s insensitive, patronizing and saccharine *Laughing Boy* (1929) was good Southwestern stuff.

Certain parallels with the literary tradition of the American Deep South characterize Southwestern literature. Between 1865 and 1920, Southern writers, many native-born, grieved over the Lost Cause.

Then William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Carson McCullers, and Eudora Welty came along and developed a more credible and arresting genre. Between 1884 and 1970, foolish romanticism characterized Southwestern writers, or, rather, authors writing about the Southwest—almost none were native, Harvey Fergusson and Jonreed Lauritzen being among the few glaring exceptions. But as was true in the South, the Southwest should not be cursed forever with this stuff. In recent years, in addition to Marguerite Noble, several native Southwesterners have come forth to offer more credible and compelling work: Rudolfo Anaya (*Bless Me, Utima*), Leslie Silko (*Ceremony*), and Eva Antonia Wilber-Cruce (*A Beautiful, Cruel Country*).

It is interesting that almost all of the immigrant “Southwestern writers,” fiction and nonfiction alike, have tried to put the region within a context of “respectability.” Charles Lummis persisted in quoting classical literature in his descriptions of New Mexico. In effect, then, Lummis was doing the same thing as did the “respectable” and “refined” New Englanders who brought their china and linen and pianos and dictionaries to the region. He was being defensive. Apparently, in his mind, the region had to be propped up; culturally, the place could not stand up by itself. If human nature is universal, we don’t need to read Shakespeare or the Bible; we can learn about the human condition from William Faulkner and Leslie Silko. If humankind is not universal, if we are all different, that is all the more reason for understanding our regions and putting the rest of the world’s cultures in a less significant perspective. If “truth” is universal, then the Southwest, like William Faulkner’s South, needs no exterior buttresses to hold it up. Like Yoknapatapha County, the region should be able to stand on its own; it merely needs to be examined more closely.

Some of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Southwest imagery has been diluted, even forgotten. In particular, the traditional Southwest Hispanic clichés, both the aristocratic hidalgos and jolly villagers (John Nichols’s *Milagro Beanfield War* notwithstanding), have disappeared. Josephina Niggli’s *Mexican Village*, written in 1943, though set in the southern part of the state of Coahuila, Mexico, could be called the consummation of this genre. That year featured both the pinnacle and collapse of the Latin American fad in the United States. Few people today know of Ruth Laughlin Barker’s *Caballeros* (1931) and Charles Lummis’s *Flowers of Our Lost Romance* (1929). Instead, we hear more of “Chicanos” and “Low Riders,” “La Raza” and “Aztlán,” Reyes Tejerina

and Cesar Chavez, and Xicanindio. If dignity and honesty and realism are virtues, then the new images represent a definite change for the better.

The cowboy, the worldwide twentieth-century centaur-figure, despite being driven from the motion picture and television screens in the last fifteen years, remains a Southwest imagery staple. Today, one-third of the United States' national cigarette-promotion revenue comes from "Marlboro Man" advertising. John Wayne, the "Duke" (who, fittingly enough, died of lung cancer; "the big C," he called it), lives on in the world's consciousness as representing the epitome of what is missing in our urban industrial jungle. On whitewashed walls of humble Albanian cottages hang two portraits: Vladimir Lenin and Tom Mix. While not unique to New Mexico and Arizona, the common romantic setting for the modern baronial model and its knights in Levi 501s and Pendleton armor more often than not has been a Southwestern one. Classical Southwest imagery is too fundamentally attractive and satisfying to ever die. Sadly, we cannot say this about the "real" Southwest.

#### THE SOUTHWEST DEFINED

##### *The Southwest's Boundaries*

When one looks at their location on a map of the United States' southwestern quadrant, all of the "Southwestern traits" determined and identified in this essay appear, geographically, to be amazingly uniform, similar and distinct. The conspicuous impact of the physical traits upon the cultural ones strongly supports an "environmental determinism" interpretation, particularly in view of the relationship between the Southwest and its people up until World War II. This condition persisted after that war, too, although the effect of human habits on the environment—either negative or positive, as one may choose—has increased so rapidly as to overwhelm the obverse relationship. Most people crave definitions and borders and an absence of "fuzziness," as Ned Spicer and Ray Thompson have reminded us. Geographers keep lamenting and preaching about how abysmally ignorant—geographically, in general, and cartographically, in particular—most otherwise "well educated" Americans, and most of the world's population, for that matter, happen to be. People just want to know where "borders" are, and they insist on something that is easily recognizable, so to communicate—however impre-

cise—we are forced to use parallels and meridians as practical devices for “handy references.” Actually, in a rather remarkable and coincidental way certain parallels and meridians do seem to lie close to marking the limits of the several “Southwest regional” traits discussed in this essay. And D. W. Meinig’s persuasive *National Geographic* map of the Southwest conforms closely with the demarcations formed by these parallels and meridians.

It is clear, for example, that almost all of the region’s physiographical traits lie within the geometric Southwest quadrant (26°–38° N.L., 98° 30′–124° W.L. of the United States. The Southwest’s geological formations and weather, too, seem clearly confined to this region. Biotic features have qualities unique to this place. However, the region’s cultural traits appear to have been as tightly uniform and delimited as the physiographic ones, at least through the first two-fifths of the twentieth century. (After World War II, the indigenous cultures rapidly became less conspicuous.) Southwestern archaeological and anthropological features, as abundant as they are fascinating in this land, are unique to the Americas. To a certain but often exaggerated degree, pre-1900 Hispanic history has qualities that definitely reflect a unique cultural tradition within this region. But the Southwest’s Anglo-American cultural qualities, apart from popular fiction and motion picture representations, are quite another story. While the method and apparent nature of Anglo occupation of the Southwest is more colorful and quite different than the settlement of Oregon or Nebraska, the outcome and substance of that cultural reality is pure mainstream U.S.A.

Before I make any more refined and final conclusions about the location of the Southwest, there are some admittedly more arbitrary and “nonobjective” traits that need to be considered here. The first concern of this nature has to do with the 26th Parallel North, the latitude identified earlier in this essay as the southern boundary of the Southwest quadrant of the United States. Except for those who think like Charlie DiPeso and Miguel León-Portilla, an extreme southerly designation of the 26th Parallel as the Southwest border appears too extravagant. Such a designation negates the validity of meaningful physiographic and cultural commonalities in the endeavor to designate something “American,” that is, in the sense that most people concerned with this problem want to see it as being “of the United States.” Using physiographic criteria exclusively here also defeats the purpose of this project, since the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Chihuahuan Desert extend from the

U.S.-Mexico borderland southward deep into Mexico. Incorporating these physiographic traits in their entirety into a definition of the “American Southwest” would be as counterproductive as would be the use of the 26th Parallel.

But, many people argue, Old Mexico does have numerous traits in common with New Mexico—and Arizona . . . and Texas . . . and California, the four American states which Mexico borders. To set the Southwest’s regional boundary at the line between Arizona–New Mexico and Mexico (31° 20’ N.L.) is patently too political and too far north. The northern Mexico states of Sonora and Chihuahua are linked to the United States historically, economically, ethnically, climatically, and physiographically. Every day American produce warehouses and brokerages in Nogales, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas, process into the United States tens of thousands of pounds of fruits and vegetables grown by American agribusiness located in Chihuahua and Sonora. American manufacturing corporations employ thousands of cheap-labor Mexican mestizos in their “maquiladora” plants located in Juarez, Nogales, and Tijuana, Mexico. Still, the 26th, even the 27th, parallels north include too much of Mexico. And, it is true, the intensity of “Southwesternness” does begin to diminish rapidly as we travel southward from the U.S.-Mexico border.

Therefore, everything in the paragraphs above considered, and in a quest for balance together with a spirit of compromise that should satisfy such diverse authorities as D. W. Meinig and Charlie DiPeso, Bertha Dutton and Lawrence Clark Powell, together with Charles Lummis and Mary Austin, as well as many others, let us designate the 29th Parallel North Latitude—halfway between the 27th and 31st parallels—as the Southwest’s southern boundary. This line encloses nearly all of the Southwestern features that the United States and Mexico share, including both the physical geographic features and the cultural ones, excluding, of course, the intensity degree of the Hispanic quality. This designated border also includes more than half of Sonora and more than a third of Chihuahua. Moreover, this 29th Parallel designation coincides with the 1982 *National Geographic* map of the Southwest.

With the same license in mind that established the southern border of the region, it seems also appropriate to consider a more “subjectively acceptable” northern boundary for the American Southwest. Few people interested in identifying the “the Southwest” would include such places as Denver and Grand Junction, Colorado; or Price and Nephi,

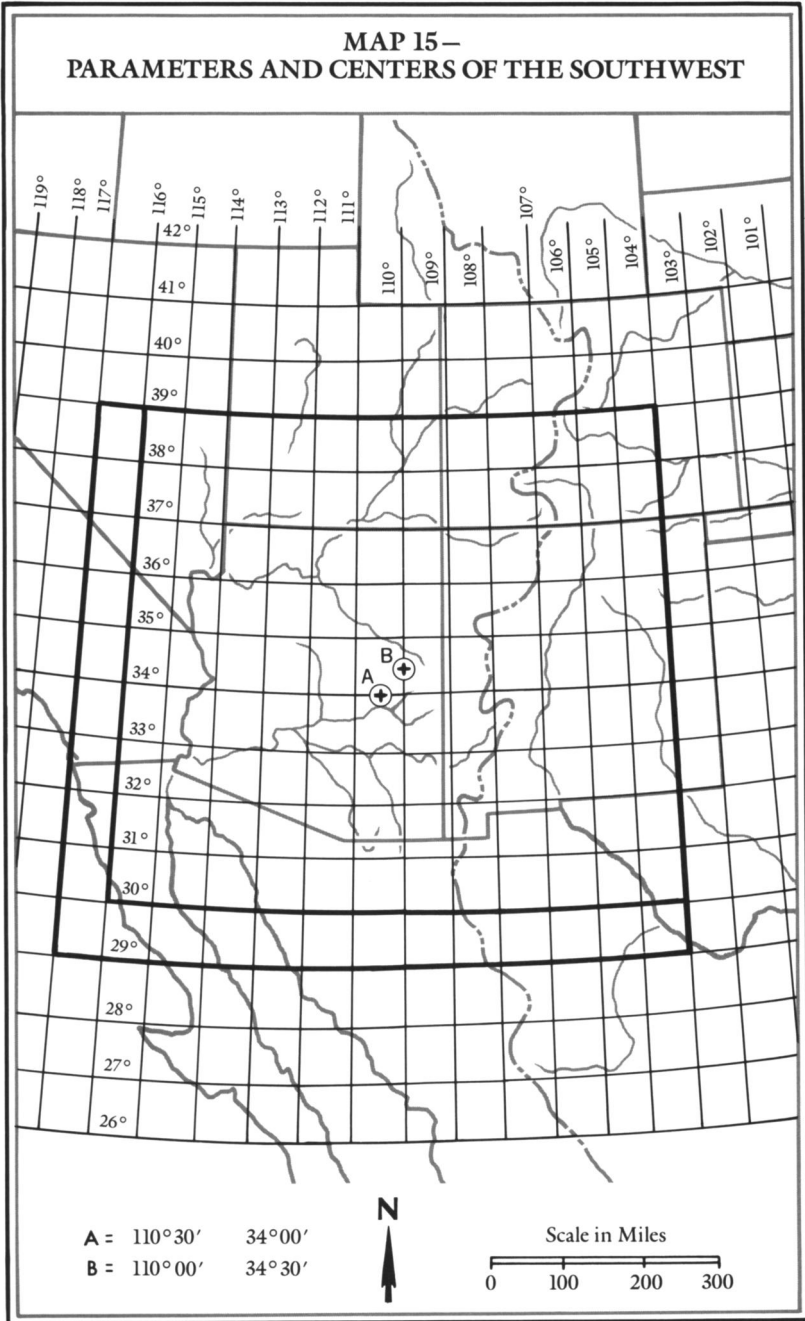
Utah; or Reno and Ely, Nevada, as part of this region. So, in response to this consideration, probably without much complaint, we could lower the northern border of the Southwest from 39° 55' North Latitude down to the 39th Parallel.

There should be much less of an argument regarding the Southwest's eastern and western boundaries. Texans may not like it, but there is no convincing or substantial physical and qualified cultural evidence that the Southwest extends eastward beyond the 104th Meridian West. The Llano Estacado clearly belongs to the Great Plains, and the headwaters of the Canadian and Cimarron rivers roll toward the same direction as does the culture of northeast New Mexico face: eastward. Combined with the Southwest's southern boundary coordinate of 29° N., this border would enclose the western two-thirds of the "horn" of Texas, a region which includes El Paso, one of the most "Southwestern" of all Southwestern towns.

To the west, the boundary appears equally distinct. Few areas to the west of 117° West exhibit with any clarity or strength those traits used here to evaluate places properly belonging to the Southwest. No passionate argument extant, romantic or scientific, places Nevada's Great Basin or California's Sierra Nevada within the Southwest. Physically, the bottom corner of Nevada *could* belong, but its dominant feature, sleazebag city Las Vegas, actually a Southern California hedonistic exclave, exists only as a bizarre Southwestern anomaly.

### *Parameters and Centers of the Southwest*

The evidence is very strong that those physical and cultural traits most often associated with the American Southwest are, indeed, confined to a very sharply delineated geographical region. The coordinates 104°–117° West Longitude and 29°–39° North Latitude constitute the boundaries of this region, thus making 110° 30' W. and 34° 00' N. the region's geometric center—a spot three miles south-southeast of the small Indian village of Cibicue on the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation. Cibicue lies in rough Mogollon Rim country, 105 miles northeast of Phoenix. This site lies only eighty-five miles north-northeast of the geometric Southwest's (98° 30'–124° 00' W. x 26° 00'–40° 00' N) center (111° 15' W. x 33° 30' L.) which, in turn, is situated eight miles east-southeast of Florence, Arizona (see map 15).



But the Southwest has other “centers,” too. For centuries, El Morro (“the fortress,” A.K.A. “Inscription Rock”) has been called the “Crossroads of the Southwest.” Located just a few miles north of the 35th Parallel at 108° 25' West Latitude, El Morro has been a multiethnic travelers' watering hole for many centuries. Don Juan de Oñate, a mine owner of Zacatecas, Mexico, and the first commissioned governor of Northern New Spain, appears to have been the earliest (1605) self-recorded visitor at Inscription Rock. Not all of the numerous explorers and travelers of the Southwest—a few before Oñate and many afterward—left a message. But they all had the same experience that Don Juan took the time to engrave in the base of El Morro's sandstone tower: “pasó por aquí (“[I] passed by here”), a term that has become a byword of the region's polyglot culture. Among these visitors were Arellano (a group from Coronado's expedition, 1540), Chamuscado-Rodriguez (1581), Espéjo (1582), De Vargas (1692), Dominguez-Escalante (1776), De Zuñiga (1795), Young (1829), Sitgreaves (1851), Whipple (1853), Doniphan (1846), Simpson (1849), sheep drives to and from California (1830–1880), military wagon roads (1840–1880), Beale (1859), Chávez (1863), the Prescott to Santa Fe stagecoach line (1863–1882), and others. El Morro, the major Southwest crossroads and oasis, intersection of ancient as well as modern trails, both east-west and north-south, also occupies a conspicuous centrality to a number of contemporary Indian tribes, Pueblo and non-Pueblo. It serves, too, as the hub of many periods of classic pueblo and other pre-Columbian cultures. What other spot in the Southwest can possibly begin to rank with El Morro as such an old, pivotal, and well-used *central* waystation? In recognition of its almost mystical blend of physical and cultural spirituality, Lawrence Clark Powell has designated El Morro the “magnetic center” of the Southwest. And, for what it's worth, the North American Continental Divide, that is, the natural geologic and hydrologic north-south boundary that separates the Atlantic Ocean watershed from the Pacific Ocean watershed, is only fifteen miles east of El Morro.

A companion to Inscription Rock's historical and cultural centrality is Zuni Pueblo, which lies only about thirty miles west of El Morro. While Zuni's southwesternmost village of Hawikuh, or, as the Spanish called it, Cíbola, lies in ruins, historically and metaphorically speaking it could be said that Cíbola—and, therefore, Zuni—is the heart of the Southwest. It was “heart of the Southwest” Zuni that first tempted and drew the Spaniards so deep into Northern New Spain. As one of the

legendary “Seven Cities of Gold,” Cíbola, a village built of rock and mud, was the first “Southwest” Indian pueblo within what is today the United States to be conquered by the Spanish. Fray Marcos de Niza, indisputably the first white man to penetrate so far into *tierra incógnita* beyond New Spain’s farthest northern border, in 1539 struggled through the vast, unexplored, and menacing *despoblado* of Mexico’s most northward frontier (today east-central Arizona’s rugged Mogollon Rim country) to reach his goal. Warned of Estevánico’s fate, Fray Marcos dared only to steal close enough to Cíbola to sneak a cautious peek. He wrote:

I continued my journey till I came within sight of Cíbola. It is situated on a level stretch on the brow of a roundish hill. It appears to be a very beautiful city, the best that I have seen in these parts; the houses are of the type that the Indians described to me, all of stone with their storeys and terraces, as it appeared to me from a hill whence I could see it. The town is bigger than the city of Mexico. . . . It appears to me that this land is the best and largest of all those that have been discovered.

De Niza’s report on Cíbola prompted Viceroy Mendoza to send Francisco Vázquez de Coronado on his important exploration northward in 1540. The Cíbola people resisted this new Spanish visit also, so on June 7 of that year Coronado and his men stormed the pueblo. Up until that time this aggressive act was Spain’s most northward frontier conquest involving bloodshed, and the Cíbola conquest established a model for Southwest Spanish colonial behavior, if not policy, during the next 160 years.

### *Southwest “Ports” and “Extra-Southwest” Enclaves*

It is curious and ironic that some of the best known novels of the Southwest are not set anywhere near the region’s heartland. Helen Hunt Jackson’s *Ramona*, for example, takes place in coastal Southern California—an area peripheral to the Southwest at best. Perhaps this is because the evidence of California’s aristocratic Hispanic culture seemed much richer and more manifest than did the New Mexico version.

Rudolfo Anaya’s *Bless Me, Ultima* has a marginal Southwest setting, too—Santa Rosa, New Mexico, on the Pecos River (the east side of the Pecos, however). Moreover, despite the town’s name (which was not given to it until 1890), Anglo railroaders in the 1860s, not seventeenth-

or eighteenth-century Hispanics, founded the place. Anaya employs the marginal nature of Santa Rosa to develop a major motif in his novel. The story's protagonist has a mother who belongs to the west side of the Pecos, where self-sufficient gardens and cash crop produce farming characterize the social and psychological nature of its people. The protagonist's father belongs to the Llano Estacado. Llano people see themselves as being freer and more dignified. The two areas represent two quite different worlds.

Several of Paul Horgan's stories take place in or near Roswell, New Mexico, only marginally a Southwestern town, also on the Pecos River. However, Horgan's books often have no sense or flavor of "the Southwest" that has been identified in the essay that you are now reading. Many of these Horgan books are home- and family-centered, very domestic, even effete. These radio soap-opera-level novels reflect a Midwest and Great Plains locale and point of view in terms of both landscape and human behavior. Horgan uses "plains" and "prairies" much more frequently than the word "desert." While both authors, unconsciously or otherwise, illustrate the difference, if not the conflict, between the Llano and the region west of the Pecos, figuratively Anaya makes the west side of the river more domestic, while Horgan's prairie, east of the river, is the tamer environment.

Other places on the region's periphery also claim ties to the Southwest. Chicanos of Pueblo, Colorado (with a 100 percent Spanish place name), insist that the Arkansas River, which runs through Pueblo, serves as the northern boundary of the Hispanic Southwest, thereby excluding its neighbor Colorado Springs, Colorado (with a 66.66 percent Spanish place name) forty miles to the north. Yet the people of Colorado College in Colorado Springs offer and enjoy the popular support of the most appealing and successful "Southwest Studies" curriculum in the nation. During his classic "tramp across the continent," Charles Lummis, too, gave credence to Pueblo as a cultural portal to the Southwest. He said of his experience on Saturday, November 15, 1884, just a few miles south of Pueblo, referring to his first encounter with Hispanic culture: "I stepped across the line from an alleged American civilization into the boundaries of one strangely diverse."

Historically speaking, Bent's Old Fort, about seventy miles east of Pueblo on the Santa Fe Trail, served during the critical years 1833 to 1849 as a major Anglo entry point to the Hispanic and Indian Southwest. Throughout the nineteenth century, northern New Mexico's Taos did the same thing, but more so. The Spanish Borderlands historian

Herbert E. Bolton argued eloquently that Pecos, New Mexico, also deserves such a “portal” reputation. And the name “Portales,” which designates an eastern New Mexico town on the Llano Estacado near the Texas border, means, appropriately enough, “doors” or “entrances.”

Historically, too, no place on the southern border of the region has served more as a gateway to the Southwest than has El Paso, Texas. From its earliest occupation, it has always been recognized as such; indeed, “El Paso” in English means “portal” or “passageway.” Moreover, since 1581, when Chamuscado and Rodriguez, the first Spaniards to enter the region by way of the ancient corridor, “The Great River of the North” (El Rio Grande del Norte), to the present day, El Paso, culturally as well as physically, has belonged more with Southwestern cities Albuquerque and Tucson than with Dallas or Houston. However, the Spanish did explore and settle much of southern Texas, and that fact plus close historical ties with Mexico, remains the most legitimate—and only—claim the rest of Texas can present as a credential for membership in “the Southwest.” And in many other ways Texas simply doesn’t qualify, despite such vestigial Hispanic enclaves as San Antonio and Nacogdoches.

Deterministic geological conditions like those found at Lees Ferry and Raton Pass served as funnels through which people had to travel in order to reach the region’s interior, while deadly byways like southwest Arizona’s aptly named “El Camino del Diablo” (“The Devil’s Highway”) became the only routes through which the Southwest could be reached from certain other departure points. Another sinister-sounding route, New Mexico’s notorious “Jornada del Muerto” (“Journey of Death”), a short-cut for the Rio Grande’s El Camino Real, is also properly named.

Southern California’s physical proximity and Hispanic cultural affections—for that matter, the whole coastal California Hispanic-mission phenomenon—certifies that area as a port, a place of entry, even a vestibule, to the shoreless inland Southwest. Although geographically peripheral to the heartland, Southern California with Los Angeles, the Southwest Museum, Charles Lummis, and the neo-mission movement, has served—in fact and in symbol—as gatekeeper, customs (in two senses of that word) inspector, and tickettaker for the region. Although set in Southern California, in many ways the novel *Ramona* has more a mythic and metaphoric locale than a geographic one. Helen Hunt Jackson meant *Ramona* to symbolize the Mugwump Southwest romance: noble and betrayed savages, earnest and simple Anglo pioneers, honorable and aristocratic Hispanics, and sensitive, honest, and decent Mug-

wumps—all four crushed and conquered, one way or another, by ruthlessly greedy and boorish Yankee land grabbers and other capitalists.

Upon examining the cultural geography of the Southwest, one finds it difficult not to notice that a strong cultural bond connects Santa Fe and Los Angeles. Both display a solid Hispanic influence, both exist on the perimeter of the region, and both were Americanized soon after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Not only were these two communities busy portals to the hinterlands, but the two towns reciprocated as trade terminals and regional storage depots. Linked by the Santa Fe Railroad after 1885, the two have a strong historical connection, both economically and culturally. Santa Fe was 171 years old when Los Angeles was founded in 1781. But despite Santa Fe's priority, as Leroy Hafen has said, "the two pueblos looked much alike in the 1830s and '40s:

Both were then typical rural pueblos of the Spanish Southwest—mud-brown adobe, flat-roofed houses clustering about a central plaza. Irrigation ditches, leading from a nearby mountain stream, brought glistening water to the house doors and to the adjacent gardens of corn, beans, onions, and chili peppers. Productive orchards and small farms, interspersed with the houses or adjoining the village, exchanged succulent produce for the mountain water [*sic*].

Each town was in the midst of a vast Indian country peopled with migrant [?] natives. Catholic missions had effectively domesticated [?!?!] some of these Indians to serve as servants of the house, tillers of the field, or *vaqueros* and herdsmen on ranch and range.

Remoteness from larger centers of civilization caused each pueblo to develop a self-sufficiency for elemental needs. To obtain foreign goods both [needed to] support long and difficult lines of transport. Santa Fe's earliest supply line had been by pack train from distant Mexico City. Los Angeles had received occasional goods from small sailing vessels that braved the scurvy seas. . . .

Though both New Mexico and California were founded and nurtured by Mother Spain, climate and geography dictated divergent products for the two areas.

New Mexico, a high, arid land where irrigation was necessary for production of crops and where grazing resources were meager, was good sheep country. Wool, hand-manufactured into blankets, became the principal exportable product.

On the other hand, California, with a low altitude, mild climate and ampler rainfall, had extensive areas of excellent grazing land. The result was the large and easy production of cattle and horses on a thousand hills. Hides and tallow, carried away by ship, were the chief exports in the days of the missions. Horses and mules were the items for overland trade.

Thus there existed a natural basis for trade between the two provinces. A commercial traffic—principally an exchange of woolen blankets for horses and mules—instituted and maintained the annual caravan from New Mexico to California and return.

Spanish settlers and traders developed the Old Spanish Trail to enable this relationship. Later, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad connected the two towns. (The through trains have always stopped at Lamy, about twenty miles to the south of downtown Santa Fe.) A Santa Fe–Los Angeles axis still exists, still penetrates the heartland by way of the AT and SF and U.S. Interstate freeways 15, 40, and 25.

But the “Southwesternness” of the two places has changed substantially. In the past fifty years, Los Angeles has lost its interest in the back-country and has become drawn to the more compelling attractions of its own neon, beaches, automobiles, a bizarre and “laid-back” lifestyle, and the self-centered and sybaritic Culture of Right Now. Generalities can be dangerous, but it appears safe to say that people in Southern California specialize in doing insignificant things well—antique car restoration, surfing, garage-organizing, macramé, tofu salads, breakdancing. They care little about the future, let alone the past, particularly a past that they cannot perceive each new day in any conspicuous, stimulating, or “relevant” way. Who, for example, today in California (and in the rest of the nation, including Arizona and New Mexico—and the rest of the world, for that matter) would find it “boorish” or “distasteful” to exploit the Southwest in order to gain capitalistic wealth and power? Isn’t that what the “American Dream” is all about? Besides Disneyland is closer and more attractively garish, and it requires less deliberation or effort. Its scaled-down dimensions make it much more quaint and cute than full-scale Arizona mountains and canyons. Only a very few people in Southern California know of Charles Lummis or of the Southwest Museum—or, as some call it, the “Southwest Mausoleum”—where the simple visions of a bygone day lie embalmed and gathering dust. And, indeed, just recently, in spite of the fact that the Southwest Museum lies almost in the center of a metropolitan area of more than eleven million people,

the museum had to curtail some of its services due to lack of revenue.

Despite their peripheral geographical location as portals to the Southwest, Santa Fe and its north-central New Mexico little sister, Taos, enjoy, in many popular and commercial perceptions, reputations as the “most Southwestern” and “most New Mexico-ish” places in the region. In ways similar to those of Los Angeles, Taos and Santa Fe are also ports or doors to the “cultural” Southwest. But, for forty years or more, unlike in Los Angeles, business has been booming for these regional borderland purveyors of Southwest culture. Always campgrounds for dilettantes and dabblers, regardless of whatever bona fide “Southwestern” past the two towns can claim, these tourist meccas play a modern cultural role neither profound nor branded by substance and integrity.

Taos and Santa Fe, at one time popularly perceived as bohemian hideaways, have now for many years served as the antithesis of what even the Mugwumps sought eighty to a hundred years ago. While it does seem true that Taos and Santa Fe have always been known for their quaintsy-poo affectations and other forms of silly and superficial aestheticism, over the years a few “serious” writers, artists, ethnologists, and naturalists—as well as the dilettantes—found in Taos and in Santa Fe an atmosphere conducive to personal contemplation and introspection. The two colonies were lodestones that attracted people who sought respect for nature, ethnic sensitivity, aesthetic freedom, and a refuge from materialism.

Now, in the late 1980s, more meretricious and tacky than ever, these two cultural harlots serve the Southwest as carnival barkers and spielers, sensationalist hucksters, and peddlers of regional snake-oil. New Yorky pseudo-Mugwumps lounge in their \$300,000 condominiums, read Lummis’s *Land of Poco Tiempo* or Louis L’Amour novels, snort coke, and complain about urban-industrial society’s decadence and bewail the immigration of more of their own kind, even as they sell their condos at a 50 percent profit after two years. Apart from a few exceptions, the earlier imagemakers ignored mining, industrialism, urbanism, and other Southwestern “realities.” But today’s “tastemakers” are involved in mindless faddishness several cuts below the already earlier gutter-level imagemakers. As D. H. Lawrence observed as early as 1924, “The Southwest is the great playground of the White American. . . . And the Indian with his long hair and his bits of pottery and blankets and clumsy home-made trinkets, he’s a wonderful toy to play with. More fun than keeping rabbits, and just as harmless. . . . Oh, the wild west is lots of fun. The Land

of Enchantment. Like being right inside the circus ring!” He was, of course, quite accurate—painfully so, but accurate.

The commercial imagery that gets fobbed off today in Taos and Santa Fe and Sedona and Scottsdale supposedly represents all of the Southwest. Fortunately, however, for the rest of the region, this foolishly snooty egotism and self-applause draw more people only to Taos and Santa Fe, themselves, leaving many of the best parts of the Southwest unadvertised and unnoticed.

#### SUMMARY

#### U.S. 64, N.M.

Along the highways through big mesa land  
The traveler turned to light  
Discovers paths the spirit travels.  
Great scopes of sky & stone,  
The face of wild and momentary things  
The spirit raining light defaces into light  
Again, like light surrounding water-lying land,  
The far, land-glancing light  
The traveler finds along remembered hands.

from *Light Years*, by J. M. Ferguson, Jr.

D. W. Meinig recently wrote that “regions are defined by what is enregioned and thus will likely vary in extent and character with each shift in focus from one topic to another—or so I believe.” Quoting his *Southwest: Three Peoples in Geographical Change, 1500–1970*, Meinig stated, “‘Regional delineations should emanate from the purpose of the study.’ Thus the search for some ‘best’ or ‘clear’ or ‘consensus’ definition that might apply to perspectives ranging from physical geography to social history to aesthetic response—or whatever, is elusive, and, ultimately, futile.” His wisdom and common sense deserve respect.

But, for those of us who want it—need it—passionately, we *can* define the Southwest. It is here to be defined. Gerald Cassidy and Carl Sauer and Mary Austin and Sharlot Hall and Charles Lummis were not bamboozled. We get from the Southwest, Laura Adams Armer said, “the urge to live, the impulse to survive so apparent in a formidable land; . . . [the sense] that nothing stands alone in the universe. . . . The

earth in process, becomes a symbol of mutability in the Southwest, understandable and obvious." The Grand Canyon, she wrote, "tells its story of millions of years of upheaval and erosion . . . there is a nakedness about the Southwest, a bald truthfulness and at the same time there is a sense of the hidden. The secret does not lie thinly veiled. It is deep down at the heart of things, only to be glimpsed after patient digging."

One thing difficult to understand about the Southwest's landscape is the comment that the Southwest is "inspirational." For some of us the place is *not* inspirational, except to the most brain-dead vegetables. Quite the opposite; the place overwhelms you; it leaves nothing to the imagination and it is intimidating. Hyperbole is the norm here, the run of the mill, nuts and bolts, meat and potatoes. Gothic cathedrals may be inspiring; they show the masterwork of man. But how can mere human beings "be inspired" by the Grand Canyon? That place is more than awesome, more than humiliating, it knocks you down a peg or two, does not lift you up; and it reminds you of how insignificant you are. Descriptions of the Southwest invariably wax hyperbolic. But is hyperbole even possible here? Of all places in America, the Southwest's physical presence dominates one's awareness.

The few outstanding native Southwest writers—Luci Tapahonso, Leslie Silko, Rudolfo Anaya, Marguerite Noble, and Eva Antonia Wilbur-Cruce—must ignore the "beautiful, cruel" setting, for like all natives everywhere they take the landscape for granted and focus their observations on concerns more unpredictable and dynamic, on the more inconspicuous but very real creatures and activities that populate this obscenely, grotesquely attractive and captivating region of the planet.

Carpetbagger Southwestern authors such as Tony Hillerman, Charles Bowden, John Nichols, Ed Abbey, and Bill Eastlake perceive the Southwest as a "site" or "stage" or "location" or "backdrop" for the expression of these writers' not necessarily uniquely Southwestern regional interests: manhood, politics, romance, ecological disaster, detective mysteries, rebellion, ethnic conflicts, honor, independence, and anti-urban, anti-industrial attitudes and beliefs. These are very legitimate concerns, regionally and universally. But these transplanted authors appear to be observers of—more than participants in—the region's dynamics, tourists rather than natives. On the other hand, the native Southwestern writers focus more on their own intimate and personal relationships with the region's physical and cultural landscapes. These autochthonous authors display the consequences of a "natal imprint," they write more

of “moods,” “connections,” “home,” “family,” and “place”—of the oneness, for better or for worse, of the immutable bond between people and their native land.

Southwestern architect Henry C. Trost wrote in 1907, “The atmosphere of the Southwest is wonderfully clear. The mountain masses are rugged and their shadows and contrast are sharply defined. . . . The horizons are infinite—long, distant level lines, broken only by the far-off mountains or the scrubby desert vegetation against the sky.” And despite his vicious ridicule of the Southwest escapist mentality, D. H. Lawrence wrote in 1930 of the early-morning Southwest landscape: “It had a splendid silent terror, and a vast, far-and-wide magnificence which made it way beyond mere aesthetic appreciation.” It is hard to believe that we are so intellectually refined in nuclear physics, mining, banking, entertainment, horse breeding, computer science, and many other areas of human knowledge, but so unrefined in regional identification. Perhaps most people simply to want to keep it personal and subjective. Maybe they think the quaintness will be lost and the fun will be gone if we develop and agree upon a strict definition. In fact, perhaps it is the vague romanticism and imprecise quaintness that acts as a sop and an antidote to too much empirical science and too much precise technology. Sterile knowledge has no texture; formulated (as opposed to speculative) science has no mystery.

In two ways, clearly, the Southwest as defined here is a distinctive reality: it has a unique physical geography, and it has a pluralistic ethnic makeup. That part of the region lying south of the United States–Mexican political boundary is still very Mexican, but Anglo investments, agribusiness, values—TV, *hamburguesas*, Nike shoes—and *maquiladoras* are making Sonora and Chihuahua more like the United States than vice versa. The impact of United States culture and values, materially and otherwise, has been infinitely greater on Latin America than the obverse. Dislodged from their historical context, the Southwest indigenous cultures have become a veneer of “quaintness.”

But tourists don’t know that. They, and the more permanent immigrants, too, see the presence of “authentic” Mexican restaurants, even the conglomerate-corporate-controlled Mexican food franchises popping up in malls and shopping centers all over the United States, as evidence that Hispanic culture is enduring and substantial. With time, if the people of the world don’t vaporize themselves first with some of the various doomsday devices developed at Los Alamos laboratories, the

United States' physiographic and climatic southwestern quadrangle will become less and less "Southwestern" while Chihuahua and Sonora will, like most of the rest of the world, become more and more Americanized and Anglicized. Oriental immigrants to the United States these days waste little time in becoming proficient in aping the native Anglo-European Americans. In fact, so much so that in many cases it should be threatening and frightening to pedigreed Puritan Mugwumps. Within only a few years and across America the Vietnamese, Japanese, and other East Asian people have become more successful mainstream Americans than are the tenth-generation, Protestant, white-skinned indigenes.

*New England's Legacy: Cultural Colonialism*

Is the Southwest, as many people quoted in this essay assert, culturally and politically different from the rest of the nation? Is it regional in law, food, tempo, politics, ambitions, morals, concepts of status and such? Despite chicken fried steaks, green chili chimichangas, and Navajo fry bread, which by now are spreading rapidly throughout the nation, and in no time, the world, most of the Southwest's Safeway stores carry the same frozen TV diet dinners, ham and eggs, tofu, and steak and potatoes found in New Jersey or Oregon supermarkets. While it may seem logical, there is no visible connection between the "cool" and "laid back" qualities supposedly found in contemporary California and the "splendid, idle, mañana land" described in romantic turn-of-the-century California history books.

Vestiges of certain laws from Spain related to water rights and marital community property can be found in the Arizona law books. But these particular statutes do not constitute the foundation of jurisprudence in the Southwest. In fact, Spanish water law, that is, the law of "prior appropriation" as opposed to the Northern European "riparian rights" legal tradition, happened to suit the particular interests of Arizona's nineteenth-century commercial agriculture and the state's mining companies. Were it not for this very all-American motive, the Spanish laws would not have been perpetuated.

As far as lawful community property rights are concerned, Arizona has been in the national vanguard of gender equality for more than a hundred years. Women were wanted in the godforsaken place in the late nineteenth century, so the men found Hispanic community-property rights to be an enticement to lure eastern females to the West. And the

leadership in this movement came from reform-minded Yankee Mugwump types, not Arizona's Hispanics.

Some of the cliched veneer can, of course, be found in New Mexico. Habits, traditions, "old families," and the like abound in that state. But the more vital and numerous young people are leaving the old, moribund Hispanic villages of the Rio Arriba to go to the University of New Mexico and work in a clean, high-tech Albuquerque industry so as to have suburban homes, RVs, orthodontia for their children, and vestment in a good pension system. There are, it is true, scattered remnants of the old Hispanic period of occupation, but they are declining in importance and visibility.

The number of "traditional" Hispanics, despite a general population growth of this ethnic group, continues to decline. Some of these older people, if they are not too proud, will take advantage of "liberal" government food-stamp programs, as will some young families, in a proportion equal to that of other segments of American society. But in another generation or two their descendants will be fully assimilated into the American mainstream. They will forget their language and other cultural legacies, become conspicuous consumers, and vote Republican. Even today, about as close to their heritage as some Mexican-American children get is a trip to the nearest Taco Bell fast-food franchise. Although late in doing so, New Mexico—like eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.—is now moving from formalism to functionalism at a rapidly accelerating pace. A similar process characterizes the Arizona and New Mexico Indian tribes.

In his classic novella *The Bear*, William Faulkner attempted to explain that America's baronial myths were part of a very old legacy. Americans, North and South, Faulkner said, had escaped to a "new world." Here, they believed, they had found a "continent dedicated as a refuge and a sanctuary of liberty and freedom from . . . the old world's worthless evening." Western Civilization, corrupt and decadent and moribund, was infected with the evils of social tyranny, economic despair, and political dissolution. Unavoidably—and naturally—germs of greed and suspicion, fear and vanity found their way across the Atlantic with the first colonists. The new land was "tainted before any white man owned it . . . as though [carried] in the sailsful of the old world's tainted wind which drove the ships." Thus all America had been "born lost."

In Faulkner's view, this infection produced a variety of pathological symptoms. The Southern regional myth with its "respectability" and

“refinement” was a crude, cosmetic, homespun regional shawl draped to hide the crippled national body. The puffed up, vacillating, and oxy-moronic qualities of effete vigor, arrogant doubt, sweet despair, and a “glowing sense of doom” permeated this perspective. If there is a present or a future, Faulkner felt, it is envisioned in terms of a mythical past. In *The Bear* Faulkner catalogued the investors and bankers and corporate agents and politicians who were the infectious carriers of the entire nation’s terminal malaise. This included the South, and by our inference, the Southwest, too. Mankind’s potential for virtue in confrontation with nature is profound. But banks and railroads and real estate speculators are more “natural” and certainly more “American” and much more attractive than the “frontier” way. Contrary to Frederick Jackson Turner’s “frontier” theory, the nation’s traits that were retained and came to characterize and dominate all of America were the degenerate traditional traits from the Old World. The virtues Turner claims grew out of the American frontier experience to become part of the American character, were, according to Faulkner, the very ones which slipped away.

Conspicuously, despite the Southwest’s physiographic uniqueness and ethnic heterogeneity, the region’s cultural qualities, when reduced to their most essential and significant substance and potency, appear clearly to be the same as those found in Boston or Cincinnati or Dallas or Seattle or Miami. The operant culture (as opposed to the affected style) of the region—its laws, official language, politics, religions, and ideologies, and the dominant tastes in music, food, automobiles, and vacations, with only a few colorful exceptions that highlight the general rule—represent national and global preferences more than anything “regional.” The supreme irony—among many ironies—of this regional self-awareness lies in the fact that at the very time the Mugwumps were spinning their back-to-nature fantasies about the Southwest, the vanguard of urban-industrial America was rapidly developing in the very same place.

Cultural geographer Wilbur Zelinsky has written,

the various Hispanic-American and aboriginal groups swallowed by the dynamic Anglo-American frontier were minor sources of influence for the national culture. . . . Despite the stubborn romantic inclination to believe otherwise, the settlement frontier cannot be credited with the origination of any important inventions, material or otherwise. . . . In general . . . the frontier played a passive role in the American cultural drama.

**BIG  
JIM**

**BAR & LOUNGE**

**PIN BALL**

**ICE COLD  
BEER**

**POOL**



By the end of the eighteenth century, cultural leadership had passed on to the more developed portions of New England, then rapidly ascendant in commercial and manufacturing activity. Throughout the nineteenth century, this region was clearly the most fecund and powerful, setting an example for the whole country in many departments of higher human endeavor. By virtue of the vigorous out-migration of New Englanders and the diffusion of ideas and objects through other means, the national patterns in industrial technology and mechanical devices of all sorts, higher education, science, literature and the other fine arts, theology, political ideas, manners, and the domestic and public architecture were largely controlled by this single small region.

In fact, the cultural geography of nineteenth century America can be described, without serious exaggeration, as the continual pumping and spraying outward to west and south of a great array of novelties, locally invented or imported from abroad, from the New England reservoir.

The Mugwump mind brought—and continues to perpetuate—its cultural colonialism in and about the Southwest in two very powerful, enduring, totally contradictory, and nonindigenous forms: the Heroic Triad mythologies, and the Puritan mainstream. Charles Lummis may have identified and extolled the wishful bliss of *poco tiempo*, but, as a compulsive Boston workaholic and status-seeker he brought with him, too, Faulkner's germs "of the old world's [and New England's] tainted wind." Apart from some moribund nucleated pockets and self-conscious ethnic enclaves (you'll see no television antennae at Taos Pueblo; the tourists would pout—and leave), today's Southwest's dominant *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*, in terms of everyday values and attitudes, are derived from mainstream Anglo-American traditions. Corporatism, capitalism, reason, agribusiness, organizational participation, materialism, conventional Democrats and Republicans, and worship of the GNP make up the foundations and other basic structural components of Southwest "culture."

Santa Feans read the *Wall Street Journal* while they savor their gourmet *posole* and *menudo*. Phoenix Rotarians may wear bola ties and cowboy boots, but they vote Republican, eat steak and potatoes, and go to the Presbyterian church for the same reasons that rep-stripe tie and tasselfoafed Boston Rotarians do. (Actually, the men in Phoenix who wear

tassel-loafed shoes probably outnumber, numerically and proportionately, those Bostonians so shod. And during a sartorial rage a few years back, cowboy boots probably sold better in Boston than they did in Phoenix, one of the few conspicuous examples of Turner's thesis.) A commitment to disposability; planned obsolescence; and the ubiquitous American God, the GNP, together with its bitch-goddess consort "Success," with a liturgical pattern of beliefs and rituals and practices and penances more holy than catechism, baptism, confession, and the stations of the cross all combined mark the Albuquerque Hispano-Catholic businessman in the same way and to the same degree as they do his Anglo-Catholic counterpart in Indianapolis. Increasingly, we can expect to see these changes accelerating in Sonora and Chihuahua, too—everywhere below the 29th Parallel—and throughout the world, for that matter.

Macro-environmentalist Theodore Roszak has found what seem to be entropic symptoms in all this:

The international unities that matter significantly remain those of trade, warfare, and technics: the unities of power. The world is being bound together by the affluent societies in ingenious networks of investment, military alliance, and commerce which, in themselves, can only end by propagating an oppressive urban-industrial uniformity over the earth. Yet there is no lack of "forward-looking" opinion makers who accept that uniformity as the highest expression of a world culture. They mistake the homogenized architecture of airports, hotels, and conference centers—which is as much as many jet-set intellectuals ever see of the world—for an authentic sharing and synthesis of sensibilities. . . .

In another two generations, there will be no primitive or tribal societies left anywhere on earth—and they are not all giving up their traditional ways because they freely choose to. In another three generations, no self-determining rural life. In another four generations, no wildlife or wilderness on land or sea outside protected areas and zoos. Today there are few societies where official policy works to preserve wilderness and the old ways of life as serious alternatives to the urban-industrial pattern; at best, they are being embalmed and tarted up as tourist attractions.

Of course there are those who think the accessible counterfeit is far superior to any reality one must take pains to approach and

know. After all, the whole force of urban-industrialism upon our tastes is to convince us that artificiality is not only inevitable, but better—perhaps finally to shut the real and original out of our awareness entirely.

The Hopi resisted and turned back both Diego de Vargas and the Church of Rome, but they cannot resist Wal-Mart and Michael Jackson and Boeing 747s.

The baronial model, that fanciful, reactionary, agrarian alternative imagery of the Southwest, is just that—a painkilling fantasy. It offers a momentary and vicarious escape from big government, the madness of urban-industrial uniformity and conformity, vague laws, a frequent and nagging sense of impotence, and a strong but still uncertain awareness of an immobile and undefined elusive purpose. Contrary to Turnerian concepts of the frontier, much of the Southwest was—under this manipulative and mercantilistic system—urban, industrial, and aristocratic before it developed into anything else. In the Southwest one can see the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century American transition from an entrepreneurial, experimental, technologically unsophisticated, individualistic economy and society to the finance-centered, scientific, specialized, “expert,” corporate form that characterizes mainstream America today. If anything, the Southwest should be an obvious and easily identified example of everything the Mugwump-type romanticists, past and present, say it is not.

So, there is then still today, a great deal of misunderstanding and ignorance about the historical, cultural, social, economic, and political nature of the American Southwest. People living in this region have swallowed the Mugwump Heroic Triad bunkum painkiller as much or even more than have those living elsewhere. While the very cutting edge of the nuclear age and its unthinkable reality can be found right in our Southwestern front yard (or playground, to squeeze the metaphor further) and still, even now after the Cold War has gone, moves the world toward some unimaginable incineration (don't forget Khaddafi and Hussein), most Southwesterners continue to wallow in the infantile comfort of a bogus heritage with its crudely concocted images of noble Navajos and *casas adobes con vigas y estuco*.

More realistically we should recognize—in the most passionate *political* way—the Southwest for what it is, a region whose landscape and

extractive potential long ago made the area an integral and complementary part of the American Industrial Revolution and the atomic age. In fact, as is true of the rest of America, industrial, commercial, corporate, governmental, and bureaucratic interests for the past 140 years or more have always sponsored and manipulated all the developmental aspects of the Southwest—economic, political, social, and, thanks to the Mugwumps, cultural. Anglo Arizona, for example, was industrial and corporate before it was in any substantial way pastoral, agrarian, commercial, or recreational. In fact, were it not for such technological developments as telegraph and power lines, railroads, atomic reactors, automobiles, computers, refrigeration, and hydroelectric turbines, few people would be here today. Moreover, huge plundered profits derived from the Southwest's natural resources over the past 120 years have contributed greatly to the rapid expansion of American self-capitalization—and to the trust accounts of Boston, San Francisco, and New York investors.

Interestingly, the most compelling indigenous Southwest authors—Leslie Silko, Rudolfo Anaya, Eva Antonia Wilbur-Cruce, and Marguerite Noble—primarily write about the past; that is to say, they know the difference between the present and the past. The immigrants, on the other hand, write stories that are contemporary, yet contain all the ingredients of the mythic past. These perpetual tourists—and ephemeral tourists, too—see, hear, and smell clichéd Southwestern ambiances and environments. Native writers feel the “presence” of the land, but because they take it for granted, are not so calculated and self-conscious about it. They indicate no awareness of the classic regional clichés, even as history, while carpetbaggers like Ed Abbey and John Nichols attempt to do just the opposite and try to make us believe that viable remnants of the old clichéd images still persist by putting the Heroic Triad in a contemporary setting and time frame. Their vision of the Southwest reflects a fabricated awareness of the region in the same sense that the “Santa Fe style” of furniture and architecture reflect the superimposition of external curiosity and romance of the early and current twentieth century.

The wonderfully sensitive—and politic—geographer Yi-Fu Tuan tells us: “The American Southwest reminds us how little the popular image of a place depends on scrupulous historical knowledge.” The manipulation of the region's imagery knows no limits. Early-twentieth-century Southwest tourist extraordinaire Mabel Dodge Luhan didn't want plumbing to be installed in Taos Pueblo; she thought it necessarily quaint that the Taos women carry their jars of water on their heads.

(Did they carry out their chamberpots that way, too?) This attitude has not changed. Today's shorts-clad, camera-draped tourists want the Southwest to be a collection of sterile museum dioramas that reflect their own antiseptic epidermal sensibilities.

Bioregionalist Peter Berg wrote: "The boundaries of a bioregion are best described by people who have lived within it, through human recognition of the realities of living in [one's native] place." And bioregionalist Judith Plant has said that "bioregionalism gives us roots, not just history," a way "for knowing one's people and place is the ancient way of survival and its memory is stirred by our yearning for home." In the light of these perceptions, it seems to me that before we can understand the Southwest realistically we must first develop a sense of place based on a view that looks from the inside out instead of the New England Brahmins' and the current trendy environmentalists' perspective of looking from the outside in.

A person can never fully adopt someone else's culture; not even Ron Ives and Amado Muro could do that. In this regard, we might listen to the words of the distinguished Mississippi regionalist author Eudora Welty who, *In the Eye of the Story*, wrote:

It is by knowing where you stand that you grow able to judge where you are. Place absorbs our earliest notice and attention, it bestows on us our original awareness; and our critical powers spring up from the study of it and growth of experience inside it. It perseveres in bringing us back to earth when we fly too high. It never really stops informing us, for it is forever astir, alive, changing, reflecting, like the mind of man itself. One place comprehended can make us understand other places better. Sense of place gives equilibrium; extended, it is sense of direction, too.

Smog, acid rain, hunters ("sportsmen"), deforestation, overgrazing, mountain bikes, mining, urban blight and suburban sprawl, high-voltage transmission lines, jet plane contrails, homes "with a view," water ranches, ATCs and dune buggies, dams, thousands of square miles of concrete and asphalt, summer homes, and new roads to every nook and cranny of the region are rapidly changing the physical features of the Southwest. As a cultural region, whatever might at one time have been "native" to the Southwest has been disappearing for a long time, too. In the meantime the immigrants and the tourists have brought their bourgeois tastes and escapist preconceptions with them and have

taken it upon themselves, in a reckless and mean-spirited way, to tell the world what this region is “really like,” thus also destroying the original *cultural* landscape.

Southwest natives could never see their own culture as “enchancing” or “quaint” or “amusing.” Nor could they ever perceive their own daily, local landscape as “breathtaking” or “glorious.” Those people, emigrés and natives alike, who would like to experience a more dignified, subtle, rich, and multilayered version of the Southwest as a region, should open their minds and their hearts and listen to the words of Eudora Welty . . . and to the native writers of this region. Then they may be able to begin to salvage—physically and spiritually—whatever is left of the Southwest’s original uniqueness. ❖