

The **West** in Contemporary American Culture

Michael L. Johnson

# New Westers



# New Westers

**Spanish Association for American  
Studies. Congreso**



## **New Westers:**

The Western Landscape in Cormac McCarthy and Wallace Stegner Megan Riley McGilchrist, 2012-06-25 The western American landscape has always had great significance in American thinking requiring an unlikely union between frontier mythology and the reality of a fragile western environment. Additionally, it has borne the burden of being a gendered space seen by some as the traditional virgin land of the explorers and pioneers subject to masculine desires and by others as a masculine space in which the feminine is neither desired nor appreciated. Both Wallace Stegner and Cormac McCarthy focus on this landscape and environment; its spiritual narrative, symbolic, imaginative, and ideological force is central to their work. In this study, McGilchrist shows how their various treatments of these issues relate to the social climates pre and post Vietnam era in which they were written and how, despite historical discontinuities, both Stegner and McCarthy reveal a similar unease about the effects of the myth of the frontier on American thought and life. The gendering of the landscape is revealed as indicative of the attempts to deny the failure of the myth and to force the often numinous western landscape into parameters which will never contain it. Stegner's pre-Vietnam sensibility allows the natural world to emerge tentatively triumphant from the ruins of frontier mythology, whereas McCarthy's conclusions suggest a darker future for the West in particular and America in general. However, McGilchrist suggests that the conclusion of McCarthy's Border Trilogy, upon which her arguments regarding McCarthy are largely based, offers a gleam of hope in its final conclusion of acceptance of the feminine.

**New Westers** Michael L. Johnson, 1996 These New Westers Johnson reveals line dance and two step, listen to Garth Brooks and George Strait, drink beer from long neck bottles, wear clothes ordered from Sheplers, watch rodeo on ESPN, play Wild West arcade games, eat fajitas and tacos in stuccoed Mexican cafes, collect Western art and Native American crafts, and vacation in and move to the West. New Westers rewrite the history and biography of the West. They reimagine the West in cowboy sagas and poetry, Native American novels, Mexican American drama, nature writing, revisionist films, eclectic visual artwork, and neo-traditional music. They flock to movies like *Thelma and Louise*, *Unforgiven*, and *Dances with Wolves*, watch mini-series like *Lonesome Dove*, and read bestsellers like *The Crossing* and *All the Pretty Horses*. New Westers are men and women who may or may not have ever hitched up a horse but who crave connection with the West. At the end of a century of urbanization, technological change, and cultural confusion, they seek a more natural home, a fuller and wider sense of place, and a deeper and more colorful personal identity. They also want to revive the dream of the mythic West but on different terms. They overrun the Old West and yet strive to preserve it, raising troubling new concerns about the differences between the mythic and the real between traditional and contemporary cultural influences.

*Travelling Across Cultures* Spanish Association for American Studies. Congreso, 2000

*Promised Lands* David M. Wrobel, 2002-10-31 Whether seen as a land of opportunity or as paradise lost, the American West took shape in the nation's imagination with the help of those who wrote about it, but two groups who did much to shape that perception are often overlooked today: Promoters trying to lure settlers

and investors to the West insisted that the frontier had already been tamed that the only frontiers remaining were those of opportunity Through posters pamphlets newspaper articles and other printed pieces these boosters literally imagined places into existence by depicting backwater areas as settled culturally developed regions where newcomers would find none of the hardships associated with frontier life Quick on their heels some of the West's original settlers had begun publishing their reminiscences in books and periodicals and banding together in pioneer societies to sustain their conception of frontier heritage Their selective memory focused on the savage wilderness they had tamed exaggerating the past every bit as much as promoters exaggerated the present Although they are generally seen today as unscrupulous charlatans and tellers of tall tales David Wrobel reveals that these promoters and reminiscers were more significant than their detractors have suggested By exploring the vast literature produced by these individuals from the end of the Civil War through the 1920s he clarifies the pivotal impact of their works on our vision of both the historic and mythic West In examining their role in forging both sense of place within the West and the nation's sense of the West as a place Wrobel shows that these works were vital to the process of identity formation among westerners themselves and to the construction of a West in the national imagination Wrobel also sheds light on the often elitist sometimes racist legacies of both groups through their characterizations of Native Americans African Americans Mexican Americans and Asian Americans In the era Wrobel examines promoters painted the future of each western place as if it were already present while the old timers preserved the past as if it were still present But as he also demonstrates that West has not really changed much promoters still tout its promise while old timers still try to preserve their selective memories Even relatively recent western residents still tap into the region's mythic pioneer heritage as they form their attachments to place Promised Lands shows us that the West may well move into the twenty first century but our images of it are forever rooted in the nineteenth

**Remapping Southern Literature** Robert H. Brinkmeyer, 2010-07 The fiction of Doris Betts Barry Hannah Cormac McCarthy Madison Smartt Bell Richard Ford Rick Bass Barbara Kingsolver Chris Offutt Frederick Barthelme Dorothy Allison and Clyde Edgerton among others challenges long standing definitions of Southern fiction and regional identity and reconfigures the myths of the West that have shaped American life In Remapping Southern Literature Brinkmeyer proposes that today's Southern writers are not by this shift abandoning Southern culture but are instead expanding its reach by seeking to balance the ideals of the South and West

**BOOK JACKET The Official Railway Equipment Register**, 1912 **Western Electrician**, 1893 **The Official Railway Guide**, 1889 **Moody's Analyses of Investments and Security Rating Service**, 1915 Annual Report of the Chicago and North Western Railway Company Chicago and North Western Railway Company, Chicago and North Western Transportation Company, 1888 *Contributions in History and Political Science*, 1930 **The Light of Western Stars** Zane Grey, 1914 The Railway Times, 1905 **Journal of the Western Society of Engineers** Western Society of Engineers (Chicago, Ill.), 1925 *Hunter-trader-trapper*, 1907 *Callis, Papa, Jackstadt & Halloran, P.C.* V. Norfolk &

*Western Railway Company*,1999      *Cumulative List of Organizations Described in Section 170 (c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954*,1979      Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church Methodist Episcopal Church. Missionary Society,1885      *The Works of John M. Synge: The playboy of the western world. Deirdre of the sorrows. Poems. Translations from Petrarch. Translations from Villon and others. Appendix: First performance of the plays* John Millington Synge,1910      **A History of the Colony of Sierra Leone, Western Africa** John Joseph Crooks,1903

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