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### Regional Domesticities: Recalling, Rewriting, and Redefining Gender and Domesticity in the Greater Southwest

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**REGIONAL DOMESTICITIES: RECALLING, REWRITING,  
AND REDEFINING GENDER AND DOMESTICITY IN THE  
GREATER SOUTHWEST**

by

**A. Laurie Lowrance**

B.A., English, St. Edward's University, 2012  
M.A., Literature, Texas State University, 2014

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

**PhD in English**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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## **DEDICATION**

To JB and Benji. Thanks for always believing in me, supporting me, and loving me. We did it!

To Casey. Thanks for sitting by my side when I was working on this project, for entertaining me when I was not, and for protecting our little family always. Rest well, good dog.

And to my family and friends. Thank you for always asking me how my dissertation was going and for never doubting I would get it done. I finally did get it done.

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Thanks for always pushing us to do better.

Thank you to my committee members Dr. Melina Vizcaíno-Alemán, Dr. Bernadine Hernández, and Dr. Amanda Zink for your vast knowledge, invaluable input, honesty, and patience through it all. Y'all inspire me.

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**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines how Native American and Mexican American women in the greater Southwest negotiated domestic expectations within their own cultures while navigating the demands of encroaching Anglo culture to produce something new: hybrid domesticities rooted in the region, which I call regional domesticities. Chapter 1 focuses on María Amparo Ruiz de Burton and connects her novels *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *The Squatter and the Don* to the rhetoric of the *Overland Monthly*. Chapter 2 explores bicultural collaborations between Native American and Anglo women and focuses on Sarah Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* and Helen Sekaquetewa's *Me and Mine*. Chapter 3 examines public preservation through Adina De Zavala's *History and Legends of the Alamo* and Jovita González's *Dew on the Thorn* and *Caballero*. Chapter 4 pairs the Sherman Institute with Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes* to demonstrate how gardens produce hybrid domestic spaces.

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## Introduction

### **Situating Domesticities within Regional Spaces and Places**

“The West was not where we escaped each other, but where we all met.”

Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whether it be in published diaries like Magoffin’s *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico*, novels like Helen Hunt Jackson’s *Ramona*, or the many stories written by women in periodicals like the *Overland Monthly*, regional and local color literature written by Anglo women circulated and dictated images of the greater Southwest and its inhabitants. My dissertation works to re-center discussions of the region from the Anglo gaze to the often lesser-acknowledged stories by Mexican American and Native American women of the Southwest.<sup>1</sup> I concentrate on domestic-centered stories by Mexican American and Native American women told from their own perspectives. Some of the stories rely on collaboration with Anglo women, a few of the women in the stories align themselves with Anglo women while also disparaging them, others demonstrate hybrid domesticities rooted in the Southwest, and many detail the effects of enforced domesticity, but all help re-populate Southwestern domestic spaces with the women who lived within them and continue to live within them today.

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<sup>1</sup> I will refer to women collectively of Spanish and Mexican descent as Spanish Mexican, Mexican, or Mexican American. I use Californianas and Californios to describe Ruiz de Burton because this is what she called herself. I also use it to describe other families of Spanish and Mexican origin holding Spanish land grants in nineteenth-century California. Throughout this dissertation, I will use the terms that most commonly appear in literary scholarship, including Native American, Native, Indian, and American Indian. I will use them interchangeably when not referring directly to a particular tribal group.



Susan Shelby Magoffin's *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico* documents Magoffin's 1846-1848 journey through the Southwest with her husband. Magoffin considers herself to be the first Anglo woman to travel down the Santa Fe Trail, and in her diary, she documents her encounters with Mexican women along the trail. At first, many of her descriptions are disparaging. With one example, she discusses the Mexican wives of the men at Bent's Fort. She describes one of them combing her hair even though a man was present. She then notes in a condescending tone how one of these women combed grease into her hair. Magoffin notes that had "she not seen her at it, I would have never believed it greese, but that she had been washing her head" (63). Later, she describes one of the Mexican homes as "a fit match for some of the genteel pig stys in the states" (90) and describes the Mexican women's clothing as "shocking" (95), while noting her disbelief at seeing children running around "perfectly naked" (95). In each of these cases, she speaks about women and things often assigned to the domestic sphere and she judges what she sees through the lens of the Anglo domesticity she learned. By describing a woman's home as a pig sty, she marks the home and the woman as lacking domesticity or not following the domestic expectations of Anglo women. In fact, she seems to hint that there is no domesticity except for what she creates in her own spaces. While Magoffin eventually acknowledges the domesticity of some of the women she meets, her encounters are told from an Anglo perspective and through an Anglo lens. We do not see the perspectives of the Mexican and Native women she interacts with, and stereotypes and misconceptions are perpetuated.

Helen Hunt Jackson's incredibly popular 1884 novel, *Ramona*, is set on a Spanish colonial *rancho* in California and works to document the plight of Indians in California

being displaced from their lands; in fact, Jackson hoped the novel would serve as the “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* for Indians” (Marsden 17). The novel boosted tourism in the region, including at the Sherman Institute in Riverside, CA, where the dorms were named after Ramona’s main characters, but as far as helping the Native Americans of California, the story never quite meets its mark and seems instead to lament the end of the mission system. The Spanish Mexican family is portrayed in the same romantic, nostalgic ways as many of the regionally based short stories in *The Overland Monthly* and other novels and periodicals of the time described California and its inhabitants. The Native American characters are effectively erased by the end of the novel. Alessandro, the male main character, dies at the hands of an Anglo settler and Ramona marries into the Spanish Catholic family, and we assume, loses any connection to her Native heritage.

Finally, Gertrude Atherton’s 1898 *The Californians* works in much the same way, portraying its Spanish Mexican main character, Magdaléna, as unattractive, unpopular, and unable to learn new things quickly. While Magdaléna prevails in the end, Foote argues that Magdaléna “is the emblem of a lost romantic culture” (85) instead of a fully developed character. At the same time, *The Californians* works to realign California as a region of the United States, ignoring its past and so negating many of its residents’ ties to the land. In this way, the novel works in a way similar to many of the stories in the *Overland Monthly* that view Spanish Mexican culture as a thing of the ancient past and California as a land to own, explore, and develop.

My dissertation seeks to dislodge works like these as accurate portrayals of Southwestern women and their domesticities. The literary works in my dissertation tell many of the same stories but from the perspectives of Mexican American and Native

American authors living in but also often displaced from the Southwest. My project functions as a means of re-examining the greater Southwest through regional domesticities akin to the decolonial process Emma Pérez describes: “To decolonialize our history, we must uncover the voices from the past that honor multiple experiences instead of falling prey to that which is easy—allowing the white colonial hetero-normative gaze to reconstruct and interpret our past” (123). Pérez argues that it is of vital importance to look for stories that have been hidden from our view by a patriarchal society only interested in wealth. When we know the history of specific colonial moments, we find it easier to pinpoint what is missing or has been left out. When we understand the historical circumstances behind the instances of domesticity portrayed in the works, we can look beyond the surface meanings of these domestic utterances at their true function.

Adaptability and hybridity are key pieces of the regional domesticities of the Southwest. By examining works written by women in the Southwest from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, we gain a more complete picture of the multitude of ways women resisted and reconfigured an often stifling and enforced domestic space and worked to reconstruct and reclaim the domestic space as their own. I contend that the study and documentation of resistance to oppressive gender roles within and outside of cultural systems and the resulting adaptability and hybridity is foundational to domesticities in the Southwest.

Take, for example, Elena Zamora O’Shea’s *El Mesquite*. Written from the perspective of an ancient mesquite tree in what would become South Texas, *El Mesquite*, first published in 1935, narrates the history of land and culture through the lens of *Tejanos* in South Texas from the 1700s to the time the book was written. O’Shea responds to over two hundred years of change on the Texas borders. Her family was

among the first settlers in South Texas. They witnessed their ways of life change under Spain, Mexico, Texas, and the United States, and some, like Elena and the mesquite tree, learned to adapt and work to speak out against the changes. While she puts words to the injustices done to the Tejanos over many years and generations, the timing of her book also makes it apparent she is responding to changes in class relations and domestic expectations in her own lifetime. By using the mesquite tree as the narrator, O'Shea occupies a space on the borders of the work. Her only appearance is near the end as "Anita" who comes to the area as the new schoolteacher (mirroring O'Shea's work as a schoolteacher for the area ranches). Anita comes to teach the children from the neighboring ranches, which may provide them with more opportunities later and shows Anita's ability to navigate multiple forms of domestic expectations. O'Shea worked through writing and teaching to defend her family's lands and rights and to speak out against their loss. As *El Mesquite* moves towards its close, the tree hears Don Santos Moreno laments:

perhaps if I had been more aggressive, more the fighting type, I would have retained these possessions [...] This new government of ours has many strange laws. I do not know the language, and therefore do not know the laws. I want you to do your utmost to educate my grandchildren so that they will know the laws of the country to which they have been born. (68)

O'Shea illustrates her belief in the importance of education and knowing how to defend oneself through law and language. She then solidifies her importance as a teacher because she and others like her will help future generations retain their land and culture through education. O'Shea uses the literary forms available to argue for Spanish Mexican women

and domesticity in the region while countering false claims so easily spread by Anglo publications.

Stories like this one and many more that came before and after it illustrate the ways Native American and Mexican American women negotiated domestic expectations within their own cultures while also navigating the demands of encroaching Anglo culture to produce something new: a hybrid domesticity rooted in the conditions of the region. Their accounts counter the Anglo gaze so popular in nineteenth-century works and use the domestic realm to document continuance, attempted erasure, and hybridity. Early examples by María Ruiz de Burton and Sarah Winnemucca dislodge many of the prevailing stereotypes of the era, and both women sought to paint Native and Mexican American women as possessing a superior domesticity – often exceeding the domestic ideals of Anglo domesticity. In another complex example, Adina De Zavala used historical preservation to mark her home among Anglo society in early twentieth-century Texas while at the same time often glossing over and occasionally glorifying the colonial history of the Alamo and other missions around San Antonio. Finally, Helen Sekaquaptewa, Leslie Marmon Silko, and the Native women and girls at the Sherman Institute documented and participated in activities necessary for continuance even as their tribes faced the effects of westward expansion, elimination, and assimilation. Without stories from these women and others, the only accounts we have of nineteenth-century women and domesticity are from the perspective of Anglos with no experience of the societies they write about. I argue that the women in my dissertation counter the narratives created about the women of the Southwest, and in the process, they document

the complex creation of new, adaptable domesticities that function as responses to the conditions of the region.

Domestic regionalism is crucial to an understanding of the importance of the Southwest region in the nineteenth century and to establishing the basis for my argument. I define domestic regionalism as regional influences on national affairs. Regional interests and the makeup of the region – its people, its industries, and its social and cultural constructs create its sense of domestic regionalism and determine the sorts of influence the region places on the nation. Underlying the land theft, removal, and forced assimilation of Mexican Americans and Native Americans in the Southwest is this idea of creating a region that is a unified whole that reflects the interests of those in charge. The region must be made into the correct image in order to be brought into the domestic fold of the nation. This unifying process may have begun in the nineteenth century, but it continues in the present. For example, in chapter 1, I argue the *Overland Monthly* worked to alter the regional makeup of California and change the domestic regionalism the region would assert. From this premise comes my term “regional domesticities.” I contend that the Southwest and the competing cultural and political expectations about gender and domesticity brought on by coloniality in the region converge to create specific types of domesticity tied to the conditions and demands of the region. Amanda Zink asserts that “American Indian and Mexican American women collectively rewrite colonial domesticity and write their own,” which she calls “sovereign domesticity” (16). My work builds on Zink’s but argues that these “sovereign domesticities” are also regionally specific. I contend that the women of the greater Southwest use culturally acceptable domestic themes to speak out against the effects of Manifest Destiny and settler

colonialism in the region and work to counter the dominant discourses of the region at the time. These writers, historians, students, mothers, and teachers practice Southwestern regional domesticity as they negotiate the layered demands cultures and coloniality placed on the region. Further, these domesticities manifest in the regionally centered literary works that Mexican American and Native American women produce.

Southwestern regional domesticities are rooted in place, created in response to change, adaptable, hybrid, and unique. By focusing on regional domesticities, I expand the critical potential for regional studies to explain layered and dynamic domestic practices manifest over time across the greater southwest. Where these multiple perspectives and domestic expectations converge is where the study of Southwestern women should begin.

Regional writing, specifically writing about the Southwest, is central to my project. I define the Southwest as the region that encompasses the present-day states that share a border with Mexico: California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. To this I add the qualifier “greater” to include other territories in the West that border the Southwest states. In many cases, these regions are also heavily influenced by the conditions of coloniality that formed the Southwest. Variations of coloniality influence and affect the iterations of domesticity at play in the region, both then and now, and those influences often appear in the writing about the region. Stephanie Foote writes, “As a genre, regional writing is deeply concerned with what is remembered and what is forgotten, and how; with how local, particular people and places and places are incorporated or discarded” (*Cultural Work* 25). My dissertation asserts that as an extension of regionalism, regional domesticity works on the same premise. The women in my dissertation work to preserve what might be forgotten through their hybrid domesticities

and through their literary works centered around domesticity. I focus on regional works created by women in the nineteenth-century greater Southwest or written about that same time-period and region. While regionalism was, and is, often viewed as a “lesser” form of literature, it in fact offers us much insight into “social and cultural difference” in the nineteenth-century Southwest and beyond. On a larger scale, as Foote, Judith Fetterly, and Marjorie Pryse all argue, regional writing was key to producing national literature by making it more diverse. Foote notes, “By depicting a rural folk, regional writing constructs a common national past for readers concerned with national matters” (*Regional Fictions* 6). She goes on to note that “regional writing gives us a way to read some of the nineteenth century’s anxieties about race and ethnicity” (16). A regional approach offers a chance to look at our nation’s past and to think through how national identities formed in the nineteenth century. At the same time, because regional literature often tells the stories of non-normative people – in terms of default American identities at least – we get a more accurate picture of the people of the Southwest. We can then work towards decolonizing the Southwest and understanding the complexity of gender, race, and national identity, and domesticity’s pivotal role in creating and spreading those ideals.

Foote contends, “Even ostensibly coherent regions are the products of suppressed relationships between natives and strangers” (*Cultural Work* 18). I argue domesticity in a region is a product of these same relationships. Foote asserts that studying regionalism is a “still-vital model for understanding cultural difference in the early twentieth-first century” (*Cultural Work* 26), and I agree. Negotiating cultural differences is a central theme in each of the works I analyze for this dissertation. With my research, I aim to



extend our knowledge of domestic practices in the nineteenth-century Southwest and make clear their relevance to our domestic interactions in this century. As Fetterly and Pryse contend, “Regionalism marks that point where region becomes mobilized as a tool for critique of hierarchies based on gender as well as race, class, age, and economic resources” (14). I assert regional domesticities are an extension of this critique. Regional domesticities as they appear in the literary works of women in the greater Southwest also illustrate this convergence of hierarchies as they pertain specifically to the domestic sphere, and they establish the point where Southwestern domesticity becomes mobilized as a critique, action, and continuance.

According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the earliest definition of “domestic” includes “having the character or position of the inmate of a house, housed, or of the household” (OED). This definition has its roots in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but the meaning of the word remains the same today. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, definitions for “domestic economy” are added, and the term falls within the feminine sphere. We have defined the space of the home for centuries, and women have been confined within this sphere for almost as long. By the 1820s, the cult of domesticity was in place and dictated the lives of middle- and upper- class Anglo women in the U.S. As Barbara Welter noted in her foundational piece, the cult of true womanhood required four things of women: “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” (152). For the women outside this structure who were unable to meet the demands of this ideology, nothing was left but the status of the fallen woman who was often considered flawed, unworthy, and unwomanly and her domesticity lacking or non-existent. Just as importantly, Welter notes, “In the nineteenth century, any form of social

change was tantamount to an attack on woman's virtue" (157). With these beliefs set in stone for many, domesticity is a manner of control or a space within which women are confined to strict roles and expected to be grateful for those roles. This is the world the women in my study encounter when the U.S. pushes west into the region, and this is the world they often rally against in their writing. At the same time, these women negotiated the demands of their own cultures' already-hybrid domesticities during a time of rapid change and often rapid loss.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I define domesticity as women's culturally assigned or understood gendered roles and expectations centered around the space of the home and family including childcare, household chores, family relations, and the teaching and control of knowledge relating to language and cultural practices. This definition also includes the structuring ideologies associated with these enforced roles that position women within the space of the home. I concentrate on women's gendered roles within the home and family: forms of marriage and kinship systems, raising families, keeping the home and working within the home space, educating the children and providing religious and traditional instruction, often existing under the patriarchal control and scrutiny of husbands, fathers, brothers and other men of the family. Of Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes*, Stephanie Li remarks, "Seemingly innocuous domestic activities carry significant import for cultural preservation and strategies of resistance" (21). My dissertation brings attention to the everyday domestic activities and negotiations in the lives of and works written by Southwestern women.

As two of the most popular examples of sentimental fiction, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* showed just how big an

influence the genre could have on its audience and what a wide-spread appeal the form had. Sentimental fiction played a pivotal role in re-creating and reinforcing gendered domestic expectations in the nineteenth century, and several of the women in my project, including Winnemucca and Ruiz de Burton most directly, make use of the form. Jane Tompkins and Ann Douglas famously debated the usefulness of the form with Douglas concluding the form was crude and not of much use for studying nineteenth-century literature and Tompkins advocating for its attention to social issues. Even with their disagreement, the two women brought the study of sentimentality and domestic fiction to the forefront. Shirley Samuels and Laura Wexler extended the scholarship on sentimental fiction with Samuels noting the form is “literally at the heart of nineteenth-century American culture” (4) and Wexler arguing that sentimentalism represented an “imperial project” and the “energies it developed were intended as a tool for the control of others, not merely as aid in conquest of the self” (15). Viewing sentimental fiction as an imperial project and method of control and part of the very culture of nineteenth-century American scholarship makes its impact on the works in my dissertation obvious. The women in my study were deeply caught up in the imperial project and all experienced loss as an effect of Manifest Destiny. At the same time, the women I focus on were all well-versed in the language of sentimentality and domesticity, lost their lands and ties to their cultures, and all knew how to use literature to fight back against the forces of colonization. The writers I examine were all exposed to the form at some point in their lives, whether it be through Ruiz de Burton’s insatiable appetite for reading or through forced assimilation in boarding schools for Winnemucca and others, and they used the form to speak out against the very things sentimental and domestic fiction found useful

and effective. In *Who Would Have Thought It?* Ruiz de Burton plays on the popularity of the sentimental form to speak out against the gendered prescriptions of the form itself. Instead of putting the Anglo, Protestant women of the East coast on a pedestal as the picture of womanly virtues, Ruiz de Burton retells the typical sentimental tale with the young, Mexican Catholic Lola and her mother as the true examples of proper Southwestern domesticity. For Sarah Winnemucca, the form offers the opportunity to reach a larger and more influential audience, mainly middle-class women on the East coast who can help get her story to a larger audience and help fight for reforms to Indian policy. In short, nineteenth-century domestic ideology is about national pride and national purpose, and the protection and growth of the family equals protection and growth of the nation. Native American and Mexican American women were often left out of this national body, with attempts made to bring them into the fold based in training them for roles as teachers in their own communities or domestic workers in Anglo communities. This dissertation shows how women worked against these ideas to make their own claims for inclusion in domesticity and so, therefore, in the nation. I examine stories based in the region in which or about which they are written because the demands of the Southwest were often specific to that region and were the direct result of centuries of layered colonization in the region. The southwest is a colonial construct and so, therefore, is the domesticity in the region. The women in my study rewrite themselves back into the region that was making a concerted effort to erase them.

Critical to regional domesticities is tying the region itself to the pre-existing domestic spaces, practices, and expectations of the region. Antonia Castañeda's notes in "Women of Color and the Rewriting of Western History" that gendered experiences of

women in the nineteenth century were as diverse as the number of cultures. Women acted according to their culture and its economic and socio-political and religious organization (26). Castañeda's premise is central to my argument about constructing regional domesticities. The basis of regional domesticities lies in the bedrock structures of domesticity the women of each culture operated under. Castañeda also points to the idea that these specific iterations of domesticity were in play long before U.S. encroachment and remained residual long after. Castañeda goes on to assert that understanding gender systems and experiences before contact is critical to understanding how those experiences changed with conquest and colonialism and why women responded and acted the way they did in intercultural settings and relationships.<sup>2</sup> The end results of these interconnected relationships are hybrid regional domesticities based in one's culture first and foremost, but also influenced by the other factors and other cultures in the region as well as the colonial demands of the region.

I build on Castañeda to stress the importance of understanding how women in the Southwest maintained, adapted, and transformed their own cultural forms while resisting, adopting, adapting, and affecting those of other groups. These interactions and reactions between the old and the new are what I categorize as the foundations of regional domesticity. This dissertation is a study in utilizing those forms and illustrating how those forms document hybrid domesticities only found in the Southwest. Tey Diana Rebolledo extends the discussion of women's roles in the Southwest and how those duties were

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<sup>2</sup> Spanish entradas into Northern New Spain began in the late sixteenth century. For more information on Spanish and Mexican colonization in the area that would become the Southwest, see Edward Spicer's *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960*, University of Arizona Press, Eleventh Printing, 1997 or Patricia Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*, Norton, 1988.

often reflected in their writing. Rebolledo argues early women writers in the Southwest, especially Mexican American women, wrote about traditionally feminine topics, such as customs, recipes, history, or folklore. These texts often “take the guise of first-person accounts incorporating stories or tales of older relatives or acquaintances, thus extending the ‘personal’ narrative further into the past” (97). Rebolledo contends that while some accused these women of having “hacienda syndrome,” it is important to consider the rigid racial and gendered systems these women were writing from within. Working through acceptable cultural forms and using domestic themes, women like Cabeza de Baca, Ruiz de Burton, Winnemucca, Jovita González, De Zavala, and Sekaquaptewa were able to preserve their cultures, voice resistance, and assert claims to feminine spaces—both within the home and within the Southwest—through particular types or writing. Rebolledo centers her work on the themes of place, land, and Spanish culture and how they are intimately linked; these same factors are also crucial to the formation of regionally centered domesticities. Historically, women were limited in what and how they could write by gender and genre rules. I assert Southwestern women writers worked both within and against the confines of gender and genre to create and recreate forms of knowledge and culture that could be spread out from the Southwest, and I work to find these responses in variety of forms, not just sentimental fiction or domestic fiction, but forms as diverse as scrapbooks, personal archives, autobiographies, and contemporary fiction. This ability to adapt, both in the sense of adjusting to the demands of the region as well as those of their cultures and in choosing a variety of forms of expression, is an essential component in what makes the domesticity of the Southwest. The successive requirements of the domesticating projects of Spain, Mexico, and the U.S all have a

bearing on what and how women in the Southwest write about and experience domesticity and domesticating missions. With domesticity tied directly to nation-building and literature used for the same purposes to historicize and naturalize empire, it only makes sense these savvy women writers would work to incorporate and respond to both in their works.

Prior to the domestic expectations placed upon them by encroaching Anglo society, Mexican American women in the Southwest navigated a system of domestic expectations linked directly to centuries-old Spanish Catholic ideals.<sup>3</sup> Miroslava Chávez-García and María Raquel Casas provide further insight into the history of the settlement of California as well as the relationships between gender, race, and class that constructed expectations for women in the Southwest before the arrival of the Americans. Chávez-García's *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770s to 1880s* notes the importance of women, gender, and sexuality in imperial expansion in what would become California under Spanish rule, Mexican rule, and eventually American rule. In the early days of Spanish expansion into California, the Catholic church called for settling more women in California to help curb the soldiers' violence against Native women. Spanish wives and mothers often managed their households and legal affairs when their husbands were away while also caring for and educating the children. Native and *casta* women frequently worked outside the home to help provide for their families. Casas expands the premise of marriage as a tool of colonial power in *Married to a Daughter of the Land*. The Spanish learned marriage could be used to control the

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<sup>3</sup> I will often refer to the domestic expectations placed on Californianas and Spanish Mexican women as Spanish Catholic domesticity since many of its origins lie within the expectations of the Catholic church and traditions.

conquered and to settle more of the conquered land, firmly positioning empire with the domestic space. Casas notes, “Social constructions of female virtue, honor, sexual chastity at the time of marriage and proper public behavior initiated in medieval Spain have remained prescribed and valued female traits in Hispanic societies up to the present” (31). Gender expectations and the expectations of women in general are deeply, historically embedded in Spain’s history of conquest, and therefore, they are also historically linked to domesticity in the Southwest. Casas discusses intermarriages and notes that the clergy allowed military personnel to intermarry with the Native population even when the higher classes could not, and there were more intermarriages in the more remote frontier regions. Intermarriages lead to hybrid forms of domesticity—and oppression within this realm—as Spanish, Indian, Mexican, and American expectations overlapped, replaced each other, and sometimes even combined. These clashes and combinations of expectations for the women in the area are what I argue form the basis of a system of domesticity specific to the Southwest.

Still, Spanish Mexican women in the Southwest found ways to work against and through these strict constrictions. Many married Anglo men and blended Spanish Mexican domesticity into the expectations of Anglo domesticity. For others, especially around the turn of the century and beyond, writing provided an escape from the strict demands of Spanish Catholic domesticity while also functioning as a means of critique of both Spanish Catholic patriarchy and on the effects of Anglo encroachment into the Texas/Mexico borderlands – a negotiation of ideals and demands plus activism. The ability to negotiate between the demands of the region and its people is a key component of the domesticity of the region. Jovita Idár, a former teacher who began writing for her



father's newspaper, *La Crónica*, in 1910, was an early pioneer for Mexican American education and equality, and she also serves as an early high-profile Mexican American women writer.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes writing under a pseudonym, Idár worked to expose the inequities in social conditions between Mexican Americans and Anglos in Texas. She found a way to stay somewhat within feminine expectations of the time while still criticizing Anglo culture and working to expand the boundaries of her own patriarchal culture. She later worked for another newspaper, *El Progreso*, and during the Mexican Revolution she worked as a nurse for La Cruz Blanca (Masarik 286-287).<sup>5</sup> The Mexican Revolution saw an influx of Mexican women into Texas. Many of these women participated in activism centered around the war and later turned their activism to social demands in the region. In the early twentieth century, Mexican and Mexican American women along the Texas border worked to move away from strict patriarchal control in any means possible. By working as nurses during the Mexican Revolution, women could work outside the home in an extended range of roles without straying too far from what would have been considered acceptable behavior for women. The women writing in Spanish language newspapers pushed the boundaries further, writing against oppression on both sides of the border while illustrating how women could use the written word for change (Masarick 288). Some of the earliest nineteenth-century critiques by women appear in the Spanish language newspapers of the region. These women pursued work

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<sup>4</sup> See Elizabeth Masarik's "Por la Raza, Para la Raza: Jovita Idar and Progressive-Era Mexicana Maternalism along the Texas–Mexico Border" (2019) for a more complete portrait of Idar, including her stand off with the Texas Rangers at the doors of her family's newspaper office.

<sup>5</sup> See also *The Rebel: Leonor Villegas de Magñon* edited by Clara Lomas for more information on La Cruz Blanca and women in the borderlands fighting in the Mexican Revolution

outside the home, while still concentrating on domestic issues while often voicing their opposition to strict gender roles and strict definitions of femininity and domesticity.

Domesticity and domestic expectations had a direct effect on the women living in the Southwest who experienced westward expansion firsthand. While both Native American and Mexican American women came from complex and often varied systems of domesticity, U.S. encroachment placed new demands on the women. First, many often assumed Native and Mexican American women had inferior domesticities, if they had any domesticity at all. The women I study worked directly against this notion and illustrated through their writing and preservation efforts that not only were there systems of domesticity in place before westward expansion, but early regional domesticities actually had an effect on Anglo domesticity. The works in my project document the blending of layers of coloniality and domestic expectations and illustrate domesticities born out of the demands of the region and in the interactions between the women in the region. Jane Simonsen's *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860-1919* documents the attempts to impose white, middle class domesticity on Native women. Efforts to assimilate Native American women provided opportunities for middle-class white women to "assert the civilizing function of domestic work, to suggest that the cultural and economic value of their work separated their domesticity from the drudgery of working-class and Native women, and to claim professional expertise in domestic work as teachers and fieldworkers" (6). Simonsen's work reveals that there are multiple layers of oppression of women of color in the greater Southwest. Multiple sites of control and subjugation and the methods women in the greater Southwest used to combat them are a key component of the

domestic expectations of the region and of my project. Amanda Zink's *Fictions of Western American Domesticity: Indian, Mexican, and Anglo Women in Print Culture, 1850-1950* discusses domestic colonization in the West and points to the relationships between Anglo, Native American, and Mexican American women and their various systems of domesticity. She notes that Anglo writers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century often show women who use domesticity to colonize other women. Zink contends that in the nineteenth century, domesticity becomes an ideology and a set of rituals that Anglo women may no longer want for themselves, but they are quick to transfer these conditions to non-white women. Zink notes the many ways Native and Mexican American women both used and resisted these forced or enforced domesticities. Zink asserts that "American Indian and Mexican American women collectively rewrite colonial domesticity and write their own domesticity" (2). Zink refers to these assertions of domesticity and self-determination as "sovereign domesticity" (16). I contend these acts of "sovereign domesticity" serve as the basis for what I am calling the Southwest's regional domesticity. The reactions and resets that result from the clashes and collaborations of various forms of domesticity in the region work together to create sites of domesticity that structure the Southwest. My dissertation works to re-inscribe sociocultural complexity to the women of the greater Southwest by focusing on the importance of regionally specific forms of domesticity and the efforts of women writers of the Southwest to resist and reassert these forms while working to preserve their cultures and histories.

One of those efforts involved documenting domesticity through their writing. Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* serves as a good example of Native women facing

multiple forms of oppression. As a young girl, Winnemucca and her mother and sisters are trapped within a domestic space by Anglo men, but Winnemucca's grandfather has put them there. As an adult, an Anglo woman threatens Winnemucca's life and members of her own tribe often speak against her because she works as a translator. She is later considered the "mother" and "chief" of her tribe – neither exclusive of the other.

Winnemucca's narrative documents multiple forms of oppression while also illustrating multiple ways domesticity can manifest itself in the greater Southwest.

Boarding schools play a prominent role in both Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 of my dissertation. The main goal of boarding schools was to assimilate Indian students in Anglo ways, but as Brenda Child contends, "The boarding school as an institution is symbolic of American colonialism at its most genocidal" (37). Boarding schools tried to remove every aspect of students' cultures and sense of self. All was replaced with a regimented, military-like existence where speaking one's language or trying to run away brought harsh penalties. Sarah Winnemucca and Helen Sekaquaptewa both attended boarding schools, and their experiences in the schools shaped their lives and their responses to westward expansion in the region. Winnemucca uses the language and writing skills she learned in school to write her autobiography as a chance to fight for the rights of her tribe. Sekaquaptewa, female students at the Sherman Institute, and Silko's fictional Indigo serve as examples of the hybridity that came from those experiences. Many struggle to reconcile their dislike of the system with their use of the tools they learned there. Female students learned to read and write in English and later used those skills to write their own stories. Others formed lasting friendships with girls from other tribal groups. Each exchanged knowledge that they took back to their homes, setting the

stage for domesticities based in hybridity. Others used their experiences to forge partnerships with Anglo women in an effort to write and publish stories of their lives. Krupat calls these alliances “bicultural collaborations” (31), which provide the basis of my argument in Chapter 2. Native Studies scholars Siobhan Senior and Mark Rifkin also write about the effects of colonization and the life-long effects of boarding schools, forced assimilation, and living in an ongoing settler colonial society. The women in my dissertation speak to these effects through the lens of domesticity because they knew they were most likely to reach a sympathetic audience by writing in forms acceptable for women to be writing in. From scrapbooks to recipes to sentimental fiction, historical fiction, and gardens, the women in my dissertation write to preserve the past while participating in a society quickly moving towards modernity and destined to repeat the mistakes of the past. Other works like Brenda Child’s *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* and Margaret Jacobs’s *White Mothers to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* offer in-depth discussions of the role domesticity played both within the home and as a national concept in the lives of Native Americans in the Southwest. Jacobs describes “intimacies of empire,” the connection of women to home and to colonialism (11). Anglo women were viewed as a civilizing force, and it was their domestic duty to do the work of helping to rescue Native children from unfit families and of training Native women in household techniques they could take back to other Native families. Both Child and Jacobs document the loss of culture and ties to family that boarding schools imposed on Native children. Just as important, each provides accounts and theoretical discussions of the concerted efforts to impose Anglo

Victorian domesticities on the lives of Native students. Native women often took these domesticities and reconstructed them into useful forms to help their families and tribes. For example, Sarah Winnemucca attended Anglo schools and learned to read and write in English. She later used this knowledge to write her story as a way to bring attention to the plight of her tribe. Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa also document their time in boarding schools and the uncertainty they faced while trying to balance different forms of domesticity.

The following chapters outline the development of regional domesticities across time and region to illustrate the layers of coloniality and the resulting responses to that coloniality that take shape in women's domestic writing in the nineteenth and early twentieth century greater Southwest. Each chapter explores a different theme and mode of expression in the works of Mexican American and Native American women writing in the Southwest to document specific instances of resistance and collaboration that point to the formation of hybrid, regional domesticities. By taking this approach, I am able to examine the effectiveness of each mode of expression as a specific response to the conditions of coloniality in order to offer a more complete picture of the ways domestic regionalisms and regional domesticity form in the region. By looking back and repopulating the greater Southwest with more diverse voices, specifically the voices that were most affected by colonial projects, we can continue to decolonize the region and create a more accurate portrayal of the variety of hybrid domesticities at work here.

Chapter 1 begins with competing domesticities inside the home space, the domestic rhetoric of nineteenth-century periodicals, and Ruiz de Burton's responses to these clashing forms. Periodicals like the *Overland Monthly* that perpetuated racist and

sexist ideals about not only Spanish Catholic women and domesticity but also about the California region made it necessary for Ruiz de Burton to speak out, but domestic conventions from Spanish Catholic and Anglo cultures in the Southwest determined how she could fight for her rights. In *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *The Squatter and the Don*, Ruiz de Burton blended the conventions of popular sentimental fiction with historical fiction to create a biting critique of the types of settler domesticity she saw in the *Overland Monthly* to rewrite what the literature of the period was getting wrong. Chapter 1 compares Ruiz de Burton's letters and novels with specific stories and articles from the *Overland Monthly* to illustrate how she uses her regional domesticity to overwrite the domestic regionalism the *Overland Monthly* was creating and promoting to change California's culture.

Chapter 2 examines Sarah Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* and Helen Sekaquaptewa's *Me and Mine*. Native writers like Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa both accommodated and resisted Anglo influences on their work while working and writing within acceptable cultural forms of Native domesticity. Mary Mann and Louise Udall had a direct influence on the style and form of Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa, respectively, but both maintain their own voices to document the plight of the Piutes and Hopi while also making arguments for extended views of domesticity and gender. As Piatote notes, Native women were often targeted within the space of the intimate domestic, with the goal of having Native women spread Anglo ideals to others. I include Olive Oatman's heavily edited *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* in this chapter for several reasons. First, even with the intervention of an Anglo male editor, the reader gets a look inside the domestic practices of the Mohaves and how Olive and her sister were integrated into

these domestic practices. Second, the work flips the script on enforced domesticity, with the Anglo girl conforming to Native domesticity, and third, captivity narratives help create the images of the frontier and of Natives that both Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa work against in their own works.

Chapter 3 centers on preservation through folklore and fiction in the works and lives of Adina De Zavala and Jovita González. First, I analyze the re-creation of the Alamo as a domestic space and cultural archive and Adina De Zavala's efforts at historical preservation. I argue Adina De Zavala used the Alamo as a cultural symbol to create a symbolic home space in which to assert her regional domesticity. At the same time, while De Zavala worked to protect the Alamo and other missions in Texas, her story and her work is often under erasure. In most cases, Clara Driscoll, who also worked on Alamo preservation and became De Zavala's nemesis, gets the public credit for saving the Alamo. In the early twentieth century, Anglo women began to form organizations to protect and project certain views of history and to create a historical narrative. I argue De Zavala participates in these movements not only because they can save historical monuments, but because her involvement can also bring her regional notoriety. She illustrates her regional domesticity by centering her domesticity in the preservation of the Alamo, and so, bringing her domesticity from the space of the home to the public sphere. In the process, she works to preserve and bring attention to the layers of domestic regionalism at play in the area. Next, I discuss González's use of folklore and fiction in *Caballero* and *Dew on the Thorn*. I contend through both works, as well as in her public work with the Texas Folklore Society, González created a body of work that preserves a



Spanish Mexican past while advocating for a modern and progressive future for Mexican American women.

Chapter 4 examines cultural preservation and domestic hybridity through garden spaces and how those spaces provide a tie to home even during displacement. I examine the effects of boarding schools and boarding school outing programs on Native domesticities and argue that the boarding school experience often created unique forms of Native domesticity. Leslie Marmon Silko's *Garden in the Dunes* provides a fictional account of domestic adaptation and hybridity through the story of Indigo, a young Native girl whose family survived for centuries in the Arizona desert. As Indigo travels around the world as part of a boarding school outing program, she learns about the resilience of other colonized cultures. She combines what she learns abroad with her own understanding of Native domesticity to create a hybrid form that can sustain her family. Her story illustrates the ability to adapt and combine various forms of domesticity to ensure families and cultures survive. I pair Silko with an in-depth discussion of the Sherman Institute in Riverside, CA and its policies regarding agricultural education and community outing programs to highlight the school's role in creating hybrid domesticities, particularly in garden spaces. Pairing the Sherman Institute with Silko's fictional account of a boarding school student's outing program experiences, I argue for the importance of gardens as feminine spaces of domestic negotiation and hybridity. Domesticity in colonial spaces is often a structure of violence and erasure where important traditions and lifeways are eliminated or subsumed by the colonizers. But, as often evident in writings by Native women in the Southwest, domesticity can also serve as a site of hybridity and strength— a place where older cultural forms blend with colonial

forms imposed over hundreds of years. These hybrid forms do not mark the loss of culture and domesticity, but instead function as places of resilience and continuance.

## Chapter 1

### **“Era Necesario Que Yo Hablara en Defensa de Mis Derechos”: *The Overland***

#### ***Monthly* and María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s Regional Domesticity**

An essay in the July 1868 issue of California’s *The Overland Monthly* titled “Favoring Female Conventualism” advocates for traditional roles for women and argues that if women cannot be wives and mothers, they should have places of refuge available to them to insure they do not become aimless and hopeless. These homes or missions for orphans, widows, and others would provide an avenue for women to continue practicing traditional domestic duties like sewing, cooking, and cleaning and so, the article presumes, would in the long run keep the women healthy and happy. The essay implies that women should not be left on their own or allowed to make their own paths but instead will be happier and safer within an enforced domestic space (Reardon 64-49). The short story “Annetta” from an 1883 issue recounts the story of a young, single woman and her brother’s control over her life. The work ends with the woman punished by her brother because of unfounded rumors that were beyond her control and seems to offer a warning to women who step, even slightly, outside the traditional and deeply ingrained boundaries of an Anglo, East Coast domesticity rapidly spreading West (Ludlum 64-67). In her novels and her letters, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton uses her familiarity with the regional literature of the period to actively work against this type of domestic rhetoric to highlight forms of domesticity already in the region before western encroachment. Through her fictional works *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *The Squatter and the Don*, Ruiz de Burton seeks to repopulate the region with landholding Californios while

openly fighting to protect her land from squatters.<sup>6</sup> In the process, she unwrites and critiques literary Manifest Destiny and the culture of settler colonialism so deeply ingrained in the mission of the *Overland Monthly*.

Ruiz de Burton asserts in her May 18, 1887 letter to Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, “Era necesario que yo hablara en defensa de mis derechos, pero jamás he faltado a la cortesía que una Señora debe observa” [It was necessary for me to speak in defense of my rights, but I have never lacked the courtesy that a lady should observe] (*Conflicts* 518). Periodicals like the *Overland Monthly*, which perpetuated and reinforced deeply ingrained beliefs about not only Mexican and Native American women and their domesticity but also about the California region, made it necessary for Ruiz de Burton to speak out, but domestic conventions from Spanish Catholic and Anglo cultures in the Southwest determined how she could fight for her rights. By examining and engaging with the popular literature of the time, especially the *Overland Monthly*, Ruiz de Burton uses print culture to become well-versed in the rhetoric of Yankee domesticity and responds to its demands while documenting regional and cultural forms she often sees as superior to those of East Coast Anglo women. Amanda Zink asserts that in their writing, “Indian and Mexican women used print culture to process which elements of American domesticity they would accept, which they would reject, and which they would synthesize with their own pre-existing rituals of indigenous domesticity” (16). Further,

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<sup>6</sup> I use Californianas and Californios to describe Ruiz de Burton because this is what she called herself. I also use it to describe and other families of Spanish and Mexican origin holding Spanish land grants in 19<sup>th</sup> century California. Collectively, I will refer to women of Spanish and Mexican descent as Spanish Mexican, Mexican, or Mexican American. I will refer to Lola and Theresa Medina as Mexican or Spanish Mexican because their home is in Mexico and they are of Spanish descent. I will often refer to the domestic expectations placed on Californianas and Spanish Mexican women as Spanish Catholic domesticity since many of its origins lie within the expectations of the Catholic church and traditions.

Zink contends “Mexican American women wrote themselves into Republican Motherhood in the twentieth century, directly responded to Anglo women who historically and literally or literarily colonized Mexican American women’s spaces and asserted that women’s customs were compatible with Anglo’s customs and with modernity” (103). Ruiz de Burton serves as perhaps the earliest example of these women. Through her characters in both *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *The Squatter and the Don*, Ruiz de Burton uses the popularity of regional literature to paint a more complete and often much less flattering portrayal of Yankee domesticity. At the same time, the Mexican women in her stories shine as examples of a superior, pious, and pure domesticity. While not all the Yankee women in the texts fare badly - Mrs. Darrell is portrayed much more sympathetically than most - Ruiz de Burton provides a biting critique of the imposed American domesticity of westward expansion. This assessment, and the form she uses to voice her opposition, is her regional domesticity. She uses regional literature, a form acceptable for women to publish in, to undermine the steady spread of Anglo domestic expectations and domestic regionalism to California and the greater Southwest.<sup>7</sup> In the process, she constructs her own lived and literary domesticity, based in the region—setting Californianas as the standard of pious, adaptable, and superior domesticity.

Regional writing’s importance and popularity in the nineteenth century and its embrace of women writers is key to Ruiz de Burton’s approach. Regional writing is front

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<sup>7</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of domestic regionalism please see the introduction to this dissertation. In short, I define domestic regionalism as regional influences on national affairs. Regional interests and the make up of the region – its people, its industries, its social and cultural constructs create its sense of domestic regionalism and determine the sorts of influence the region places on the nation. In the case of the *Overland Monthly*, I argue the periodical was working to alter the regional makeup of California and change the domestic regionalism the region would assert

and center in the *Overland Monthly*, and like Ruiz de Burton, the periodical both capitalized on its popularity and added to it. Stephanie Foote asserts of regional writing's ties to remembering and forgetting (*Cultural Work* 25) that "As a genre, regional writing is deeply concerned with what is remembered and what is forgotten, and how; with how local, particular people and places and places are incorporated or discarded" (*Cultural Work* 25). As an extension of regionalism, regional domesticity works on the same premise. Ruiz de Burton creates literary works rooted in place that counter the effects of Manifest Destiny to preserve what is quickly being erased about the women of a region. In her writing and her life, she disputes many of the default views Anglos had of Californios, and she does this without leaving the bounds of what would have been considered acceptable Spanish Catholic domesticity at the time. Her work is not without its issues – while staking her claims to domesticity, she also effectively erases indigenous forms of domesticity in the region – but her methods and her approach prove useful in further illustrating how women in the Southwest were well-versed and well-informed regarding domestic expectations and how they found ways to write through and against these expectations.<sup>8</sup> While regionalism was, and is, often viewed as a "lesser" form of literature, it in fact offers us much insight into "social and cultural difference" (*Regional Fictions* 4) in the nineteenth century Southwest and beyond. Foote asserts that regional writing works to help create a national past (*Regional Fictions* 6). Ruiz de Burton's writing, her habits, her letters, and her legal battles all illustrate her clear concern,

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<sup>8</sup> For more on Ruiz de Burton and Native Americans, see Jesse Alemán's "Historical Amnesia and the Vanishing Mestiza: The Problem with Race in *The Squatter and the Don* and *Ramona*" in *Aztlan*, Vol 27, number 1, Oct 2002, José Aranda's "Contradictory Impulses: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, Resistance Theory, and the Politics of Chicano/a Studies" in *American Literature*, vol 30, num 3, Sept 1998, and Sánchez and Pita's introduction to *The Squatter and the Don*, Arte Público Press, 1995

understanding, and involvement in national matters, and through her characters, she works to build a common national identity for landholding Spanish Catholic Californios and the encroaching Anglos. She fictionalizes Californio lives and fortunes in both *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *The Squatter and the Don* to also monetize her interest in national belonging, but the stories hold many similarities to her own life. She published her fiction in an effort to gain funds to continue her legal battles against physical encroachment onto her family lands, similar to the Alamar's plight in *Squatter*, and to fight against the stereotypes so prevalent of Californianas that Lola proves to be incorrect and inadequate in *Who Would Have Thought It?*.

The *Overland Monthly* was a key force in promoting California and reshaping Californian identity, and time and time again, Ruiz de Burton refutes the settler colonial identity the *Overland* was so invested in. Foote goes on to note that “regional writing gives us a way to read some of the nineteenth century’s anxieties about race and ethnicity” (*Regional Fictions* 16). Ruiz de Burton’s works center on this anxiety, as she works through it for herself and her various audiences, and story after story in the *Overland Monthly* works through this same theme. A regional approach offers a chance to look at our nation’s past and to think through how national identities were being formed in the nineteenth century. At the same time, because regional literature often tells the stories of those on the outside – in terms of default American identities at least – we are able to get a more accurate picture of the people of the Southwest. We can then work towards decolonizing the Southwest and understanding the complexity of gender, race, and national identity, and domesticity’s pivotal role in creating and spreading those ideals. As Fetterly and Pryse contend, “Regionalism marks that point where region

becomes mobilized as a tool for critique of hierarchies based on gender as well as race, class, age, and economic resources (14). Regional domesticities are an extension of this critique. Regional domesticities as they appear in the literary works of women in the greater Southwest also illustrate this convergence of hierarchies as they pertain specifically to the domestic sphere and they establish the point where Southwestern domesticity becomes mobilized as a critique, action, and continuance. Ruiz de Burton uses the region and regional writing as criticism of the multiple forms of Manifest Destiny moving through the Southwest.

With many of her letters lost and limited access to her archive, we do not have indisputable proof that Ruiz de Burton read the *Overland*, but enough information exists to safely assert she would have been familiar with the magazine, its writers, and its themes. The *Overland* was the prevailing regional publication of Ruiz de Burton's time, and it played a monumental role in shaping domestic expectations of and for California and Californian women for much of the nineteenth century. I use the *Overland* for my argument here because of its far-reaching range as a cultural influencer, its role in manifesting settler colonial culture in California, and because it presents a cosmopolitan view of the region that Ruiz de Burton resists in her own writing. Ruiz de Burton's works argue that the rich history and culture of Spanish Catholic California produce a domesticity far superior to the popular, rapidly advancing and changing cosmopolitan version the *Overland* encourages. She is fighting to retain her land and her culture from waves of Anglo settlers she sees as inferior. María Amparo Ruiz de Burton understood the *Overland's* role in the flow of information from West to East and East to West, and she worked to use its own assumptions against it in an effort to make her claims for her



land and for the land and lives of the other Californios being displaced and erased by American policy.

I believe it is possible Ruiz de Burton chose the *Overland* for more personal reasons. First, it is possible that she used her own works to undermine the *Overland Monthly* simply because it was the regional periodical that rebuked her. While her work was published in other popular periodicals of the time, her work never appeared in the *Overland*. Second, both were centered on the West coast with an interest and knowledge of the East coast, and both expressed a strong desire to position California as culturally superior to the East-coast cultural elite. From what we know of Ruiz de Burton and from what we see in her work, especially *Who Would Have Thought It?*, she felt herself to be superior to the women of the East coast, and with its fancy cover and heavy card stock, the *Overland* portrays the same sense of superiority over the leading East coast periodicals. She also knew the type of rhetoric the *Overland* aimed at Californians. With each new issue and new volume, the *Overland* actively worked to destroy the image of the Californios. By dismantling their image, the *Overland* also helped terminate land rights and encourage squatters to take over Spanish land grants. The *Overland* helped create prevailing opinion about California, and a woman as well-informed and as well-read as Ruiz de Burton, who shopped two novels to various periodicals over the years, would without a doubt be reading this magazine. Ruiz de Burton understood the capability of periodicals and magazines to sway popular opinion because she used several newspapers for this purpose herself. By reading periodicals like the *Overland Monthly*, Ruiz de Burton could remain informed on the events of her time, but she would also know implicitly how her home region, California, was being marketed to the rest of the

country. She used what she learned from these publications to tailor her arguments and views on domesticity to reach the largest possible (and mostly Eastern) audience while overwriting the type of domestic regionalism the *Overland Monthly* made so popular.

Overall, all indications are that she was fully immersed in the print culture of the era and placed the foremost importance on being well-read and well-informed, and she used the knowledge she learned from her engagement with literary and print culture to further her own agendas. First, Ruiz de Burton was a voracious reader, and her letters and novels point to full engagement with classical and contemporary literature. Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita note she was an “insatiable reader of literature and history” and a “woman intellectual” (551), and both her letters and her two novels reflect this role. She was well-versed on the classics as well as historical and contemporary works. She actively encouraged Vallejo to include his stories in Bancroft’s history, and she makes numerous references to classical literature in her letters. In an 1869 letter to Vallejo she notes, “Ya entre Ud. y Víctor Hugo m e van educando...ya voy hacienda el ánimo a contemplar el batiboleo de la chusma como el gran *desideratum* de la humanidad...” [Already between you and Víctor Hugo you are educating me ... I am making the courage to contemplate the uproar of the mob as the great *desideratum* of humanity...] (*Conflicts* 306), a clear reference to her wide-ranging reading habits and her interest in contemporary works, her interests in philosophy, and her ability to speak and read French. In another letter to Vallejo, she references Draper’s *Intellectual Development of Europe* (1863), another key indication she was reading the popular, political, and scientific literature of the time. Finally, we know sentimental fiction and historical fiction were at the height of popularity at the time and were widely read on the East coast. It is

during this period that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* became a successful tool for emancipation while later novels by Gertrude Atherton and Helen Hunt Jackson both portrayed Ruiz de Burton's home region of California. With her appetite for all things literary, we can safely assume she was familiar with the works of these women and understood the kind of influence their works had on East coast readers. As further confirmation, Contreras contends "*Squatter* appeared during a time of unprecedented activity in literary marketplace" (214) and when "an unspoken standard of aesthetic judgment arose: northeastern fiction was serious literary writing, while western fiction was sub-literary, regional, or picturesque" (215). I assert Ruiz de Burton was reading both and would certainly disagree with the distinction.

We know Ruiz de Burton relied on Spanish language newspapers for information about Mexico and to keep abreast of changing land laws. As Alemán notes, "The writers, writings, and people who populate the Latino/a nineteenth century inhabited a Hispanophone world. Theirs is a world of Spanish-language print culture, circuits, readerships, and routes" (viii). While Ruiz de Burton lived part of her life on the East coast, we have evidence that she fully participated in the dissemination and receipt of information through the Spanish-language press. In her letters to Vallejo, she frequently discusses her land claims and legal battles in Mexico and displays an intimate knowledge of the political climate and happenings in Mexico – information that could only come from full engagement with the news of the area. In an 1887 letter to Vallejo in which she discusses her legal battles and decries the unlawful methods men are using to try to steal her lands in Mexico, she ends the letter with an ardent and pointed question: "¿Por qué no me ha enviado periódicos mexicanos?" [Why haven't you sent me Mexican newspapers?]

(519). The necessity of having access to these Spanish language newspapers and why they were so important to her is clear, at least from a business point of view. Ruiz de Burton was a woman working in two worlds, and she was able to work confidently in both. With continued business interests in Mexico and familial ties to the region, she would of course rely on Spanish language periodicals to gain information.

Ruiz de Burton's letters also point to her constant reliance on American periodicals to keep up with the news of California, both when she is in the East and when she is back in the West. Just as she asked her lawyer Samuel Barlow to send copies of her books to "the *World, Herald, Times, and Tribune*" (*Conflicts* 437) so they could give her a "puff" (*Conflicts* 433), we can reason that she would also do the same for the incredibly popular *Overland Monthly*, especially since it was based in her home region. Ruiz de Burton's letters contain almost constant references to American newspapers and magazines. She mentions the *San Diego Bee* numerous times, and she wrote several articles for the paper. We also know *Squatter* was reviewed in both the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Alta California*, and the *San Diego Herald* reviewed her play when she lived there with her husband. Ruiz de Burton was by all accounts a savvy businesswoman and understood the importance of having her work recognized in such a major periodical, and she understood the power periodicals had when disseminating information and helping create popular opinion. She would be especially interested in a periodical that specialized in the literature of and about California. In a letter to E. W. Morse in 1870, she remarks "What about the gold discoveries the *Herald* tells of being near San Diego?" (342). This statement proves she is reading California newspapers even when she is not on the West coast. With the *Overland's* immense popularity on both coasts, Ruiz de

Burton would have had easy access to it throughout its run – no matter what coast she was on. The *Overland* probably would have been an especially problematic periodical for Ruiz de Burton, given its approach to liberalism in the region. According to Stephen Mexal, “Due in part to a regional desire to attract settlers and financial investment, the essays and short fiction published in the *Overland Monthly* often portrayed the American West as a civilized evolution of, and not a savage regression from, eastern bourgeois modernity and democracy” (5). The goal of the *Overland* was to balance the civic development of California with a sense of rugged individualism that the founders and writers believed could only be achieved in California. The magazine’s circulation grew from 2500 copies a month in its early years to 12,000 copies a month by the 1880s, and the list of subscribers was from every state and several foreign countries (Mexal 19). The *Overland* worked to unify the “contradictory impulses to historicize and romanticize the hard liberalism of the frontier west” (Mexal 20). In the process and from its earliest issues, it built an image of California that overlooked, undervalued, or erased the people and the cultures that came before – a process inherent in all colonial enterprises, including Spain’s own earlier entradas into the region.

Other specific examples point to Ruiz de Burton’s immersion in local news and periodicals. José Aranda’s argument about Ruiz de Burton and the Battle of Mussel Slough further proves her engagement with events in California and with local media. Aranda discusses the literature that followed Mussel Slough and notes that one pamphlet in particular may have been “instructive for the political moment” and “set the stage for later writers Royce, Norris, and now forgotten contemporaries like William Chambers Morrow, who wrote *Blood Money*” (16). But, most importantly for our purposes here,

Aranda reinforces the argument that Ruiz de Burton was reading local literature and using what she found there to air her grievances in the *Squatter and the Don*. Aranda says, “It is highly probable given Ruiz de Burton’s political contacts and voracious reading habits that she too knew this pamphlet well. The penultimate paragraph of the novel specifically mentions this event in connection to the demise of the Texas Pacific Railroad” (16). Aranda argues of clear proof Ruiz de Burton was engaged in the political discourses of the era and was reading the literature connected to these discourses and then using them as content for her creative works. If she engaged with a local pamphlet, she certainly would have engaged with the popular *Overland Monthly*, which was readily available on both coasts. Finally, in the clearest example of her interest in and use of the U.S. press, the *San Diego Herald* published an article in 1854 about the “Pinto” tribe whose members were depicted as having “no sympathy or feeling in common with any people who boast Castilian extraction” and as being “covered with blotches upon the skin, blue, white, and chocolate color” (*San Diego Herald* qtd in Sánchez and Pita 94). Sánchez and Pita assert, “The date and tongue-in-cheek character of much of what appeared in the *Herald* notwithstanding, the notion of a *Pinto* tribe nonetheless made its way into *Who Would Have Thought It?*” (94). Lola, the young Mexican girl adopted by the Norvals, had her skin dyed to disguise her white skin. As the dye begins to fade over time, the New England Anglo women describe her similarly to the Pinto Indians. Sánchez and Pita argue Ruiz de Burton creates this comparison to shine light on the hypocrisy of New England women, but as we know, Ruiz de Burton also uses Lola and the Pintos to illuminate East coast views of the Mexican population of the Southwest, and I assert to further unwrite *the Overland Monthly’s* portrayal of them.

Including the Pinto reference in her novel points to Ruiz de Burton's familiarity with regional print culture and her complete engagement with its content. She was a savvy woman who used the tools around her to make her points. She also had a knack for using key issues her audience would be familiar with. As numerous examples in both *Who Would Have Thought It?* and *The Squatter and the Don* illustrate, she uses real characters and real events being reported in the press to serve as the basis for her fictional stories. She stays abreast of all the issues of the day - social, political, regional, and cultural. During the *Overland's* heyday of popularity on the East Coast, she was living on the East coast, and *The Squatter and the Don* in its earliest forms was pitched as an idea for a serialized story in the *Californian*, which was later absorbed by the *Overland* (Contreras 213). Ruiz de Burton would have to be familiar with her audience and familiar with her venue. From her letters compiled by Sánchez and Pita, we also know Ruiz de Burton was a frequent contributor to newspapers, both anonymously and under her own name. Logically, we can form the conclusion she would have been intimately familiar with the leading magazine about her home region of California.

Founded in San Francisco in 1868 - at a time when Ruiz de Burton was living on the East coast as an officer's wife and already fully embroiled in land disputes in California and Mexico - *The Overland Monthly* was quickly a sensation in California and on the East Coast and helped launch the careers of numerous big-name regional writers, including Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Jack London, Ambrose Bierce, Josephine McCracken, and Ina Coolbrith. When asked how the founders agreed on the name the *Overland Monthly*, Bret Harte's comments are illustrative of the purpose and audience of the magazine. Harte notes, "The 'West,' 'Wide West,' and 'Western,' are already threadbare

and suggest to Eastern readers only Chicago and the Lakes” (99) and “California” would simply be too local and not attract a large enough audience. Harte goes on to note how the railroad is expanding and connecting the new nation and travel over the Overland trail will become more and more popular. Harte asserts “Where our people travel, that is the highway of our thought” (99). In his explanation of the magazine’s title, Harte establishes both the intended audience – Eastern readers – and the purpose – documenting, and I argue domesticating—California and the greater Southwest for the people who would be traveling to the region. In numerous *Overland* articles including “Art Beginnings in the Pacific” from the inaugural issue and “Carthage” from later in 1868, Spanish Mexican culture is portrayed as crumbling and ancient, even only two decades after the Treaty of Guadalupe. Ruiz de Burton would have to be aware of such a popular magazine – she ran in the best social circles on both coasts – and she would have been intimately familiar with the rhetoric the magazine was pushing. Creating a sense of domestic regionalism in California and the West was key to the success of the *Overland Monthly*, and its articles, stories, and commentaries put forth a carefully calculated view of California and the West. In fact, as Nancy Glazener points out, the magazine “sought a readership and cultural authority like the *Atlantic*” (206) but “prided itself on the fact that most of its contributors were from the West in general and from California in particular” (205). The *Overland* wanted to portray itself as a maker and marker of California culture, and it sought to do this by writing from within the region but also by reaching the largest outside audience as possible. California was constantly in flux as social and cultural constructs evolved, and we can see the *Overland’s* influence on the West, but most especially on California. The *Overland* was popular, and it was mobile – its influence



carried from one coast to the other. The views the magazine put forth had the power to shape policy in relation to California and in interactions between California and other regions, including Mexico. This influence in California and Mexico would have made it of special interest to Ruiz de Burton.

While the *Overland* offered new opportunities for regional women writers to publish and Anglo women are mostly presented in a positive light, the gendered expectations touted by the magazine usually adhere to strict Yankee standards of female domesticity. Anglo women are not fully developed in most *Overland* entries, although they do seem to have more diverse roles in a few of the stories and numerous Anglo women were writing for the magazine. We see upper-class Anglo women embracing mobility and using California as a base to travel to new locales and collect furnishings for their homes as in “Panama Fever” in which women are seen outside the domestic space, traveling by ship with their friends to Panama; the focus of their trip is spending leisurely days with their friends and buying items to decorate their domestic spaces when they get home. The women are also portrayed as entitled, and we read of one of the women that “very little on this passage has pleased her” (557) because she had not received the attention that her social position usually afforded her. The worst hardships the women face are the heat and the rain and the risk of catching malaria, but they remain demanding and unhappy despite their privilege.

In the case of Mexican American and Native American women, the portrayals are even less flattering, especially to a modern audience, and often follow the local color literary traditions of the time – portraying Native and Mexican characters as separate from and uniformed of the progress of the era, adhering to flat characterizations and

stereotypes, and speaking in rough imagined dialogs, if speaking at all – as was the tradition at the time. Most of these female characters are not fully developed as characters, or they fill stock roles in the stories and articles – roles being assigned to most Mexican American and Native American women and men at the time. In the 1883 story “One Foot in Tlascala,” for example, the author portrays the Mexican woman Josefita as willing to help the American men and shield them from danger from within the space of her home. We are told that one of the men in the expedition would marry her if he did not already have a girlfriend, but we know little else about Josefita. She exists only as a sexualized object of conquest positioned within a shoddy domestic sphere and is ever eager to help the colonizers. Mexican women, when they appear at all, are contained within certain roles in the *Overland* and in the other popular literature of the era. Native American women receive even less attention or depth. Again, we see the *Overland* perpetuating settler colonial ideals with the power to physically and culturally alter the gendered makeup and domesticity of the region and the region as a domestic space within the nation. Ruiz de Burton laments her hatred of Manifest Destiny in a letter to Vallejo, noting “Y un verdadero odio y desprecio (como buena mexicana) por el tal ‘Manifest Destiny’” [And a true hatred and contempt (as a good Mexican) for this certain ‘Manifest Destiny’] (*Conflicts* 117), and the *Overland Monthly* was an extension of this unrelenting westward expansion. Ruiz de Burton uses her regional domesticity – the responses she found acceptable within the cultural domestic expectations and values of her position in California Spanish Catholic culture - to overwrite the domestic regionalism the *Overland* was spreading, advertising, and advocating.

As Sánchez and Pita assert, Ruiz de Burton was a “fissured subject” (x). Not only was she split between her views of the US and Mexico, but her outlook on domestic ideals and expectations appears at odds too. In some cases, she is torn between presenting herself as fierce and savvy in business and the domestic expectations placed on her. Occasionally, her correspondence with prominent men in California illustrate this fissure, with business and domesticity appearing in the same letters. In one letter to Barlow discussing her lands, she is forceful and reminds him, “Let me repeat not to send the originals, but send facsimiles” but then begins the next paragraph with “I shall be most happy to see Mrs. Barlow and Mrs. Crawford and I hope they will call before Thursday” (*Conflicts* 283), clearly illustrating her ability to balance both worlds and multiple expectations with ease. Her letters to Vallejo often have a similar style. In a May 1877 letter to him, she spends most of the letter discussing her land fight in Mexico but ends by talking about her children, writing “Estoy muy triste” [I’m very sad] and “Creo que me muero si no voy a ver a Nellie” [I think I’ll die if I don’t go see Nellie] (*Conflicts* 467). Still other times, Ruiz de Burton is direct and to the point and does not mince words, telling her attorney Barlow, “You might give me the trouble of a lawsuit and harass me cruelly, but I am too well informed regarding my rights in the matter” (*Conflicts* 516). In other cases, she relies solely on her role as a proper Spanish Catholic woman to make her point. In one letter to Vallejo she remarks, “¡Cuán triste es mirar en retrospecto!...pero, ¿y el future\_qué me promete a mí, a esta infeliz mujer...’sin patria y sin amor’ ....la tumba...un ataúd” [how sad it is to look back! ... but what about the future\_ what promotes me, this unhappy woman ... 'without country and without love' ... the grave ... a coffin] (*Conflicts* 302) in what seems an obvious attempt to gain sympathy and reinforce

the idea that while she takes care of her business affairs, she still has the proper sentiments of a mature Spanish Catholic widow who is looking back with sadness and regret. The way she negotiated all the demands placed upon her is the basis for her regional domesticity. She wrote against the national rhetoric she saw in the major novels and periodicals of the day in an effort to “incite direct political action” (Aranda 18), but she also wanted to make sure she protected her rights through ways that were befitting of a Spanish Catholic woman of the era. She develops her own brand of domesticity and uses it to counter the kind of rhetoric she was seeing in the leading periodicals of the day, like the *Overland Monthly*.

Ruiz de Burton’s novels also speak to this ability to produce hybrid forms of domesticity based in a region built on coloniality and hybridity. Intermarriage is key to the formation of domestic ideology in California since the earliest days of Spanish colonization. María Raquel Casas expands the premise of marriage as a tool of colonial power in *Married to a Daughter of the Land*. The Spanish learned marriage could be used to control the conquered and to settle more of the conquered land, firmly positioning empire with the domestic space. Casas notes, “Social constructions of female virtue, honor, sexual chastity at the time of marriage and proper public behavior initiated in medieval Spain have remained prescribed and valued female traits in Hispanic societies up to the present” (31). Gender expectations and the expectations of women in general are deeply, historically embedded in Spain’s history of conquest. Casas discusses intermarriages and notes that military personnel could intermarry with the Native population even when the higher classes could not; and there were more intermarriages in the remote frontier regions. Intermarriages lead to hybrid forms of domesticity – and

oppression within this realm - as Spanish, Native American, Mexican, and Anglo-American expectations overlapped, replaced each other, and sometimes even combined. These clashes and combinations of expectations for the women in the area form the basis of a system of domesticity specific to the Southwest and what Ruiz de Burton's regional domesticity is based upon. For Californianas of all classes throughout the nineteenth century, domesticity and the roles of women were built around old Spanish Catholic ideals and the Church. As Miroslava Chavez-Garcia notes, "To ensure the social stability of the community, particularly the family...they enforced a rigid system of patriarchal beliefs and practices that emphasized the authority of husbands and fathers over women, sexual purity or virginity before marriage, fidelity and monogamy during married life, chastity in widowhood, and shame in all bodily matters" (20). Women were valuable for their ability to produce heirs and to keep Spanish bloodlines pure. Women within the peonage system were expected to adhere to these same strict values, but their value resided in their ability to produce new workers for the patron.

While early Spanish Catholic women often owned property and sometimes ran their own businesses, they were most important as ties to familial lines. Marriages were frequently arranged, and women often had little say in the matches. Among the upper classes of society, women were tied to the ability to ensure Spanish bloodlines remained pure. Marriages could be based solely on this requirement. Within marriages, women were expected to provide a strong Catholic upbringing for the children, but the men were the spiritual and physical heads of the households with women deferring to them in all things. They often had little legal recourse if their husbands were abusive or did not provide for them. As the U.S. pushed into California, some new opportunities emerged

for Californianas. They could now legally file for divorce, and many did. Some chose Anglo husbands, often against their family's wishes. Others found themselves in arranged marriages to Anglo men – arrangements secured by their fathers, uncles, or brothers to secure alliances and increase the stature of both the Mexican families and the Anglo men the women were marrying. As a larger metaphor, securing new lands and bringing new people into the domestic fold strengthened the U.S. and continued to enlarge its holdings. These traditions are the basis for the domesticity Ruiz de Burton is born into, but they are also the conditions she laments at times. Her views and her domesticity lie somewhere along the borders. She did choose to marry an Anglo soldier, but she also created an image of herself as a landed Californiana above reproach and strictly adhering to Spanish Catholic culture. Both in her letters and her novels, she constantly moves between the expectations she created for herself and overwriting incorrect images of California and Californianas while making every effort to support her family and save her land.

### **The Superior Domesticity of *Who Would Have Thought It?***

In *Who Would Have Thought It?* Ruiz de Burton makes a clear argument that imposing or even just encouraging such a faulty, pretentious, and un-pious Eastern domesticity on the Southwest is ludicrous when Mexican women like Lola and her mother Theresa are clearly superior. In the end, while documenting domestic practices of the East coast and of landed Mexican - or Californiana in Ruiz de Burton's case - women in the Southwest, Ruiz de Burton argues for the superiority of a Southwestern domesticity grounded in Spanish Catholic ideals while illustrating through the displaced character of Lola its ability to adapt to changes in conditions and locations. Through the character of Lola Medina, Ruiz de Burton critiques the treatment of Mexican women and rallies

against their portrayal in the popular literature of the time. While *Who Would Have Thought It?* centers most of its plot on the East coast, the action focuses on the young Mexican protagonist Lola Medina whose roots are firmly within the Southwest. Ruiz de Burton uses Lola's regional domesticity as a foil to the default but faulty Anglo domesticity so popular in regional fiction and literature. Early in the work, Ruiz de Burton takes direct aim at the romanticized notions of sentimental fiction and the views held of Mexican American women, but her critique is not only of sentimental fiction but also of the limited roles and opportunities afforded Spanish Mexican women by the writers of the *Overland Monthly*. When Dr. Norval introduces Lola Medina to his wife, he remarks that Lola "is only ten years old, but her history is already more romantic than that of half of the heroines of your trashy novels" (*Who* 17). We encounter those same heroines in *Overland* stories, but we rarely see educated and sophisticated women like Theresa and Lola Medina. We encounter women writers in the *Overland* too, but not Ruiz de Burton. Ruiz de Burton argues in no uncertain terms that the confines of regional literature in the popular periodicals of the time do not give the whole story and should not be the only narratives. The Norvals view Lola Medina (a young Mexican girl rescued from Indian captivity) only as an adopted daughter, a wife, a source of wealth, domestic help, or a woman hidden away in the home or in a convent – similarly to how the *Overland* views the California region.

Eventually we learn Lola's father is of Austrian descent. When we are first introduced to her father, Don Luis Medina, he is speaking with his father about the possibility of the Austrian Maximilian taking the throne in Mexico. We learn Don Luis and Don Felipe are of Austrian blood while born on Mexican soil. At this point, Ruiz de

Burton provides a two-page commentary on the possibility of Maximilian coming to Mexico and his entitlement to the throne, and she notes that the men believe Maximilian has a valid claim. He does eventually take the throne. “A Court Ball at the Palace of Mexico” by William W. Wells appears in the August 1868 issue of the *Overland Monthly*. The piece provides an inside look, from an outsider’s perspective, of the happenings at the court of Maximilian while also describing the men and women who would attend such parties. It details the grandeur of the palace and of the rule of Maximilian. Wells writes that at the time, “Mexico is the centre of fashion and wealth of the American tropics” (109) and notes of the women of the court, “In diamonds, especially, the Mexican belles far out shown all European competitors” (110). Not only does the author provide a view of the court of Maximilian, whom Lola’s family vows to support, but “A Court Ball” also includes detailed descriptions of the women of the court. First, the author points out that “In Mexico, female education, if such a thing in its legitimate sense exists, is usually confined to religious teaching” (110). While not strictly confined to religious teaching, Lola is educated at a Catholic convent in what a reader would assume, having read both stories in the *Overland* and *Who Would Have Thought It?*, is proper for an wealthy young Mexican girl. On another note, “A Court Ball” paints Empress Carlotta as elegant, regal, and well-versed in ladylike behavior. She has an “amiable disposition,” “goodness of heart” and a “dignified and rather stately step” (110). Again we see traits just as easily used to describe Lola in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, but they are also reminiscent of how Lola’s mother, Theresa Medina, is described. Theresa is “the pure, the high minded, refined and delicate” and “pure and beautiful and accomplished” (*Who* 200). The story also offers a clear distinction between Carlotta and



some of the Mexican women at the ball. One is described as an “unsophisticated Mexicana” while another is said to have “unmistakable Aztec expression and features” while Carlotta is taller than the other women, is elegant, and switches effortlessly between four languages (110). Ruiz de Burton makes these same types of distinctions between Lola and her Native American captors, Lola and the Norvals’ Irish servants, and Lola and the Anglo women in the story. Ruiz de Burton chose to make Lola of Austrian descent. There is of course the notion she does this to stake claims to whiteness for herself and the Californios, and that seems obvious if we look at the rhetoric surrounding Austrians in Mexico when the story was written. At the same time, this story and several others like it in the *Overland* depict the wealth and glamour of Maximilian and Carlotta’s reign. While Maximilian ruled after Lola is born, for people reading this story in 1872, the association would still be there. Giving Lola Austrian ancestry places her above her European and Yankee competitors in a way that would be easily recognizable to Ruiz de Burton’s readers.

While Anglo women seem easily susceptible to falling from domesticity’s grace in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, and this fall is a common trope in popular literature of the time, Ruiz de Burton argues that location and mobility do not lessen the domesticity of good Spanish Mexican women. Even displaced from her family home firmly in the Southwest, Lola (and perhaps Ruiz de Burton herself) never strays from the Catholic domestic ideals. She attends Catholic school at her mother’s dying request and remains pious and respectable even as the Anglo women around her spend her money and Mrs. Norval secretly marries. The Anglo women in *Who Would Have Thought It?* embrace mobility, and their ability to move freely works against their domesticity – just like in

various stories in the *Overland*, but even forced into mobility like Lola and Theresa and Ruiz de Burton, those demands never affect their domesticity in a negative way. But for Anglo women in the regional literature of the time, movement outside their domestic realm is often it is at the expense of their reputations as ideal or true women.

“A Run Overland” by Thomas Magee from the December 1868 issue of the *Overland* discusses his journey along the Overland Trail. While mobility for women can often be a detriment, the premise of the story is the effectiveness of travel for curing the male author’s nervous condition. However, quickly the story moves from the author’s ailments to a traveler’s gaze. The further West the story goes, the more conditions seem to deteriorate for the author. At the same time, notably, Magee seems to give the railroad system a plug, writing “one of the most complete roads of which the country can boast is being laid” (511) and perhaps “fictions of the East must be rewritten to match the realities of the West” (511). For him, the realities of the West are still viewed through the lens of someone with East-coast notions of the nation, of personhood, and even of domesticity. By the time he reaches Laramie, Wyoming, Magee cannot resist the urge to sympathize with the women he sees while still denigrating them for their seemingly lost sense of womanhood. He notes, “Women have a terrible life in these frontier towns, and I do not wonder that many of them become unsexed by their isolation among the roughest possible specimens of men” (512). In the September 1868 issue, another short story, “Some Facts about Her,” seems to reiterate the ills of women’s mobility. In the story, Linda is described as a “beautiful brunette” who worked in some of the “very limited number of openings for labor that modern civilization offers to women” (281). Linda eventually leaves the domestic confines of the apartment she shares with her sister, and

the male narrator loses track of her. The narrator meets Linda years later and discovers her new wealth comes from a series of male benefactors. The story ends with a moral of sorts: “Her wealth, her beauty, her womanhood, were each and all to her merely instruments of her ambition. A woman without principle, love, honor, faith, or God. Linda had gone her own way” (285). Even away from her home and trapped in the desert, Theresa Medina retains her womanhood and notes in her testimonio that through all the years of hardship her “soul did not sin” (*Who* 202) and manages to create a home space of protection for her and her daughter.

In another example from the *Overland*, while the protagonist in Josephine Clifford’s January 1871 “Something about My Pets” is content to stay home, be a supportive wife, entertain guests and care for all the stray pets who show up at her home, *Who*’s Aunt Lavinia kills her beloved pet birds because she will be working outside the home and will not have time to feed or protect them. Along the same lines, Mrs. Norval’s new wealth and mobility allow her to marry Hackwell in secret, and she becomes unstable when she learns her husband is still alive. At the same time, her daughters spend money freely and marry men who steal from the government through their war contracts. All of Ruiz de Burton’s moves work to place Lola within the usually exclusive framework of Anglo-American domestic ideals constantly touted on the pages of the *Overland* while actually establishing upper class, land holding Mexican Americans as the true white ideal. In the process, through Lola, Ruiz de Burton illustrates the superiority of a domesticity based in place. Lola adapts, even when she is not in her region, while the Anglo women can’t maintain domesticity with the introduction of even the smallest amount of mobility. While Lola’s transformation may seem to suggest a movement

towards a cosmopolitan sense of domesticity, it is the opposite. Lola's domesticity itself never changes throughout the novel. Her beliefs, her ideals, and her sense of Spanish Catholic domesticity never changes. Her domesticity remains rooted in a place, Mexico, even though she was not born in the region. Her domesticity is of Mexico. Its expectations are based on centuries of colonial contacts and Spanish Catholic views on the roles of women. Her location does not and cannot change those origins. That rootedness allows her to adapt to new changes, but it does not make her domesticity cosmopolitan. Her domesticity is adaptable because it is so rooted in its place of origin, and Ruiz de Burton's seems to suggest that a domesticity rooted in place can survive any amount of mobility, while the cosmopolitan, superficial Anglo domesticity cannot. This is not to say Ruiz de Burton's domesticity cannot be cosmopolitan and even progressive but rather that a regional domesticity rooted in place that has adapted to the changing demands of the place is more prepared for mobility and change.

Not only does Mrs. Norval contain Lola throughout the novel, but the family views her as an object for conquest - just as the *Overland* repeatedly advocates for the continued conquest of California from gold rushes, to railroads, to squatters. Lola's mother spent years using Indian labor to find and hide gold and gems in the hopes that she might eventually find freedom for her daughter and ensure she receives a proper education. While Ruiz de Burton at one time brags about breaking the story of the diamonds and jewels in the Southwest, the *Overland's* 1868 "What the Railroad Will Bring Us" notes "Throughout the greater part of this vast domain, gold and silver are scattered in inexhaustible profusion [...] every valuable mineral known to man" (297). Ruiz de Burton depicts Theresa as encountering these precious metals everywhere she

looks – with little to no effort - while the Indians have no idea of the gems’ value.

Including this effortless source of natural wealth as premise for Lola’s fortune feels like a satirizing nod to the kind of rhetoric appearing in the *Overland*, and perhaps the “Railroad” piece specifically.

### ***The Squatter and the Don and the Domestication of California’s Resources***

Ruiz de Burton’s second novel, *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), demonstrates how domestic policy in a region has a direct effect on the people of that region and how they navigate being forced to negotiate and adapt to the demands of U.S. domestic policy. While the *Overland Monthly* documents the domestication of the Southwest and promotes travel and settlement, Ruiz de Burton’s *Squatter* tells the other side of these tales being disseminated to a large reading public on both the East and West coasts. Her work documents how the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo’s bringing of the Southwest into the nation was only the beginning of national policies that would shape and reshape California and the lives of the people who lived there. The 1862 Homestead Act and 1872 No Fences Law, both used extensively for the plot of *Squatter*, are further products of this early policy still aimed at bringing California into the nation at a drastic cost. As the title page of each issue states, the *Overland Monthly* was “Dedicated to the Development of the Country.” Article after article, story after story shows this drive and dedication. Ruiz de Burton works to undo some of what was done by regional magazines and newspapers by using their tools.

Ruiz de Burton hoped *Squatter* would be published by an East coast publisher and receive wider attention than her first novel, but that was not the case. Living in California and telling a regional story, Ruiz de Burton was denied the access to the types of power

she needed to reach a large publisher, even after previously writing a well-received novel. *The Squatter and the Don* was eventually accepted by the *Overland*'s publisher at the time, Samuel Carson and Company. (Gruesz 464). In its earliest stages, *The Squatter and the Don* was an idea for a short story to be serialized in the *Californian*, but eventually Ruiz de Burton decided the tale would be much too long for that format. She writes to George Davidson, "I began a story, and my notes got to be so many, that I found myself spinning quite a long yarn" (*Conflicts* 484). The *Californian* was eventually absorbed by the *Overland* in 1883, and to think Ruiz de Burton would not have researched her audience and her venue would be short sighted. While I contend that she read the *Overland* from its earliest iterations, she would certainly read copies of the *Californian* as well if she hoped to have her story appear there. As she makes the decision to turn the story into a novel, she would need to look forward to reviews by publishers and major newspapers and magazines. Unfortunately, while *Squatter* was reviewed by several newspapers in California and caused a stir in San Diego, the novel did not receive much notice from the East coast; likely because Ruiz de Burton was a woman and because her novel was published by a small, West coast publisher, which moved her towards the popular but less critically acclaimed local color of the era. However, each edition of the *Overland* includes book reviews – a fact that would not be lost on Ruiz de Burton. And mention of *Squatter* did eventually appear in a Carson and Company advertisement in the February 1885 issue of the *Overland*; however, the novel was never actually reviewed by the *Overland*.

While I argue *Who Would Have Thought It?* is focused on domesticity and the roles of both Anglo and upper class Spanish Catholic women, *The Squatter and the Don*

continues the regional literature tradition by focusing most directly on the domestication of California as a region of the United States. The novel centers on the uneven practices of the U.S. that effectively brought the lands of California into the U.S. without fully integrating the people tied to that land. In the process, Ruiz de Burton creates female characters, both Anglo and Mexican American, who demonstrate a domesticity centered on their own cultural norms but also on the changing interactions and demands of the region. The novel focuses on the Alamar family and their fight to retain their lands in the face of unjust land laws, squatters, and an American system interested in the valuable lands of the Californios but not concerned with the rights of the people on those lands. From a letter Ruiz de Burton wrote to Don Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo in 1860, we know she was contemplating a version of this novel even then. She noted the work would focus on a main character, Don Mariano Alamar, who would be modeled after Vallejo, and center on the loss of land and power of the Spanish land grant families of California. (*Conflicts* 556). In the story, Don Alamar's land grant claim was denied, and while he is appealing the decision, squatters are rapidly settling on his land and killing his cattle in the process. The squatters consider this land near San Diego to be such a premium spot that they actively seek more people to join them there. Among those is William Darrell, that "terrible and most dangerous squatter" (*Squatter* 64). Darrell is known for his role in protecting squatter rights in other parts of California. The degree to which squatters and squatters' rights permeated every aspect of life in California cannot be underestimated. As an example, the January 1870 issue of the *Overland* contains Socrates Hyacinth's article "On Some of Our Birds." While seemingly discussing the migration of Eastern

birds, the reader also gets a commentary on the squatters in California. The author notes as he observes some new, unfamiliar birds:

Here in southern California, they have squatters – or, as they are sometimes contemptuously called, in allusion to their vagabondizing habits and wretched holes of tenements, “coyotes” – who stop on eligible lands for a season, in the hopes that someone will presently pay them a bonus to leave, rather than involve themselves in the pother of a lawsuit to oust them. (38)

He then compares the birds he sees to the permanent birds of California, or the “legitimate or lifelong settlers” (38). Hyacinth notes these birds make improvements on the land and pay their rent on time. As the story continues, the narrator points out the way the blue jay’s habits have changed since he began living in California and he now has “departed from his Eastern habits” (39). While the story is presented as an article on the habits of the various birds of California, it is more obviously about the benefits of immigration to California and a chance to make clear distinctions between squatters and what the author believes are legitimate settlers. *The Squatter and the Don* makes a similar distinction between the other squatters who destroy the land and have no respect for its rightful owners and the Darrells, who by marrying into the Alamar family, depart from their Eastern habits like the blue jays.

Perhaps the most obvious example of the domestic rhetoric of western expansion centered on California can be found in the October 1868 issue of the *Overland*. Understanding *The Squatter and the Don* as a direct response to this kind of rhetoric is obvious, but we can also see the work as a reply to specific articles Ruiz de Burton would



have encountered in the magazine. Besides the squatter versus Don story line and the romance plot between Mercedes and Clarence, anticipation of the Texas Pacific Railroad coming to nearby San Diego is also central to the plot. Even Don Alamar, who is losing his cattle and most of his land, still has the hope of regaining his fortune when the railroad comes. He uses his remaining assets to buy up as many city plots as he can in anticipation of being able to sell them for a major profit when the railroad is approved. Articles like October 1868's "What the Railroad will Bring Us" by Henry George lay the basis for this excitement about the railroad we see in the novel while they also point to the other issues at play in the novel. The article illustrates the connections between settlement, land grabs, and the railroads – the main plots in *The Squatter and the Don*. It is easy to imagine if Ruiz de Burton was already considering a story about this topic in 1860 how an article like this could help cement the plot and further illustrate the struggles her friends and family were experiencing in California while she was on the East coast. In his article, George contends the railroad "will not merely open a new route across the continent; it will be the means of conveying a wilderness into a populous empire" (297). The railroad will make travel between the East and the West faster and safer and in turn, make more settlement possible. The story takes place in 1872, but this article is what Ruiz de Burton is building on. It contains the history of land theft and the colonial mentality the Alamar family and others deal with and shows this cultural assault is still in full effect in 1872.

By 1872 when the novel is set, many Californios' lands were lost and parceled out. The ones that remained were banking on the railroad just like everyone else. "All over the state, land is appreciating – fortunes are being made in a day by buying and

parceling out Spanish ranches; the government surveyors and registrars are busy; speculators are grappling the public domain by the hundred of thousand of acres” (298). In *The Squatter and the Don*, despite the ongoing legal battles engulfing the town and its occupants, everyone is happy and anticipating the arrival of the railroad. When the city of San Diego plays host to Tom Scott who is looking things over for the railroad, San Diego “was happy, seeing a broad vista of coming prosperity in the near future” (122). Unfortunately, powerful men work to sway the government contracts, and the railroad does not come to San Diego. This defeat is the final blow for the Alamar fortune and Don Alamar dies a broken man – a clear reflection of another line from the railroad article, “And so the California of the future – the California of the new era – will be a better country for some classes than the California of the present; and so too, it will be a worse country for others” (301). The article goes on to say California would never want the cotton mills of Massachusetts with their child labor or the “thieves, loafers and brothel keepers of New York or the factories of England where “young girls are treated worse than even slaves on Southern plantations” (300) but seems to miss the point about the exploitation and brutality involved in industrializing and resettling California in America’s image. Finally, “What the Railroad Will Bring Us” also foreshadows more changes in domestic expectations for women in the remaining original homes in the area as well as in the new homes of the settlers and squatters: “This year we have received the first great wave of the coming tide of immigration, and the country has filled up more rapidly than for many years before, more new farms have been staked off and more land sold” (299). More farms equate to more women and more new domestic spaces.

These new homes are recreated in *Squatter*. While the Alamar house is well-established and the reader gets some in-depth descriptions of its design, much more time is spent on the actual construction of the Darrell home. Clarence tells his father, “I don’t know yet the price of every item, but don’t be alarmed, I am sure they would not go beyond the limit I gave Hubert [...] and I assure you, it will all be paid with our volunteer crop” (105). First, this line illustrates the capital coming into the state with these settlers and squatters. Second, we see these new inhabitants not only occupying the land but adding a domestic space with domestic comforts. In the case of the Darrells, they did pay for their land – a fact not disclosed to Mr. Darrell until later in the novel, but Mr. Darrell still came to the Alamar rancho with the intent to squat there. Also, within this short quote is a direct commentary on the growing focus on agriculture in the region. Clarence Darrell believes, because as an educated businessman he has also read all the literature and propaganda about California, that his crops, even those he is not actually planting that year but will come up on their own, will be abundant enough to pay for the new home he built. Almost every issue of the *Overland* well into the 1880s contains at least one article or story centered on the agricultural prospects in California, often serving as propaganda to ensure the continued immigration to the region.

J.S. Silver’s “Farming Facts for California Immigrants” from 1868 remarks “The courts have now settled most of the land titles, and a better class of farmers is fast taking the place of the earlier settlers” (176). The author notes that farming is becoming even more profitable and there is plenty of land and “ample room for large agricultural populations” (182). He goes on to boast that “great efforts are being made by organized societies to excite a rush of emigration to the farmlands of the state. In anticipation of

success, speculation runs high” (182). While arguing for large scale agriculture, Silver does have the foresight to suggest growing some crops native to the area like grapes and other fruits. While this article appears four years before the publication of *The Squatter and the Don*, the sentiments expressed are played out on the pages of Ruiz de Burton’s novel with squatters still rushing to take over the lands of the Californios and transition the region from ranching to agriculture. This is the very shift Don Alamar tries to prevent with his offer to the squatters on his land. If they focus primarily on cattle and grow small crops native to the area, everyone will profit, but if they invest in large scale agriculture, especially of grain and wheat, he fears all will be lost and they will all be those replaced by that better class of farmers. Finally, in his final burst of positive thinking, Silver discusses the drought of 1864 and believes new immigrant farmers have nothing to fear. He notes, “Since the advent of Americans, this calamity has happened so seldom that farmers do not reckon it seriously among the evil contingencies” (182). For Silver and countless others, Americans are so superior and so destined to take over the lands of California that Mother Nature herself would have no reason to get in their way.

While *The Squatter and the Don* focuses more on California as a new domestic region of the United States, to any new domestic region comes immigration and eventually families and Anglo women who look to spread their sense of domesticity to the new region. February 1883’s “Mrs. Johnson” by Millicent Washburn Shinn focuses on women’s roles in the family and makes a case for the superiority of East coast forms of domesticity. The story centers on Mrs. Johnson who works in Mrs. Adams’ home, which is always “kept up to the Vermont standard of neatness” (123). Mrs. Johnson works as a servant for Mrs. Adams, and immediately we are made aware that the two

women are not to be considered equal. While Mrs. Johnson keeps Mrs. Adams' home up to a high standard, her own home is not the same. We are left to conclude it is the well-off Mrs. Adams' influence that keeps the home in order. Mrs. Adams' house is so far off the "norm" that she cannot be expected to convalesce there after her latest round of surgery to remove a cancerous tumor. Mrs. Adams graciously allows Mrs. Johnson to stay in her home while she recovers. At the same time, Mrs. Johnson is painted in an admirable light. She is strong and fights off the cancer each time. Her husband lacks motivation and so she is often responsible for supporting her family by working out of the home. Of course, here again we see the dangers of working outside the home. Mrs. Johnson is unable to maintain her own domestic space because she repeatedly grows ill. This story seems to be one of the more straightforward and obvious nods to very traditional domestic roles and to the superiority of upper-class East coast domesticity – even at a time when roles for women outside the home were expanding. While Ruiz de Burton does not paint Anglo domesticity in a positive light in *Who Would Have Thought It?*, the women of the Darrell family in *The Squatter and the Don* fare much better. Mrs. Darrell seems to receive the best qualities of both Mrs. Adams and Mrs. Johnson. Mrs. Darrell has a proper sense of propriety and maintains an orderly and respectable home. At the same time, she refuses to enter a domestic space that has not been obtained fairly. Early in the novel she tells Mr. Darrell that she will not move to a new home on the Alamar rancho if the land is not obtained legally and correctly. On the other hand, we can also see similarities to Mrs. Johnson's domesticity. Often, Mrs. Darrell must make up for the mistakes of her husband, as in her directing her son Clarence to buy their land from the Alamars before they begin building a house. Also, often, Mrs. Darrell struggles to

keep the space of the home in order because of her husband. Her home is frequently invaded by his squatter business partners which disrupts the space. Finally, and this seems to be the most important to a sense of a new regional domesticity for California, Mrs. Darrell is open to other forms of domesticity and the combining of various forms. Her daughter marries into the Alamar family and her new daughter in law, Mercedes, comes from a strict Spanish Catholic upbringing in the Alamar home.

### **Conclusion**

The *Overland Monthly*, so integral to presenting and creating a new American view of California on both coasts, used regional writing and local color to popularize the region while also working to erase and remove the Spanish Mexican and indigenous people already in the region. Ruiz de Burton responds to this literary colonization with regional literature of her own. She creates works that seek to overturn the images of California being created and perpetuated by magazines like the *Overland Monthly* and she moves to counter the advancement of Anglo domesticity and domestic regionalism into the area. In *Who Would Have Thought It?* Ruiz de Burton takes direct aim at Yankee domesticity so popular in the *Overland* and other periodicals of the time and issues a warning of the domestic rhetoric invading the Southwest. She shows that Anglo women who believe their domesticity is superior to all others cannot even maintain a sense of decorum within their comfortable home spaces while Theresa Medina, displaced from her home in Mexico, is able to sustain her Spanish Catholic domesticity while being held captive on the frontier. With *The Squatter and the Don*, Ruiz continues her derision of Yankee domesticity by focusing on the land grabs that look to unsettle well-established Californio home spaces. Ruiz de Burton traces the destruction of Californio ways of life

and the cultures cultivated there and illustrates that the domestic rhetoric the *Overland* promoted moved into the region with dire consequences for those who called the region home. In both her novels, Ruiz de Burton rewrites the American colonization of California through the eyes of the Spanish Mexican families being forced out. In the process, she uses her regional domesticity – her place-based ability to adapt and respond to domestic demands – to argue for Spanish Mexican women as the true domestic ideal.

## Chapter 2

### **Motherhood, Collaboration, and Regional Domesticity in Native**

#### **Autobiography**

Beth Piatote writes in detail of how in the late nineteenth century, the battles against Indians moved from exercises of military force to a focus on the home. She notes, "The impaired domesticity of blacks, Indians, and lower-class white women served as the sites for middle-class white women to assert and claim public identities" (68). The U.S. thought it increasingly necessary to target Native homes, and often Anglo women led these initiatives. Piatote goes on to assert, "Indian economies, lands, kinship systems, languages, cultural practices, and family relations - in short, all that constituted the Indian home - became the primary site of struggle" (2). The U.S. government moved from indiscriminately killing men, women, and children in Indian villages and camps—spaces Piatote refers to as the "tribal-domestic homeland" (2)—to, as the nineteenth century drew closer to the end, a figurative assault on the "intimate domestic" (2) of Indian homes and families. The goal of taking Indians' lands remained the same, but now the U.S. focused on eliminating or assimilating Indian populations and belief systems through a cultural assault. Because the U.S. assigned women firmly to the space of the home and to the work of securing the domestic space, during the Assimilation era, Anglo women targeted Indian women in efforts to impart Anglo domestic values in Indian homes. The new focus on Indian women was not a means to place them on equal footing with their Anglo counterparts but a continued effort to confine them in designated spaces and in designated roles as the domesticated other. As Mona Domosh and Joni Seager point out, many felt, "If Native American women adopted Western ideals of femininity and



domesticity this salutary influence would ripple through Native American societies, creating more 'malleable' populations" (21). By appealing to Anglo women's sense of domestic duty, the U.S. hoped to indoctrinate Native women and eventually further contain Native populations.

With the battle moving from outside the home to inside, the type of resistance to the U.S.'s efforts also changed. Whereas before, men, and sometimes women, fought physical wars against encroaching settlers, traders, and the government, Native women were now often at the forefront of resistance; but the new form of battle originated in the domestic sphere. Sometimes resisting meant physically protecting the domestic space from outside forces. In the case of working from inside the home, the moves Native women made from within the domestic sphere often seem on the surface to be playing into typical Anglo-American gender stereotypes learned in boarding schools or from interactions with Anglo women. Native women did learn about Victorian ideals and the expectations of Anglo domesticity, but they also used that knowledge to speak back to colonization. In fact, Amanda Zink asserts that "Domestic educations introduced Indian girls to more than Euro-American housekeeping rituals; while learning to practice colonialist models of domesticity, Indian girls also learned to *write* about domesticity" (25). Learning the language of Anglo domesticity opened the door for literary collaborations with Anglo women. Native women learned both Anglo domesticity and the rhetorics of sentimental fiction and then used both to communicate in popular forms that functioned outside the home and could reach a large, mostly Anglo and often female audience. Zink notes that "For American Indian women writers who engage sentimental and domestic discourses, the goal is not to claim whiteness in a clash of colonial powers

but to survive whiteness in a settler colonial nation” (14). While Zink contends this clash results in sovereign domesticity, and she looks at national publications and the nationalizing project of American femininity and domesticity first, my approach charts a more local course. Regional domesticity uses the domestic space and domestic expectations to affect regional changes in the structures of settler colonialism while also preserving cultural traditions. For the women in this chapter, that regional domesticity often manifests itself through literary collaborations with Anglo women.

One result of Anglo women entering Native women’s homes and spaces was eventual collaboration on literary projects and speaking tours – both often focused in some way on educating other women about Native culture and Native struggles - especially as the demand for firsthand accounts of Native life grew. Usually, collaborative works by Native women centered on the domestic space and concepts of home and often on motherhood in particular. The women used cross-cultural communication and collaboration, and specifically autobiography for the writers in this chapter, to both preserve traditions but also to create new lines of understanding between Native and Anglo readers, especially women. Mark Rifkin notes in *The Erotics of Sovereignty* that the “histories of settler dispossession, exploitation, and attempted genocide and their ongoing effects and current trajectories are embedded in the dynamics of everyday life” (2). I argue the women in my study use writing about domesticity to do the same thing. For Native American women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, everyday life was often centered in domestic expectations. And while each tribal group had their own expectations about what “women’s work” entailed, these women were also learning to navigate Anglo domestic expectations in a settler colonial

society where everything is influenced by that coloniality. I assert that for Native women, domesticity functions as a space to articulate lived and felt experiences that are the results of living in a settler colonial society, and those conditions and responses are regionally based. Because the greater Southwest is itself a colonial construct, domesticity in the region is too. And, since the conditions of settler colonialism may differ from region to region and because of the specific interactions between groups, I conclude domesticity in the greater Southwest is also based in the region. Writing through the domestic space politicizes the space and provides meaning to the daily negotiations women of color in the Southwest make. Domesticity at its simplest is about preservation but also innovation. I assert that the women in this chapter, Sarah Winnemucca, Olive Oatman, and Helen Sekaquaptewa, use domestic-centered and regionally based autobiographies to give voice to their negotiations between the domestic expectations of both their own traditions and that of Anglo women. They also knew the best way to reach Anglo women, who could and would use their influence to help them reach a bigger audience, was through domestic-centered rhetoric. For Native writers in the greater Southwest, regional domesticity means using cross-cultural collaborations to gain access to systems of domestic power not previously open to them.

Arnold Krupat asserts there are two forms of Native autobiography. He defines Indian autobiographies as “bicultural composites in which the named Native subject’s story has been transcribed, arranged, edited, or otherwise constructed by a white collaborator or collaborators [...] Unlike the subjects of a great many earlier Indian autobiographies, all of these Native people spoke and read and wrote English so that each had substantial say as to the final text” (*Changed Forever 2*). Krupat affirms that “Indian

autobiographies are not a traditional form among Native peoples but the consequence of a contact with white invader-settlers, and the product of a limited collaboration with them” (*For Those* 31). For both Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa, there is collaboration with Anglo women, and both of their works are based at least in part on Anglo assumptions and expectations expressed by the Anglo women who helped write them. Cotera gives further insight into these kinds of collaborations. While discussing Jovita Gonzalez’s and Margaret Eimer’s collaboration on *Caballero*, María Cotera notes that their “bid to rewrite the past from a plural, cross-racial, and gendered perspective represents a key challenge to historical meaning making itself” (215). She goes on to assert that the women’s collaboration helps to “destabilize the dominant logic of historical mythmaking in Texas by offering a multi-perspectival vision of history” (215). Both Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa are using autobiography rather than fiction, and they are not writing about Texas, but their cross-cultural collaborations with Anglo women work to produce the same effect. While we do not know for sure how much Mary Mann edited Winnemucca’s text, we do know that the process of writing, even in autobiographies, is subjective. The writer remembers events in a particular way and may look to present the events in a certain way for an intended audience. At the same time, two different perspectives on the same issue may work to dislodge deeply ingrained myths. At best, cross-cultural collaboration can lead to greater equity in terms of race, gender, class, or sexuality. Even at the least, regional collaborations between women lead to new explorations of the space of the borders between homes, cultures, regions, and sovereign nations. In the case of Winnemucca, Sekaquaptewa, and Olive Oatman as well, writing from different perspectives helps to undercut long-held beliefs about Native women and their

domesticity. Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa recognize the importance of documenting their lives and the struggles of their tribes, and they understand that by talking about domesticity through culturally approved channels like autobiography, they can achieve success. Writing their lives, even through the lens of Anglo editors and co-writers, is an exercise in navigating the domestic demands of two cultures and functions as their regional domesticity, while the content of their works provides cogent examples of domestic resistance and resilience. As Zink remarks, “By the late nineteenth century, as writers such as Sarah Winnemucca and S. Alice Callahan show, domesticity and sentimentality were also *Native* literary modes” (226). Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa work from within this new literary tradition and successfully illustrate their regional domesticity by producing autobiographies that document and span both the removal and assimilation periods of U.S. Indian policy. By cultivating the connections they made to Anglo women through westward colonial expansion, Winnemucca, Sekaquaptewa and other Native women were able to document the histories, cultures, and continued needs of their tribes. At the same time, their stories offer lessons in domestic hybridity that come from constant contact and necessity. This sustained intersection of regional influences and women’s responses from within the domestic space create iterations of domesticity specific to the region from which it emerges.

Since the earliest days of westward expansion, Anglo women often functioned as self-appointed teachers and communicators with the Native people they encountered. Anglo women frequently carried preconceived notions about Native Americans – both male and female. Glenda Riley argues in her assessment of diaries and other correspondence of early Anglo women in the west and southwest that these early

perceptions often changed or became more complicated with increased interactions, noting:

Further complicating the apparent inconsistencies in women's views of western natives was the observable tendency of a number of them to begin to shift toward an increasingly generous interpretation of American Indians. [...] the women's own words demonstrate that many of them did replace their perception of American Indians as a combination of saint and savage with a view of the natives as human beings to be empathized with, perhaps even liked. (122)

Riley further argues that Anglo women's changing perceptions of Indians also related to their changing ideas about their own gender roles (122). Anglo women were pre-conditioned to see Native women in certain ways—as savage, inferior, and certainly lacking domesticity—but repeated contact with Native groups often made these women realize their pre-conceived notions were incorrect. At the same time, Anglo women were tied to expectations about their own domesticity. Interactions between Native and Anglo women helped to change perceptions of both. Anglo women learned Native languages and trading practices in order to bargain for the domestic goods they needed for their families, and as time went on, Anglo women began employing Native women as baby nurses – further solidifying collaboration and shared customs between Native and non-Native women. Riley notes, “Interestingly enough, many of the women who engaged American Indian nurses did not appear to object to them teaching the children native customs, dialects, food preferences, and games” (174). Anglo women gained intimate knowledge about Indian homes and families, and this knowledge helped change their

perceptions. This new-found awareness acquired by both Native and Anglo women would eventually lead to collaborations outside the home. Literary collaborations, while often co-opted by Anglo women for their own goals, were hugely influential in changing views on Native women and their domesticity. Sarah Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes: Their Wrongs and Claims* (1883) and Helen Sekaquaptewa's *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa* (1969) were published eighty-six years apart, but both provide a window into Native domesticities, while also illustrating the complexity of Native collaborations with Anglo women.

Siobhan Senier asserts "The era of assimilation also generated new opportunities for women to write and speak publicly – opportunities they seized with gusto" (ix). Anglo women expanded their roles as reformers and speakers, and "Indian women, some of whom had been forced to learn how to speak, read, and write in English in boarding schools as part of the assimilative effort, also capitalized on this wave of reform by recording their stories or relating them to others" (ix-x). This is the era Winnemucca is writing in, and these are the conditions she uses and responds to with her work and her speeches. *Life Among the Piutes* is a collaborative effort between a Native woman using the tools she was required to learn in boarding school and an Anglo woman bent on being a reformer and friend to the Indian. While Winnemucca represents an early case, Helen Sekaquaptewa's *Me and Mine* falls on the far end of the Assimilation era and was published well after. Still, her life was guided in many ways by the era of assimilation and hostilities between Anglos, and her Hopi beliefs directed many of the events in her life. Her collaboration with an Anglo woman, Mormon Louise Udall, is a product of early female collaboration efforts and is the result of forced assimilation. However, because of

the time period of Sekaquaptewa's story, we see how the early efforts of removal and assimilation Winnemucca describes in her work continued and evolved even into the mid-twentieth century. In both cases, Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa assert their regional domesticity by centering their stories in the greater Southwest, responding to conditions in the region, and maintaining forms of domesticity built of the region by using collaborations with Anglo women to create unique and important autobiographical pieces that work to preserve history while asserting Native domesticity and agency. Sarah Winnemucca's autobiography marked her regional domesticity with its nods to the conventions of the domestic-centered, sentimental novel, itself a type of romantic novel "directly involved in building American national identity" (Alemán 39), to speak out against the domestic containment and conquest of Native American women during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes* offers multiple examples of domestic resistance in all its forms: protecting family and culture within the home, providing wealth to ensure family security, educating children, and finally, using the domestic rhetoric of the time as a site of resistance. Sekaquatewa, though her book was written much later, uses similar techniques – also collaborating with an Anglo woman to document the history of the Hopis and the personal history of her family. Both stories are similar in that, like in many Native traditions, their works are interconnected to stories about the tribes and the connection is clear in how both works combine historical information with their own personal experiences. In both cases, what emerges are tales of strong women who used the space of the home, women's work, and



maybe most importantly, motherhood to ensure survivance and continuance for their families and their tribes.<sup>9</sup>

**Asserting Motherhood Through Autobiography: Collaboration as Regional Domesticity in Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes***

For Winnemucca, writing *Life Among the Piutes* serves as a chance to "counter some of the stereotypes of Native violence and demonstrate both the Paiutes' humanity and their vulnerability to white violence" (Kleist 80). Demonstrations of violence, especially within the domestic space, center firmly on the female characters in the work, and Winnemucca alludes to various cases of violence or the threat of violence against Native women. She seeks to "illuminate the particular burdens borne by Indian women, who found themselves on the front lines of defending home and family" (Piatote 11). While documenting the cause of Native women and the cruelty perpetrated against them, Winnemucca also offers up acts of resistance to such attacks by calling attention to instances of violence to win the sympathy and support of Anglo women – efforts that hold the promise of further bicultural collaboration. Winnemucca's work starts with her birth "somewhere near 1844" (5) and ends with her in the East in 1882, a time-period that moves from first contact between whites and the Paiutes through the Indian Removal Act of 1871 and finally into the early years of allotment and assimilation. Even with Winnemucca's mobility throughout the narrative and her life, Native women travelling throughout the country or working and acting as political liaisons were not the norm. As wards of the government, most Native women did not have the privileges of mobility their Anglo counterparts enjoyed. Winnemucca realizes the novelty of her position and

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<sup>9</sup> Regarding the term survivance, see Gerald Vizenor's *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance*, University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

uses her mobility -something she shared with more and more Anglo women in the late nineteenth century - and her ability to write from within the conventions of sentimental fiction as a bridge between two cultures.

As we know, Mary Mann edited Winnemucca's *Life Among the Piutes*, and the debate continues regarding how much influence Mann had in the final product. This oft quoted letter from Mary Mann offers perhaps the biggest clue:

I wish you could see her manuscript as a matter of curiosity. I don't think the English language has ever got such a treatment before. I have to refer to her sometimes to know what a word is, as spelling is an unknown quantity to her, as you mathematicians would express it. She often takes syllables off of words & adds them or rather prefixes them to other words, but the story is heart-breaking, and told with a simplicity & eloquence that cannot be described, for it is not high-faluting eloquence, tho' sometimes it lapses into verse (and quite poetical verse too). (qtd in Senier 93)

While from the letter we know Mann made many changes to the manuscript, the revisions may have been mostly cosmetic and are a product of Winnemucca's recollections first and foremost. Senier asserts, "What we must say, rather, is that the text was created by two cultures and two people – if not by Mann and Winnemucca equally, then certainly by Winnemucca with Mann's help, and by Winnemucca with an acute consciousness of what women like Mann would have expected" (95). In any interpretation, the work is the product of a bicultural collaboration between two women with very specific goals and a certain target audience in mind.

While *Life Among the Piutes* is considered an autobiography and works under that basic premise with Winnemucca functioning as an active participant and agent of change in the action of the story, the text also functions as a definite nod to the popular sentimental fiction form – a mode Winnemucca and Mann found familiar and appealing to Winnemucca’s Anglo audience. By using actual events from her life while following the tenants of sentimental fiction, Winnemucca places herself as a real-life sentimental hero. Discussing the use of sentimental fiction, Zink notes, “Native sentimental writing repurposes domesticity in ways that white reformers and educators could not have seen coming: claiming Indian women’s power to educate white women in the superior methods of Native domesticity and crafting a sovereign domesticity” (230). Winnemucca uses the tropes of sentimental fiction to provide this education while still maintaining some mystery about Paiute women’s life ways. At the same time, she works to connect with her readers through the conventions of the sentimental novel, often addressing her readers as “dear reader” or “oh dear friends.” Sentimental fiction tied all the elements of the domestic space together, and its familiar and nationalistic tropes appealed to the women in charge of these middle-class, Anglo domestic spaces. It often featured a young girl protagonist and was frequently used by nineteenth-century women writers to shed light on social issues. Winnemucca’s text works through these conventions to reach a large, middle class female audience in the hopes of bringing more attention to the plight of her people; and her ability to adapt her life story to the tenets of sentimental fiction speaks to using literature as regional domesticity. She tailors the literary form she chose to fit her cause and her life while also responding to the expectations of the dominant culture. The result is a hybrid form of literature and a hybrid form of domesticity.

Winnemucca uses the conventions and popularity of the sentimental novel as an opportunity to voice her complaints against the U.S. government, and in the process, provides a veiled yet undeniable assertion of the power, strength, and superior domesticity of Paiute women.

Winnemucca uses the concept of domesticity and the popularity of the sentimental novel genre to speak out against the very themes of settlement and expansion that made the genre so popular. While westward expansion positions Winnemucca to go on dangerous missions on her own, live among soldiers, and work as interpreter for both the Army and Indian agents, she also acknowledges Anglo expectations of the time and reinforces the role of ideal, Anglo-centric womanhood stating that she “is powerless, being a woman” (139). She works throughout the text to point to the superior domesticity of Paiute women. She later notes that when they encounter a man along the road, he will know they are not Bannocks because “Bannock women do not ride sideways, nor do they wear riding-dresses” (152) as Winnemucca does. She firmly asserts Paiute women can easily meet, and probably surpass, the dictates of Anglo domesticity while she suggests that other Native women might not meet the same criteria.

Women and views of women, both Paiute and Anglo, play an integral role in the text. While Winnemucca portrays a handful of Anglo women as caring and nurturing (i.e. the woman who gives her cake and then helps to nurse her back to health), she also works to assure the reader that the domestic space of Anglo-American women does not always nurture or protect all women as national narratives and sentimental fiction would have the reader believe. She carefully illustrates that settler colonialism leaves Native women in constant danger. She then provides examples of womanhood from her own life—working

to reinforce her argument that Native women are good mothers who use domestic resistance to protect their families. Winnemucca talks of an encounter she had when she stopped for food on her way to Camp Haney. As “another enemy of mine” (168) comes in with coffee, this woman remarks, “Well I never thought I should feed you again. I hope they will not let you off this time” (168). Winnemucca’s enemy goes on to tell the lieutenant, “Why don’t you take her and tie one part of her to a horse, and the other part of her to another horse, and let them go? I would see the horses pull her to pieces with good grace” (168). After this grisly description, Winnemucca speaks directly to her readers, notably Anglo women on the East coast, and reminds them, “Dear reader, this is the kind of white women that are in the West” (168)—a direct contradiction to the usual portrayals of Anglo women in the East. Winnemucca's comment works to illustrate the constant threat she and other Native women endured and that often the biggest threat came from Anglo women and mothers firmly within the domestic space of the western frontier. Domesticity in the greater Southwest was used as a means of controlling Native women and rarely as an opportunity to place them on equal footing with their Anglo neighbors. Winnemucca points out this reality in her work while seemingly to acknowledge the need for cross-cultural collaborations with Anglo women to improve material conditions for Paiute women and other Native women. Shining a light on the dangers Anglo women posed to all Native women runs counter to justifications of Manifest Destiny's domesticating mission and shows men were not the only threat to Native women; Anglo women, especially in the West, posed a similar threat. Later in the work, Winnemucca offers another commentary of Anglo women in the West. She speaks to their hypocrisy, remarking of an Indian agent’s wife that she carried what looked like a

Bible but was in fact a pack of cards, and this woman “would sit and play cards with men, and every evening, too” (223). Winnemucca understands the true goals of teaching Anglo domesticity to Native women. In most cases, the mission has nothing to do with equality or inclusion but works as another form of erasure.

As *Life Among the Piutes* progresses, Winnemucca provides examples of herself in the role of mother; connecting her life to the domestic space and further paralleling the usual premises of a sentimental novel, even when she does not occupy a traditional domestic space. In the first instance, U.S. troops find a baby after a battle against another tribe. Winnemucca asks for condensed milk for the child and tells one of the other Indian women “how to fix it” (180) for the baby. Not only is Winnemucca doing the domestic work of caring for an infant, but she also teaches others in the domestic space how to care for the Native child. Later in the work, the soldiers refer to the child as Winnemucca’s baby. As the story continues, Winnemucca alludes to herself as “mother” of her tribe, and the rest of the Paiutes are often referred to as “dear children” (192), further reinforcing the idea of motherhood, the domestic sphere, and domestic resistance. Her father remarks, “Now hereafter we will look to her as our chieftain, for none of us are worthy of being chief but her” (193). With these words, Winnemucca’s father places Winnemucca in the role of protector, but as their people are often referred to as children, he also places her in the role of mother. She says to tell her people, “I, their mother, say come back to their homes again” (182), further solidifying her role as not only mother, but protector of her “children’s” homes and the domestic space.

The strongest portrayal of motherhood, however, centers on Winnemucca’s depiction of her own mother. When Anglo men first come to their village, Winnemucca's

mother and aunt bury their daughters to keep them from being "killed and eaten up" (11). Through the domestic space, Winnemucca's mother first teaches her daughters that while their grandfather may trust the white men, she does not, and second, she provides safety and protection for her daughters in their domestic space. While the men frighten Winnemucca, "thinking every minute that I was to be unburied and eaten up by the people my grandfather loved so much" (12), her mother works to save her home and family and does not trust the white men coming through their camps. Later, Winnemucca comments on her mother's strength and her well-founded ideas about the white men who surround them. Winnemucca's brother relays a message from the men to Winnemucca's mother stating, "You and sister are to wash dishes and learn all kinds of work. We are to stay here all the time and sleep upstairs" (36). The men contain Winnemucca's family within the Anglo domestic space, and they will still be under constant threat from the men. In response, her mother laments, "I cannot see for my life why my father calls them his white brothers. They are not my people; they have no thought, no mind, no love. They are beasts, or they would know I, a lone woman, am here with them. They tried to take my girl from me and abuse her before my eyes" (37). With her words, Winnemucca's mother speaks out against containment and violence within the domestic space, and at the same time, she instructs her daughters on what to expect of Anglo men. By including this instance, Winnemucca also reinforces her role as the young heroine navigating through a world of immoral people. With her actions through an enforced domestic space, Winnemucca's mother eventually wins out and the men allow the family to leave. Winnemucca's depictions of these occurrences solidify her representations of the Paiutes, and Paiute women in particular, as morally superior to the Anglo men constantly

threatening Native women. She offers a critique of the process of moving Native Americans into the fold through threat and force, while also showing Native women may be closer to the ideal of republican motherhood than Anglo women.

Not only were Native women contained within specific parameters, locations, and roles, but they often found themselves physically confined and contained. Winnemucca details numerous, specific examples of Paiute women being trapped and the ways these women worked against a forced confinement. Native women remained locked in a system that compared them to and placed them under the Anglo feminine ideal—as illustrated by Piatote's concept of tiered maternalism (12). Unfortunately, this ideal could rarely be attained. Still Winnemucca illustrates the ways her mother exceeds the Anglo feminine ideal through her efforts to defend her family. Finding herself, her mother, and her sister imprisoned in a house with no outlet early in the work provides one of the more chilling episodes of containment and the threat of conquest. At the same time, the account also illustrates Winnemucca's adept use of the tenants of sentimental fiction.

Winnemucca tells of her grandfather leaving her family under the care of two white settlers, Scott and Bonsal. Winnemucca's mother immediately senses the danger they are in and worries that her "children might get sick, and there would be no one to speak for us; *or something else might happen*" (33-34 Emphasis added), leaving the reader with space to consider what that something else might be. Winnemucca's habit of only implying gendered violence falls directly in line with the characteristic use of ellipses in sentimental fiction to lead the reader to the conclusion without having to make a direct reference to it. Winnemucca's use of actual and implied ellipses offers her middle-class women readers the conventions they are familiar with while also leaving a clear message



about the safety of Native women, and the effect is powerful. Winnemucca's grandfather, always sure his white brothers will be true to their words, assures the women that they will be safe and insists that the girls stay and “learn to work and cook” (34), further reinforcing white feminine ideals on Paiute women while placing them firmly within a threatening domestic space, but Winnemucca’s mother knows better. Soon, Winnemucca’s mother’s fears prove valid, and the men “would come into camp and ask my mother to give our sister to them. They would come in at night, and we would all scream and cry” (34). To stave off the men, the women along with Winnemucca’s uncles, leave the camp each night to hide in the woods—captives in more than one sense. Just as Stephanie Li ties mothering and family protection to domestic resistance in Silko’s *Gardens in the Dunes*, so does Winnemucca. Winnemucca's mother knows her family is in danger and works to defend her children and the rest of her family in and through an unsafe domestic space. While Winnemucca’s uncles are with them at the time, they are powerless because of the threat of being shot, so the acts of resistance – protecting the family and ensuring the children understand the threat – center on Winnemucca’s mother. Winnemucca and her family understand they are captives to the will of Scott and Bonsal and are held within this domestic space because first, they are alone in a strange land and there is “no one to speak for us” (33) and second, because the domesticating mission of the U.S. placed them there. Winnemucca’s mother's comment demonstrates Native women's roles, and particularly Winnemucca's role, in speaking for their families and protecting the domestic space. While protecting one’s family comes naturally to most, placing this role squarely on the shoulders of women and mothers makes the acts specifically domestic resistance.

*Life Among the Piutes* takes another chilling turn when the white men come into the camp one evening as the group is trying to leave. Winnemucca, or her Anglo editor, again nods to sentimental conventions and omits much of the story at this point and only telling the reader that she woke up in a boarding house with her sister upset and crying. As Winnemucca and her mother and sister try to leave the boarding house, her sister tells them, "There is no outlet to the house. We can't get out" (35). The reader can only assume her sister has firsthand, prior experience with the house, and the implications of this statement are significant. Without speaking about the incident directly, Winnemucca paints a vivid picture of the constant threats of containment and sexual violence facing Native women in the region both within and outside the domestic space. According to Brigitte Georgi- Findlay, "What is negotiated in her representation of Indian-white relations is not only the issue of the dispossession of tribal land . . . but also the outrageous issues of sexual violence and miscegenation revealed in the violation of native women's bodies by white men" (229). By writing about sexual violence in an acceptable form and showing how the women fought against this constant threat, Winnemucca resists this default fate for Native women in life and in sentimental fiction and turns the trope of the sexualized Indigenous woman around and places the blame fully on the Anglo men. By directing her work to women, Winnemucca seeks an audience that identifies with the threat but also one who wields the power to influence Anglo men in their homes. With Anglo women as keepers of the domestic space and in charge of raising good citizens, making them aware of the violence perpetrated against Native women might change what they teach in Anglo homes. Winnemucca documents acts of domestic resistance in Native spaces to foster domestic resistance in Anglo homes. To

further her point, later in her work Winnemucca writes about two young girls who went out gathering roots and did not return. Several days later, the Paiutes find the girls at the house of two traders – hidden in a cellar and “lying on a little bed with their mouths tied up with rags” (71). She notes of the girls that when the “people saw their condition, they at once killed both brothers and set fire to the house” (71). Winnemucca again asks us to read between the lines, but the effect is incredibly powerful. She works to expose the ways Native women and children were under constant threat from white male settlers and traders and illustrates the darker side of Manifest Destiny and the U.S. domesticating mission. In documenting the burning of the house, Winnemucca literally and figuratively destroys the unsafe Anglo domestic space.

By confining them to reservations with little to no legal recourse, the U.S. contained Native Americans within the nation and continued to view them as a source of wealth. With their efforts to ignore and sidestep Winnemucca's efforts to speak for the Paiutes, the U.S. was able to successfully continue to take Paiute lands and destroy their culture. On a local scale, Native tribes lived on reservations that only grew smaller as more and more settlers wanted the land. After a forced migration through snow in which many people die, the Paiutes end up trapped on the Yakima Reservation in Washington Territory, far from their original homelands. They are treated unfairly by the Indian agent, who insists they pay for the provisions they are entitled to, and they are starving. The U.S. and its policies force the Paiutes to remain trapped on worthless land and to continue to starve while the Indian agent makes money off the provisions intended for them. All was in the interest of land, and the people who already occupied the land had to be removed or absorbed into the domestic fold by whatever means necessary.

Winnemucca works against the Paiutes' containment by making public—by repurposing the conventions of the sentimental novel—the ways the U.S. government continues to wrong the Paiutes and other Native groups.

### **Olive Oatman's Early Regional Domesticity and Collaboration**

Olive Oatman's story provides a unique early look at changing attitudes about Native women from within the space of Mohave domesticity while bringing the effects of Indian removal and settler expansion to the forefront. Olive Oatman's experiences provide another moment of bicultural collaboration in that her story provides an Anglo perspective on Native domesticity and the effects of Indian removal from within the space of the Indian home. While most collaborations center on Native women and Anglo editors with no real sense of life from the other side, Oatman did experience tribal life and the effects of settler colonialism firsthand. Oatman's autobiography combines all the elements Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa encounter in their own ventures into bicultural collaboration and autobiography, but Olive is not Native; and she must also work against the powerful motives of her male editor, Royal Stratton. By living with the Mohaves and actively participating in the domestic rituals of the tribe, Oatman experiences an early form of bicultural cooperation that she eventually uses to write her story and make her speaking tours possible. On the other hand, Olive's story helps to corroborate what Native women are writing about at the time when Native women were rarely viewed with any sense of domesticity, or in many cases, humanity. We often need to read between the lines to find Oatman's words in a sea of propaganda put forth by Stratton and her own motives are not always clear either, but Oatman's story provides useful information about

early misconceptions about Native women and domesticity while working as a precursor to the collaborative work Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa do in much more direct ways.

Originally titled *Life Among the Indians* (1857) in the first edition and renamed *The Captivity of the Oatman Girls among the Apache and Mohave Indians* in subsequent editions, the story focuses on Olive Oatman's time with the Yavapai and Mohave Indians after her family was killed and she and her younger sister were taken as captives. The girls lived with the Yavapais for about a year before the Mohaves traded for them. By all indications, Olive and Mary Ann were incorporated into the Mohave tribe and treated as family and full members, and not as slaves as Olive and Stratton later suggested. Mary Ann eventually died of starvation during a drought, and five years after she was taken, Olive was returned to Fort Yuma. Olive and her brother Lorenzo were reunited, and they met Royal B. Stratton, a Methodist preacher who encouraged them to tell their stories and publish them.

Though Olive Oatman never directly mentions being fully integrated into the Mohave tribe, clues from her interviews, her narrative with Stratton, and her tattoos point to it. While Oatman needed to be careful to maintain a sense of propriety and proper Anglo womanhood after her return, especially in light of her tattoos, she produces her regional domesticity by using the popular literature of the time to provide insight into the daily lives of Mohave women in ways that Anglo women will recognize and understand. The mentions of domesticity work against the other, often racist portrayals of Natives that run rampant through the narrative. Olive's documented assertions of Native domesticity speak to the Anglo women in her audience and give them a way to identify with Native women, in this case specifically Mohave women. Through the lens of domesticity and

motherhood, Olive Oatman portrays her adopted family in a positive light when forced assimilation and removal were imminent – conditions which take center stage in Winnemucca’s and Sekaquaptewa’s work. While her narrative is heavily edited by Royal B. Stratton for his own purposes, a closer analysis of the portrayals of Mohave domesticity and motherhood in the novel point to a much more complex and useful narrative as it seeks to confirm Native domesticities to an early nineteenth-century audience; perhaps setting the stage for Winnemucca’s own story and speaking tour.

When Olive’s story was written, Indian removal was in full swing, and much of this removal depended on the ideal that Indians were savages with few redeemable qualities. Native women were often not viewed in terms of domesticity at all. But, Olive’s recollections of her time spent with the Mohaves can point to her understanding of the domesticity of Native women and to her own sense of domesticity. While Winnemucca’s and Sekaquaptewa’s autobiographies are based on navigating domestic expectations placed on them by Anglo society, Olive’s tale switches the narrative and offers a look at an Anglo woman being forced into Native domesticity and then thrown back under the scrutiny of Anglo women’s eyes. Olive begins her description of her time with the Mohaves with a detailed account of the valley where the Mohaves live. Mary Ann says, “Here, Olive is the place where they live. Oh isn’t it a beautiful valley? It seems to me I should like to live here” (117) to which Olive remarks that perhaps Mary Ann “will not want to go back to the whites any more” (117). We of course do not know that this was Mary Ann’s sentiment, since she died of starvation along with many Mohaves, but this positive outlook on the Mohave space seems too flattering for Stratton’s mission and is likely to be Olive’s own thoughts about the Mohave village. The

description of the valley provides a safe way for Olive to express her love and maybe nostalgia for a place – a place she eventually called home. The narrative then goes into a description of the Mohave home, or in this case, the chief’s residence. Olive notes, “We entered the enclosure through a door” (118), which immediately signals a home. Margot Mifflin notes Olive “lived with a tribe in which women enjoyed a greater degree of physical, sexual, and domestic freedom than white women in America, as well as higher social status in regard to men, even by Native American standards, but in her lectures, she encouraged women to enjoy their homes and be glad they didn’t live as she had” (4). Perhaps the home she is referring to is not the covered wagon she was taken from—she had no other real home when she was abducted by the Yavapais—but the Mohave village she was compelled to leave; and the life she was forced to live is not her time with the Mohaves but her time back among Anglo society as a social and literary curiosity.

While much of the story contains malicious views and assumptions about Natives in general, there are fewer negative images and reactions to the Native women and the home. Those recollections feel more like a woman’s voice and perspective. I assert these parts were less filtered or policed by Stratton because they were of much less interest to him. The descriptions of the Native home and domesticity provide opportunities for Olive to document the Mohave domesticity she saw and participated in, just as Winnemucca and Sekaquaptewa both used motherhood and domestic spaces in their own works. In the *Los Angeles Star* account, originally printed on April 19, 1856, Olive says they were treated very well and were taken into Espanesay’s family; they were given food and blankets and could do as they pleased; and they were allotted lands and seeds to grow their own food. Some of this information appears in Olive and Stratton’s published

account. We read that “the chief’s wife gave us some seed grain – corn and wheat, showed us about thirty feet square of ground marked off upon which we might plant it and raise something for ourselves” (136), but there is no emphasis in the narrative about the girls’ freedom within the tribe. We can infer this freedom though with a careful analysis of the descriptions of the Mohave domestic space and the women of the tribe.

As the narrative progresses, we see more of Olive’s integration into the tribe and of her Mohave domesticity. At one point she remarks, “The hours of plying our fingers (not sewing) in the ground flew quickly by” (136-137). This sentiment seems benign or even random, but when we look at it more deeply, we see a dig at Anglo domesticity. What signals Anglo domesticity more than sewing for the family? Here Olive seems to make a clear statement that there are other kinds of work far more preferential than hours indoors sewing, and perhaps the demands of Mohave domesticity are preferred to those of Anglo domesticity. Olive goes on to note of her time with the Mohaves, “There were some few for whom I began to feel a degree of attachment” (167) and “I saw but little reason to expect anything else than the spending of my years among them” (167). Olive appears content with her lot. She writes, “Up to the middle of February, 1856, nothing occurred connected with my allotment that would be of interest to the reader. Only one day I was grinding musquite and near the door of our dwelling” (170). Olive’s life is going on as usual. She is fully engaged in Mohave domestic activity and is part of the tribe. Of course, her complete integration into Mohave domesticity also signals the time for her departure. She notes, “A lad came running up to me in haste and said that Francisco, a Yuma crier, was on his way to the Mohaves, and that he was coming to try



and get me away to the whites” (170). It is not long after that Olive arrives at Fort Yuma and is soon reunited with her brother, Lorenzo. It is then that her public life begins.

Oatman provides useful examples about how domesticity was portrayed, and with Anglo encroachment intensifying, why documenting Native domesticity could be so vital. At the same time, we see how Native stories were often co-opted by Anglo editors with their own agendas and the steps Native women needed to take to make sure their stories rang true. While Oatman’s story and others show Native women’s early domestic collaborations with Anglo women could provide benefits, soon both Native and Anglo women realized the importance of literary collaborations, and they became a logical next step. Both Native and Anglo women came to understand the importance of domesticity as a means of education and persuasion that could be used to bring attention to Native women and the needs of their families. Finally, Anglo women had access to media outlets and social networks that could help facilitate Native women telling their stories to an audience of women, and men, who would be interested in what they had to say.

### **Preservation, Hybridity, and Collaboration as Regional Domesticity in Helen Sekaquaptewa’s *Me and Mine***

Helen Sekaquaptewa’s *Me and Mine* falls under Krupat’s autobiographies-by-Indians category. Krupat notes that “‘as told to’ autobiographies of Indians which have appeared in the twentieth century among autobiographies by Indians rather than Indian autobiographies because their subject’s competence in written English allows them to take responsibility for the form of the work” (*For Those* 31). At the same time, the fact that Sekaquaptewa collaborated with an Anglo woman on the project lends itself to María

Cotera's notion of collaborations challenging historical meaning.<sup>10</sup> Regardless of the many negotiations necessary between writers working together on the borders of two cultures, collaborations change how we see and know history – whether that is for the better or the worse; and Sekaquaptewa's story provides an inside look to Hopi history both during and after the assimilation period and through the lens of a Native writer and Anglo editor. Helen Sekaquaptewa's autobiography, *Me and Mine*, although published in 1969, focuses on many of the same themes and occurrences as *Life Among the Piutes* and Oatman's *Captivity*. We still see Indian removal and containment, and the emphasis remains on women's experiences, but because the story begins with Sekuaptewa's birth in 1898 and Winnemucca's story ends in the early 1880s, Sekaquaptewa's *Me and Mine* can act as a look at the end results of many of the policies Winnemucca and Oatman document in their works. Sekaquaptewa's Hopis experienced displacement after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and were subject to the same removal and assimilation policies at the Paiutes. The changes affected relations among the members of the tribe and forced Sekaquaptewa and other young Hopis into boarding schools. Sekaquaptewa illustrates the internal and external strife brought on by encroachment while keeping the focus on her family's experiences. Bataille and Sands assert:

Sekuaptewa recalls that it was she who set up the sequence of the narrative, which is not completely chronological, and the controlling premise, to tell only about her own experiences—leading to the very personal title of the book. She did not want to discuss Hopi life in general

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<sup>10</sup> See Cotera's *Native Speakers: Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston, Jovita González, and the Poetics of Culture*. Cotera is referring to the collaboration between Margaret Eimer and Jovita González in *Caballero*, but the premise works here as well.

or anyone else's experiences because she did not want to be criticized for being too outspoken on Hopi ways. (100)

Sekaquaptewa's approach is not the same as Winnemucca's, but she remains focused on women's roles in the Native home and re-conceptions of that home. As Jane Simonsen points out, Anglo women entering Native spaces often found "home consisting of community bonds, tribal histories, and tribal intimacies that ran counter to tidy notions of patriarchal family homesteads" (2). Anglo women learned home could be a complicated concept instead of an actual physical address or a cultural ideal versus an actual place. On the opposite side, Native women who went away to boarding schools quickly realized Anglo domesticity viewed the home as a much more concrete thing with very specific expectations for women's roles in the space. Sekaquaptewa's bicultural collaboration with Louise Udall works through these clashing concepts just as Sekaquaptewa works through them in her life. The result is a literary work illustrating the complex systems of hybrid, regional domesticities in the greater Southwest. Sekaquaptewa is not so much protecting Native women within a stifling or dangerous enforced domestic space like Winnemucca but instead preserving Hopi traditions while creating new ones for her Hopi family within a hybrid domestic space she forms from her experiences from within Assimilation era policies. The story centers around conceptions of home – both formations purely Hopi and hybrid ideals of home that were the results of westward expansion and colonial contact.

*Me and Mine* is an "as told to" story and as noted is another example of cross-cultural collaboration between a Native writer and an Anglo editor. As the introductory page of the novel notes in "How the Story Came to Be Written," Sekaquaptewa and

Louise Udall became friends on their weekly drives to the Maricopa Reservation for their Mormon Relief Society meetings with the Maricopa Indians. Their collaboration is rooted in place and in the unique demands of the region they both call home. Udall suggested to Sekaquaptewa: “Write the story of your life for your children and grandchildren” (ix) and Udall began writing down the stories as Helen told them to her. We know that the shared nature of this experience would obviously have an effect on how Sekaquaptewa presented the information to Udall and on how Udall and an Anglo audience would understand the material. Bataille and Sands relay the story of the works development:

Helen herself edited the recorded materials as they were completed, changing phrasing that didn't sound like her own, making additions and clarifying passages. [...]She notes with some amusement that it came to her then that she probably could have written the whole thing herself, but quickly confirms that her relationship with Udall and the editor's help, as well, were invaluable in developing a coherent and polished narrative.

(100)

Sekaquaptewa seems to confirm the centrality of Udall's work with the project and the necessity of having someone to make the narrative “coherent.” We can assume Udall is polishing the narrative for an Anglo audience who might be unclear on some of the key aspects of the text. Udall serves as a translator and works to make the autobiography clear. At the same time, the need for clarity for an Anglo audience likely influenced how Sekaquaptewa told the story in the first place.

From the first words of Sekaquaptewa's story, the reader understands this work will focus on not just the interior spaces of the home, but also on notions of homeland.

The narrative opens with “My homeland is the arid, sandy, plateau country of northeastern Arizona, where dwell the Hopi people in eleven villages” (3). Sekaquaptewa starts her life story with the importance of being rooted in a place. From the beginning, her approach is regional, and her story is tied to the specific geographical features of that region. On the other hand, Winnemucca’s work begins with “I was born somewhere near 1844, but I am not sure of the precise time. I was very small the first time white people came into our country” (5), indicating her interactions with white people are central to her story; reinforced by her use domestic novel conventions to reach her audience. Sekaquaptewa next gives a few specifics about Hopi culture, like the importance of getting up before the sun and the role of kachinas in the Hopi creation story. Quickly though, Sekaquaptewa moves to a more domestic-centered approach, introducing her mother and then describing her home and her routine when she was a child. She notes that she learned about life by imitating her elders, often her female elders. She recalls, “My mother seemed to be grinding corn most of the time. Little girls all over the village played at grinding corn. When I was about five years old my mother put me on a real grinding stone alongside her, with a few kernels of corn, and let me grind a little while” (7). Early on, traditional Hopi domestic practices and the importance of women’s roles within the community are front and center in the narrative.

Very soon in the story, outside forces are introduced and traditional life begins to change for Sekaquaptewa. Because her family belonged to the “Hostile” faction of the Hopis, or those who were hostile to assimilation, Sekaquaptewa and other Hostile children are the first targeted for government schools. In a story reminiscent of Winnemucca’s mother concealing her from the white men, the Hopi mothers find various

ways to hide their children from the school principal because “for once you were caught, you had lost the game” (9). Sekaquaptewa talks about hiding the smaller children in rabbit blankets suspended from the rafters or concealing herself and her brother in her mother’s small piki cupboard. While these stories are told in a light-hearted manner in *Me and Mine*, their significance is not lost. Sekaquaptewa makes the reader painfully aware of the ways settler colonialism affects children and the great lengths Native mothers go to in order to protect their children. For a young Sekaquaptewa, Hopi life changed quickly, and everyone was affected; and as Hostiles, Sekaquaptewa’s family paid for their resistance to these changes.

Sekaquaptewa’s accounts of her time in various schools are central to her story, and her education had a significant effect on her life and her domesticity. Once she is finally “caught” and sent to the local day school, her traditional upbringing is immediately challenged. She is given “cotton underwear, cotton dresses, and long black stockings and heavy shoes” (12), which children wore home, but Sekaquaptewa’s mother always made her take them off immediately. In an even bigger step towards the government’s goal of assimilation, she is assigned the name Helen. Soon, the Hopi split between Friendlies and Hostiles takes center stage. The original debate was over contact with people from the outside, namely the U.S. government. As apparent from the names, “Friendlies” were friendly towards the government and willing to make some concessions and changes while the “Hostiles” were hostile to the government and other outside intrusion. As a Hostile, Sekaquaptewa remembers she was picked on by the children of the Friendlies and those experiences stuck with her. She notes, “I liked school. It was pleasant and warm inside. I liked to wear the clothes they gave us at

school; but when I learned that the kids were ‘hostile’ to us, I didn’t want to go to school” (14). While Sekaquaptewa was open to outside influences, namely school, – her first real break from the traditional Hopi home - her family was not, and soon the contentious battle came to a head. The feud culminated with Helen’s family and the other Hostiles forcibly removed from their village by the Friendlies. As further punishment, the young men considered potential leaders of the Hostiles were sent to Carlisle Indian School for five years and the older men, including Sekaquaptewa’s father, received one-year prison sentences. A few weeks later, as another layer of punishment, officials ordered the Hostile children to school at Keams Canyon; and Sekaquaptewa begins her experiences with Indian boarding schools.

Sekaquaptewa’s recounting of her time in boarding schools is similar to other Native childrens’ boarding school experiences. She talks about her first night there and how she had “never seen so much light at night” (92) and notes that for the first few days they “were all curious about our new surroundings. We thought it was wonderful and didn’t think much about home” (93) but soon, they are homesick and all crying for home. The Hostile label still played a significant role as well, and Sekaquaptewa notes that the Friendlies often tormented them and made fun of them. Soon after, Helen and some of the other girls notice prisoners walking by the school and realize they are their fathers on work detail. She remembers, “What a thrill as one little girl after another recognized her father and pressed against the fence, calling out to him” (96). Including this story serves various purposes. Sekaquaptewa is able to capture the importance of family and the strong connections to family while also casually marking the injustices her family faced for not wanting to assimilate. She next includes a letter from a wife of one of the

prisoners stating that her husband planted corn but was sent away to prison, so he is not there to harvest it and now she is living on charity from others in the village. She laments that now it will be another year before they can grow corn again. Sekaquaptewa does not make this declaration herself, but instead includes it as a letter from another woman to show the wide-reaching effects of domestic policy on Hopi women, men, and children.

While for the most part, Sekaquaptewa's story is upbeat and positive, even in the face of adversity, but at times, Sekaquaptewa does talk about some of the darker parts of boarding schools and makes her position on these actions clear. In an almost matter of fact way—possibly because it was so commonplace—she introduces the topic of abuse. While she notes most of her teachers were women, there were a few men. One of those men had a habit of fondling the girls when he called them to his desk to read. In the troubling passage, she notes that “Some of the girls seemed to like it. They laughed, and neither teacher nor pupil paid any attention the reading” (106). However, she is quick to note that when her time to read came and the teacher made advances towards her, she “screamed and screamed and didn't stop until he let me go” (106). Similar to Winnemucca, Sekaquaptewa places herself as a Native woman in an active role of protecting Native womanhood from Anglo violence. Sekaquaptewa mentions other acts of abuse at the boarding school, including the time she was hit on the ear by a teacher for not knowing an answer. She recalls that she lost hearing in the ear for quite some time. At other times, she mentions the isolation and the hunger, noting that when she first arrived, the older children often got most of the food and she and the other younger children often went to bed hungry. While her narrative does not focus solely on her experiences in



boarding school, her experiences there are integral to the hybrid domesticity she asserts as an adult.

Education is very important to Sekaquaptewa, and she uses the knowledge and instruction she learns in the various schools she attends to create a space for her family where they keep Hopi traditions alive while integrating other approaches both she and her husband Emory learned in boarding schools. Winnemucca does not talk much about her education, but we know she was educated in Anglo schools. Her story is much more about being a woman in contested spaces and her active participation in protecting her tribe. Sekaquaptewa's approach is more narrowed; focusing more on her education and her efforts to protect and provide for her family first, and for other Hopis second.

Sekaquaptewa comes to love school and notes that she was a very good student. She was often put in charge of projects and the teachers trusted her with numerous other chores and errands. Sekaquaptewa recalls, "I enjoyed school and was eager to learn. I was a good reader and got good grades. The teachers favored me and whenever visitors came they always called on me to recite. I was not the most popular girl in school and my ability did not help me socially, it made the others jealous" (125). Her relative unpopularity among other Hopis continues throughout her life, but she notes near the end of the narrative:

After many years of patience and long suffering, the enmity between ourselves and our relatives and neighbors has at last almost melted away. There is still some jealousy, mostly because our children did well at school, and we worked together and lived better. We were as stubborn

about going back to the old ways as they were about changing their ways.

A spirit of tolerance has gradually replaced the spirit of hostility. (203)

As a young Hostile, Sekaquaptewa is not allowed to return home to her parents during the summer. She and the other girls live at the boarding school while the other children go home, and she becomes accustomed to life there. After four years of being away from home, with only a few short visits from their mothers from time to time, the school allows the Hostile children to go to their village for the Home Dance. Their parents did not return the children in September as requested, and Sekaquaptewa spent a year at home. At this point in the story, the reader begins to see the effects of acculturation and how Sekaquaptewa's hybrid domesticity forms. Once we learn Sekaquaptewa stayed home for a year, she begins the chapter with grinding corn again – reinforcing the significance of women's traditional roles in her life. After an in-depth description of the process and significance of grinding corn, Sekaquaptewa asserts, "They say no man will marry a girl unless she can make piki. *This* household art I learned while I was at *home* that year" (112 emphasis mine). Her phrasing seems to imply that she was learning household arts she considers important both at home and away at boarding school. She points to the tradition of making piki and its significance in continuing Hopi traditions and creating families, but at the same time, she seems to allude to the fact that she is being taught household arts at school that she finds valuable too. Sekaquaptewa returns to school after a year and eventually transfers to Phoenix Indian school when she convinces the principal at Keams Canyon to say she is old enough to go without her parent's permission. After thirteen years of schooling, Sekaquaptewa returns to her family when her time is done at Phoenix Indian school. She arrives at her village much

changed from her experiences. She spent her years working in Anglo homes and making her own money, acquiring a sense of freedom she would not have experienced in her village.

Sekaquaptewa finds her ideas about tradition, domesticity, and religion conflicting with her tradition-centered family. She notes, “I didn’t feel at ease in the home of my parents now. My father and my mother, my sister and my older brother told me to take off those clothes and wear Hopi attire” (144). She does not conform to the family’s wishes, but she recalls her mother was just happy she was home and said “If I would stay there, she would not urge me to change my ways. I could wear any kind of clothes that I wanted to wear if I would just stay home with her” (145). Sekaquaptewa’s mother seems to recognize her new sense of hybrid domesticity and her wishes to practice it for her own well-being and happiness. Later, Sekaquaptewa’s mother dies and Sekaquaptewa loses what should have been her home and domestic space. While Helen is the oldest unmarried daughter and should have inherited her mother’s home, her ultra-traditional sister Verlie moves her family into the house instead. This displacement from the Hopi home space moves Sekaquaptewa closer to her own forms of domesticity and her own ideas about the space of a home. Soon, in a continued thread of hybridity, Helen marries Emory in a fractured Hopi traditional ceremony and in legal ceremony. She notes, “About halfway through the rites, our consciences troubled us, because we felt the Hopi way was not quite right. We decided to get a license and be married legally” (161). After their legal ceremony, they returned to the Hopi village and completed the traditional ceremony. Including this story of hybridity documents the origin of her own life and family with Emory, but it also shows hybrid forms of domesticity in practice. All

throughout the chapter on her marriage, Sekaquatewa gives the details of her marriage in particular, but she also highlights the rituals of traditional Hopi marriage. Her story and her marriage are a testament to this hybridity. She is preserving history and culture while illustrating ways to combine the old with the new. Her decision to document her story with the help of her friend Louise Udall is Sekaquatewa's regional domesticity in action. She and Louise Udall create a collaboration that is beneficial to each. Both talk of their years long friendship and how they were both integrated into each other's families. The resulting autobiography documents and prevents the erasure of Hopi culture while illustrating one family's journey through the continuing colonial policies of the greater Southwest.

### **Conclusion: Bicultural Collaboration and the Roots of Regional Domesticity**

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought increased interactions between Native and Anglo women while also producing Native women whose time at boarding schools left them well-versed in Anglo domesticity and well-skilled at the conventions of writing about it. These interactions between groups and the growing popularity of stories of Native life opened the doors to cross-cultural collaborations between Native writers and Anglo women editors. Women worked together to combine popular literary forms such as autobiography and sentimental fiction and created unique regional works especially adept at documenting ways Native women navigate the clashing of cultures produced by settler colonialism. In the cases of Winnemucca, Oatman, and Sekaquatewa, those interactions are centered within the space of the home and what constitutes home within the colonial space of the greater Southwest; and both factors dictate the final products. For Winnemucca, publicizing her life and work to

protect her family also brought attention to the plight of the Paiutes as a whole. Placing herself in the role of mother to her tribe, Winnemucca details her adventures in a style similar to the popular sentimental fiction of the time—a format that along with the influence of her editor Mary Mann – could ensure her story reached a larger audience. For Olive Oatman, writing about her experiences living with the Mohaves provides indirect collaboration for the stories Native women will later tell about their experiences during the Indian Removal period. For Helen Sekaquaptewa, an idea that began as a way to preserve her family stories for her children turned into a years-long project and friendship with Louise Udall. Through the lens of motherhood, Sekaquaptewa documents the history of the Hopis while also showing her own journey to a hybrid form of domesticity brought on by her years in boarding schools and her conversion to Mormonism. All three women work through the form of autobiography, and often against Anglo editors, to counter many of the stereotypes often perpetuated by Anglo texts. In the process, Sekaquaptewa and Winnemucca provide examples of regional domesticity at work. Regional domesticity looks to affect regional changes and preservation through the domestic sphere. Because writing about the domestic space was and is such a popular and acceptable form for women to write in, their regional preservation efforts often take the form of popular literature. While many have discussed the roles of this literature on national projects, I assert that because these women write from spaces so rooted in a particular region, their efforts are regional first and foremost, with the hope that they might later affect national change. Their stories are firmly entrenched in the greater Southwest, and they work to preserve and protect the region and its people first. They speak out through the lens of domesticity and the home to show examples of Native

domesticities, through literary forms acceptable at the time, to document and preserve hybridity and resilience.

### Chapter 3

#### **Adina De Zavala and Jovita González: Public Archives, Folkloric Fictions, and Domestic Preservation in Early Twentieth-Century Texas**

Genaro Padilla notes in his foundational text *My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Literature* that "to remember is not only the act of not forgetting but the act of not being forgotten" (33). After 1848, Mexican Americans in the Southwest faced erasure and rupture of their culture, their way of life, and even their language. Retelling stories of the past through forms as varied as autobiographies to folklore to recipes worked to help preserve culture and to document the history of the Southwest from the perspective of those with a history in the region. Historical reclamation through literature provided and provides a chance for Mexican Americans in the Southwest—some of whose families had been in the area for hundreds of years—to reclaim the use of spaces lost to encroachment and document their cultures accurately both before and after the Southwest was ceded to the U.S. Padilla goes on to note that this work of reclamation was often an effort to restore sanity and order when faced with dispossession and alienation. While he uses the example of Mariano Vallejo and his memoirs, women writers and activists in the early twentieth century were also writing and preserving a past as a way to navigate the present. Tejanas like Jovita González and Adina De Zavala carved out spaces of hybrid domesticities. Their lives and stories are based in Spanish Catholic tradition and domestic expectations, but these women used those beliefs in conjunction with the forces of modernity in the U.S. at the turn of the century to assert identities for themselves as writers and activists. I argue the results of these efforts to balance cultural demands and expectations and reassert claims to domesticity are what constitute regional domesticities. Further, works document these

changing forms of domesticity and the creation of new forms. The conditions of the nineteenth century and the interactions and clashes between groups lead to the development of new forms of domesticity.

Domesticity historically looks to women as agents of preservation—whether it be the food and other consumable goods in the home or the image of home itself. With this focus on preservation and southwestern domesticity’s ability to adapt to new and unique situations, domesticity is the lens through which we witness not only dispossession and cultural rupture, but we start to understand the direct effects colonization and conquest had on women in the region. Through De Zavala’s public archive work and González’s fiction and folklore, we witness the creation of forms of domesticity based on the reclamation and preservation of spaces. Using archive creation and folkloric fiction, De Zavala and González negotiate class expectations, family beliefs about the roles of women, and the new norms of modernity. In the process, because of their preservation work, both reclaim historical spaces and work to control how those spaces are viewed and used. They create works that document the formation of domestic negotiations specific to early twentieth century South Texas.

Amanda Zink says of works by early Mexican American women writers, “These narratives do not simply resist or assimilate Anglo encroachment. Rather, they constantly negotiate with and even collaborate with Anglo women to claim space in national rhetorics and narratives about women’s roles that historically excluded Mexican American women in particular and women of color in general” (102). For De Zavala writing at the turn of the century, her collaboration with Anglo women took the form of her work with the Daughters of the Republic (DRT) and their efforts to preserve and



promote Texas history, while she also makes claims to space for Mexican American women through her folkloric work. For González, writing in the 1930s and 1940s, education and folklore took center stage in her efforts to engage with the political and domestic rhetorics of the time. De Zavala and González were both well versed in American Anglo culture and on the demands of Anglo domesticity. At the same time, both were intimately familiar with Mexican American domestic expectations. “That is,” Zink continues, “even while these writers resist the domination of Anglo culture (domesticity, religion, education) they assimilate these aspects of culture as *platforms* on which to state their own assertions of culture and claims to female authority in the public, national sphere” (129). I too assert both women illustrate through their works and through their own lives clashing of cultural expectations and demands. However, in the case of De Zavala and González, their work establishes a regional cultural authority, and they are less concerned with a national platform for themselves or for the Spanish Catholic history of Texas.

De Zavala, for instance, works to make the history of the Alamo and other Spanish Catholic missions in South Texas public archives of a true and complete history of South Texas. In the process, she establishes herself as the foremost authority on the missions of Texas and of the efforts to preserve the history of those missions and those who defended them. For González, folklore preserves the Spanish Catholic and Mexican American heritage of the Southwest while her fiction at times undermines the nostalgic view of her folklore and exposes the unequal treatment of Spanish Mexican women in the region. Both women’s preservation efforts are clear cases of southwestern regional domesticity. Both women’s efforts are so firmly rooted in place through the Daughters of

the Republic, the Alamo, the Texas Folklore Society, and classrooms in South Texas—they are the bedrock of their regional domesticity. De Zavala and González wrote to preserve their region through the circumstances of the time and through the roles available to women in Texas society at the time, and they wrote in forms that were available to them. I further argue that both women wrote for regional recognition. De Zavala formed a unique domestic space through her public life as a preservationist and a historian. González found her hybrid space as a historian, as a member of the mostly Anglo and male Texas Folklore Society, and later as a teacher.

Following Sergio Reyna, María Cotera, and other Chicana/o critics, Jovita González is a precursor to Chicano literature and the resistance to Anglo domination in South Texas (Reyna xv; Cotera 339-345). This project, however, is not concentrating on resistance as a main operating category. Instead, I show public preservation of cultures facing erasure to be a logical extension of the domestic roles afforded to women at the time, and archival work and folklore to be available avenues for preserving cultures in the midst of rapid change and for creating a regional domestic persona and a life—for asserting individuality while caught between the demands of two cultures. As we move into the early twentieth century, women begin to see more opportunities to be out of the home. At the same time, their responsibilities within the home do not diminish. Women are tasked with finding ways to preserve their time, to preserve their homes, and most literally, to better and more conveniently prepare and preserve foods. De Zavala would be witness to these new processes, and while she was not married, she and her sister did manage their home while maintaining active social lives. By the 1920s, the idea of domestic work as a set of scientific processes is taking shape; streamlining domestic

processes—especially processes of preservation—becomes prominent. Women enter the workforce more frequently, but they still have their domestic duties at home; preserving time while juggling multiple roles takes center stage.

To illustrate the structural importance of preservation to domesticity, like so many women before me, I will use Tupperware—an icon of middle-class domesticity since its inception. While Tupperware was not invented until 1946, nothing says domestic preservation better than Tupperware, and a closer examination of the phenomenon marks the bedrock importance of preservation to domesticity and serves as an excellent analogy for the preservation work De Zavala and González do. In her article “Preserving Domesticity: Reading Tupperware in Women’s Changing Domestic, Social, and Economic Roles,” Susan Vincent argues, “Tupperware is more than a product, it is a symbol. This symbol revolves around the notion of white, middle-class domestic femininity” (173). Vincent continues:

Tupperware as a symbol and strategy arises out of the material organization of household life in a specific social formation. Half a century after the invention of Tupperware, it continues to solve the problems of preserving freshness and maintaining order in the kitchen, at the same time as it helps women mediate tensions between their domestic and income-earning roles. (173)

Designed to preserve food and time in the kitchen, Tupperware offers a chance to meet the expectations of both the home and the public sphere. In the same way, public preservation, both through preserving local historical landmarks and archives and by documenting a regional cultural past through folklore and fiction is decidedly domestic.

De Zavala's work predates the epicenter of the domestic science movement proper by a few years, but her work and her ability to create a domestic space for herself through preservation anticipates its importance to women and domesticity. Jovita González, working in the midst of modernity and domestic science's heyday, uses the popularity of domestic preservation to save cultural knowledge and artifacts in danger of being lost to a new Texas narrative that centers Anglo achievement as the history of Texas. She does this to assert her domesticity in a world that looks at Anglo domesticity as the only domesticity. She uses preservation through writing as her key to domesticity. De Zavala, writing and preserving before this time, serves as a precursor. While the preservation work of both women is often mixed with fiction and a nostalgia for the way things were, their works at the same time talk back to the Anglo creation of Texas history so prevalent when both women were writing. For Adina De Zavala and Jovita González, public preservation through archives, folklore, and fiction becomes the most acceptable form for voicing their opposition, their negotiations, and their agency.

To understand the complexity of gendered domestic expectations for Mexican American women in Texas, we must first understand the history of the region from conquest to revolution to treaty to eventual statehood.<sup>11</sup> David Montejano notes that for *Tejanos* after Texas independence, "In the liberated and annexed territories, Anglos and Mexicans stood as conquerors and conquered, as victors and vanquished" (5). From the

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<sup>11</sup> In Texas, Spanish *entradas* began in the late seventeenth century. The earliest *entradas* were to establish missions and civilize the Indians in the area. The first Spanish colony was formed in 1716 in South Texas, while France had its own colony in East Texas during the same time. Eventually, by the late eighteenth century, settlers were present in four areas of what would become Texas: Nacogdoches, San Antonio, La Bahía, and Nuevo Santander. Families in these isolated settlements often intermarried, and as their ranchos grew, they came to rely on mestizo and neophyte *peónes* to do the labor. The first Anglo settlement, Austin's Colony, was formed in 1821. Within a short time, Anglo settlers outnumbered Spanish citizens in Texas, and encroachment and discrimination began in earnest.

moment of arrival of Anglo settlers through to statehood and to the present, there have been issues between the two groups – both vying for land and for power. As De Zavala and González both document in their works, life in Texas changed rapidly—from a secluded agrarian culture to large commercial farms with large influxes of Anglo settlers. Sergio Reyes notes of González’s writing that while it pointed out differences between Mexican Americans and the encroaching Anglos, her intent was “to preserve the customs and traditions that identified her people by honoring them through writing, for they would perish in oral form, given the transformations of social life occurring rapidly in the Southwest as Anglo dominance increased”(xvii). Mexican Americans saw their customs and livelihoods destroyed as many went from landed aristocrats to workers on the ranches and farms they once owned. Mexican Americans in nineteenth and early twentieth century Texas constantly faced loss and uncertainty but preserving the past was a way to fight against erasure of loss of culture.

For Mexican American women, encroachment added additional layers of domestic expectations on top of those already so ingrained in their lives. Chavez-Garcia notes of the roles of early Latinas in the Southwest: “gender and ethnicity shaped the policies and practices of Spanish conquest and shows that women, marriage, and the family – the basic unit of Spanish society – played a central role in producing a stable society on Mexico’s northernmost frontier” (xv). Just as Anglo women were considered a means of taming the west, Spanish Mexican women were viewed as a means of bringing civility and stability to the Northern lands of Mexico prior to the arrival of the Americans. For example, priests in the early Spanish settlements requested more women settlers in hopes that their influence, and their marriages to the men, would curb sexual

violence against Native women. In Texas, early colonists were family units – people who could bring stability to the region through their own homes and by bringing neophytes to their ranches as *peónes*. For Spanish Mexican women of all classes throughout the nineteenth century, domesticity and the roles of women were built around old Spanish Catholic ideals. As Chavez-Garcia notes, “To ensure the social stability of the community, particularly the family...they enforced a rigid system of patriarchal beliefs and practices that emphasized the authority of husbands and fathers over women, sexual purity or virginity before marriage, fidelity and monogamy during married life, chastity in widowhood, and shame in all bodily matters” (20). Women were valuable for their ability to produce heirs and to keep Spanish bloodlines pure.

As the U.S. pushed into the Southwest, Spanish Mexican women from landed families often found themselves in arranged marriages to Anglo men – arrangements secured by their fathers, uncles, or brothers. These marriages were part of what David Montejano refers to as “peace structures” or “an accommodative arrangement between the leaders of the victors and those of the defeated” (8).<sup>12</sup> These public arrangements, while technically established to create a land market, often extended to the private as well and were a means to secure alliances and increase the stature of both the Mexican families and the Anglo men the women were marrying. As a larger metaphor, securing new lands and bringing new people into the domestic fold strengthened the U.S. and continued to enlarge its holdings. Domesticity is a product of the economy of the region – this is easily illustrated in Texas. Mexican American women’s domesticity changed dramatically as the economy of the region changed. First, the women lived under strict

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<sup>12</sup> Both *Caballero* and Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* feature these “peace structures” as major plot points

patriarchal rule and were often unable to exercise much autonomy at all. Then, as the hacienda culture began to break down and became more commercial, women's domestic expectations and their freedoms changed too. Many women, especially those who married Anglo men willingly or unwillingly, moved into different social and economic circles. Gender is a colonial construct, and domesticity in the Southwest illustrates this fact, where every facet of life is touched by the history of the region.<sup>13</sup> After the turn of the century, South Texas saw an additional influx of settlers into the region and pushed it further into modernity, where the roles for all women were changing, and many were finding ways to bypass traditional roles. For De Zavala, that meant a public life of travel and preservation. For González, that mean leaving family and furthering her education in Austin. For both women, public preservation offered the needed chance to assert claims to spaces both old and new.

José Aranda remarks that “Over time in Texas, Mexican American life becomes symbolically and politically organized around the Texas Revolution (1836), and ‘remembering’ the Alamo colors everything about being Mexican in the state” (156). Adina De Zavala understood the centrality of the Alamo to Texas identity, and she tries to reclaim the history of the space with her collection of stories, *History and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions in and around San Antonio*. Self-published from her home in 1917, De Zavala's work was reissued in 1996 as part of Arte Público Press's Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Series. The work contains folklore and

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<sup>13</sup> Mexican American domesticity, or what I am calling traditional domesticity, is already a product of colonial domesticity well before Anglo encroachment. The Spanish-Catholic domesticity women in the Southwest preserve and simultaneously speak out against is shaped by the Spanish colonizers in the region for centuries. Domesticity in the region is always colonial, new layers and forms of coloniality get added to the old.

other stories and documents about the Alamo and the Spanish, Mexican, Native, and Anglo histories of the surrounding area. De Zavala's family had deep ties to the region. She was born into a politically well-connected family on her family's land near Houston, Texas in 1861. Her grandfather, Lorenzo de Zavala, was the first Vice-President of the Republic of Texas. Before being elected Vice President, de Zavala was a major political player in Mexico, serving Mexico as both a governor and an ambassador I contend that one key characteristic of regional domesticity is an interest or a tie to the place because the place of the domesticity influences the domestic space. As Mary Pat Brady asserts, "Chicana literature has, from its inception, contested the terms of capitalist spatial formation, including the attempts to regulate the meanings and uses of spaces" (6). By extension, I assert, De Zavala is working from within this tradition of contestation to capitalism. Through her conservation efforts, her work to preserve the Alamo and bring it under DRT control, and her construction of a public archive of Texas history she works to control how Texas history and its historical places are presented.

Brady's theory about Chicana space is useful for understanding De Zavala, even though De Zavala was writing long before contemporary Chicana literature and cultural production. As Brady explains:

The production of space involves not simply buildings, transportation, and communications networks, as well as social and cultural groups and institutions (including their regulation and management—what some refer to as "second nature"), but it also involves the processes that shape how these places are understood, envisioned, defined, and variously experienced. (7)



De Zavala situates her preservation work in place, specifically in the Spanish Catholic missions in South Texas. These places have ties to her family, so her efforts to save them infuse those places with the lost histories of her family. By creating a public archive of the history of the Alamo and other missions, De Zavala regulates the public view and understanding of those spaces. Her domesticity is centered in preservation like most women, but she is preserving and reproducing historical spaces instead of the food and her home. For De Zavala, the public spaces of the Alamo and other Texas missions are the home her domesticity is centered within.

Educated at Ursuline Academy in Galveston, Texas and earning a teaching certificate from Sam Houston Normal College, Adina De Zavala was an educated woman at a time when few people had a formal education or even the opportunity to pursue one (Flores xii). Her scrapbooks held in her archive at the Benson library at the University of Texas offer a window into this time in her life. These scrapbooks, first and foremost, record her ties to the Catholic Church. One scrapbook contains nearly every page of periodical about the history of the Catholic Church in Texas, including an entry about the Convent of the Good Shepherd in San Antonio, which notes, “Young women who have fallen away from virtue; any young girls in danger of going astray, are welcomed within the walls of this institution, no distinction being made as to nationality or creed” (De Zavala Papers). The comments clearly illustrate the Church’s role in maintaining the expected standards of womanhood at the time. Intermingled with these pages are newspaper clippings about womanly manners, like an 1891 issue of *Ladies Home Journal* and religious poems written by De Zavala while at Ursuline Academy. The same scrapbook contains pages from songbooks, and from her time as a teacher at Terrell High

School, handwritten ledger pages that seem to serve as a rough draft of the school newspaper. At times, the information contained in this scrapbook feels disjointed, while at others, we begin to see the layers of De Zavala's interests and her early efforts at preservation – whether that mean saving pages from an old hymnal, clipping newspapers articles, or helping high school students document that daily happenings at their school.

Another scrapbook in the collection brings domestic expectations fully to light, with the “Hints for the Housewife” article about women preparing stewed fruits to an article titled “The Coming Women,” which begins with “Nothing in the United States struck me more than the fact that the remarkable intellectual progress of that country is very largely due to the efforts of American women” working outside the home as newspaper editors, teachers, and more (De Zavala Papers). While fully invested in Spanish Catholic ideals through her upbringing and education, through her archive and the things she chose to preserve in her scrapbooks, the viewer sees a woman on the brink of modernity. She is balancing the domestic ideals of Anglo women of the time with Catholic expectations and progressive views on women's roles outside the home. De Zavala worked to create her own version of turn of the century Texas domesticity – centered in the history of the region and balanced by the expectations of women in the region.

De Zavala defied many of the gendered expectations for women in the Southwest at the time. Instead of marrying and having children and staying in the home, De Zavala embraced a very public and at times controversial persona, and she devoted much of her adult life to Texas history. She was a charter member of the Texas State Historical Society, a member of the Texas Folk-lore Society, the founder of the De Zavala chapter

of the Daughters of the Republic, and she was active in the National Council of Catholic Women and St. Anthony's Guild (Flores xxvi). She never married and lived with her sister Mary for most of her adult life. Even in her late eighties, she continued to write about Texas history and advocate for greater historical literacy and accuracy. De Zavala is responsible for many of the things we know to be Texas history. Frequently throughout her life, she was consulted by historians who wanted to verify their research, but she was never usually cited. It is likely she had an enormous effect on the official record of Texas history, although there is no quantitative way to know just how much. She used her agency as a woman with a well-known last name and acceptable avenues, specifically women's clubs and historical societies to shape and reshape Texas history. She creates Texas history and preservation as a domestic space - finding her worth in preserving the walls and histories of the missions of Texas.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, elite Anglo women began forming preservation societies as a public extension of their roles as the domestic ideal. Through public preservation, these "club women" could extend their role as moral authorities. Joel Kitchens notes:

Despite having very little opportunity for engagement outside the domestic sphere, many elite women found their public voice through preserving the past. In San Antonio, women had a significant impact regarding the preservation of the missions' physical remains. The women's efforts, in turn, directly shaped the collective memories of the missions because those memories are based upon the visible remains. (172)

Documenting and saving the historical record became their moral duty and a way to fight against modernity and materialism. For De Zavala, these kinds of clubs and societies, and particularly the Daughters of the Republic, also offered a way to create a particular persona.

Another De Zavala scrapbook from the Briscoe Collection centers on articles written about her in area newspapers over the years. In one interview, she notes, “It’s more of an honor in Texas to be a ‘Daughter of the Republic of Texas’ than an ordinary D.A.R. elsewhere” (De Zavala Papers) – solidifying for us that her regional identity takes precedence over a national one. Other snippets saved in her scrapbooks archive her fundraising efforts, her sister Mary’s travels, and other historical preservation taking place around the state. We can also see from the wide variety of newspapers her stories appear in that her regional identity was not just rooted in San Antonio but was built on her ability to branch out and extend her reach to other parts of the state as well. All these saved pages may seem random at first, but a closer look shows they clearly promote De Zavala as a central figure in Texas preservation; and we learn very little if anything about her life outside of her work with women’s groups, and the DRT in particular. Almost every article presents her first as “Miss Adina De Zavala,” keeping her safely within expectations for women at the time, followed closely by “Granddaughter of the noted Lorenzo de Zavala, first vice president of the Republic of Texas” while clearly demonstrating her identity is firmly centered in history patriotic ties to Texas history. This distinction as the granddaughter of a patriot helped her gain access to Texas society circles and provided her cultural capital to promote her historical preservation work.

Adina De Zavala used her position as a member of a prominent family to advocate for the preservation of Texas history and to shape and reshape Texas. She was a powerful force in reimagining, or at least sometimes redirecting, some of the Anglo-centric discourses about the formation of Texas. As Flores notes, she “lived and toiled for ninety-three years to recover the past so as to set it right, to celebrate Texas history so as to augment it, to restore the achievements of Mexico and Spain and a sense of culture lost” (vi). In the process, she creates, celebrates, and augments her own sense of domesticity. Preserving the Alamo was not the only cause De Zavala felt strongly about. She created the De Zavala chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas in 1889 as a way to “keep green the memory of the heroes, founders and pioneers of Texas; to formulate methods of arousing dormant patriotism of the majority of their fellow-citizens; to devise ways of inculcating and disseminating a wider of knowledge of the history Texas; and of instilling a love and proper pride in town, city, country, and state” (De Zavala 208). The group “wrote historic articles, gathered historical data, and in various ways endeavored to arouse public sentiment for the care and restoration of the Missions of Texas, and all historic places, and everything pertaining to Texas; and for a more general display of the Texas flag” (De Zavala 208). The De Zavala chapter was successful in restoring numerous missions in the San Antonio area as well as placing markers on graves, battlefields, and other historical locations.

At the time of *History and Legends*’ publication in 1917, De Zavala and her DRT chapter had been instrumental in saving the Alamo from commercial buyers and almost certain destruction. The years long struggle to gain and maintain control of the Alamo eventually ended with De Zavala physically locking herself within the Alamo, De

Zavala's chapter of the DRT being voted out of membership, and Clara Driscoll's chapter maintaining control of the Alamo. De Zavala's contribution to the preservation is often overlooked, and Clara Driscoll is frequently given credit for saving the Alamo even though De Zavala started the campaign and brought Driscoll in to help. Emma Pérez writes, "Cultural memories, disguised and 'entangled' with the workings of historical discourse, are spatially and physically embedded in geographically fixed sites of public history and culture" (18). Nowhere in Texas is this truer than at the Alamo. I take this a step further to argue De Zavala's sense of domesticity is tied directly to the preservation of the Alamo and other historical missions in San Antonio.

De Zavala became so invested in saving the Alamo and preserving the history of that site that she physically locked herself in the Alamo to protest the DRT.<sup>14</sup> When she solicited donations for her preservation projects, or asked for volunteers, or for stories from old pioneers, she asked that those things be sent to her home address. In "Private Visions, Public Culture: The Making of the Alamo," Flores discusses the formation of places of public culture and notes:

When these reproductions concern the making and establishment of national, regional, or cultural identities, along with their concomitant asymmetries of power as does the Alamo, it behooves us to explore and understand the social processes and conditions that transform private visions into public places. (99)

While the space of the home is where women's domesticity is historically centered, De Zavala grounds her domesticity in public preservation that she then brings into her home

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<sup>14</sup> See Richard Flores' introduction to *De Zavala's History and Legends* for a more detailed accounting of the incident.

space – blurring the lines between the two. For her, public preservation is still an acceptable form of domesticity because first, preservation is assigned to women’s domestic roles and second, even though she is pursuing a public life, those efforts are still tied to her home. As an extension, then she writes about the folklore of the region in *Histories and Legends of the Alamo and Other Missions in and around San Antonio*, which she publishes from her own home – again physically tying the Alamo and Texas history to her personal domestic space.

Of course, Adina De Zavala is a complex individual with multiple loyalties, and we cannot overlook her often colonial gaze. Flores argues that she represses her Mexican identity and that is why she concentrates on Mexican and Spanish history. She concentrates on a “Texan” identity instead. This points directly to the liminality of the region and its inhabitants. I extend this argument to say through her writing, she illustrates what she believes a “Texan” domesticity should look like. At the same time, her preservation efforts include Spanish and Mexican history at a time when it was often ignored. However, preserving a Spanish or Mexican past is often at the expense of the Native inhabitants who were in the region first. In *History and Legends*, Indians maintain the role Spanish colonization laid out for them. They are no examples of Indians or Indian women moving beyond a status as workers for the church. The neophytes are described as “laboring in the fields” (112) while the area Comanches are referred to as the “wild tribes” (112). She also seems to discourage mestizaje – something we see in González’s works as well. De Zavala writes, “It is said that in the vicinity of San Juan Mission there are more traces of the Indian in features and characteristics than anywhere else in the interior of Texas” (116). This statement is in the middle of a discussion of the

main buildings of Mission San Juan de Capistrano, but De Zavala seems to be talking about the features of the people. She includes a picture of “Mexican huts” and a family on the same page. If this is the correct interpretation of this reference, De Zavala has plenty to say about Texas domesticity. By referring to the home in the picture as a “hut” and infusing it with “Indian features,” she removes domesticity from the equation. She does not give the family with Indian features a home, but instead, they have a hut. Domesticity requires the space of a home, or for De Zavala, the Alamo. Yet, in the process of documenting the huts, she also preserves this part of Texas history and identity.

In other sections of *History and Legends*, De Zavala secures Spanish women (who she rarely seems to openly identify with) firmly within the foundational domesticity of Texas. She uses folklore to do this. In “A Legend of the Bells of Mission San José,” the main character Theresa’s fiancé, Don Ángel, dies in Texas while helping at one of the early missions. While Theresa waits patiently in Spain for her love to return, he is killed in an Indian raid. Like all good sentimental heroines, Theresa begins to fade after hearing the news of Don Ángel’s death. When she learns the bells for the mission are being cast, Theresa makes her way there and throws her ring and necklace into the furnace as the bells are being fired. With the addition of Theresa’s engagement ring and the cross representing her faith, Spanish Catholic domesticity is sent to the missions in Texas. And, from then on, the ring, a symbol of domesticity, will hang above the mission and watch over the domesticating mission of the church. An example of Spanish domesticity of charity, purity, and selflessness becomes one with the mission in Texas and symbolically shows how the missions and therefore maybe Texas itself are built on the proper



domesticity of Spanish women. Including this story in her compilation makes her sentiment clear and it also creates a public archive for a story based down through the home for centuries.

The example of Spanish mystic Mary Coronel of Agreda, or the Woman in Blue, provides a similar perspective on the history of early domesticity in Texas and argues Spanish domesticity predates Anglo domesticity in the region by over 200 years. Further, the story suggests Spanish domesticity affected indigenous domesticity even before the missionaries arrived. Mary is described as “a beautiful little girl, dainty, graceful and spirituelle, born of noble parentage” (99). Even when she is young, Mary experiences colonial dreams. She thinks of the Native tribes in the New world constantly and want to be “able to go out to them and help them – to held to draw away the black veil shrouding their intellects and to bring light and salvation to their minds and souls” (99). The story goes on to describe the perfect domestic character of Mary: “As she developed into womanhood, her beautiful character expanded, and she was always to be found where consolation was needed and charity was to be dispensed” (99). Mary displays all the marks of a proper Spanish woman—a higher calling and a proper domesticity—one De Zavala hoped to replicate through her charity work and her preservation efforts. Mary goes on to visit the Indians in dreams, and the tribes Spanish missionaries encounter report seeing the woman in blue for decades. She is a beloved and revered figure among them. The Chief of one tribe tells the missionaries he wants to bury his grandmother in the same color Mary wore. De Zavala mentions the woman in blue in this piece and in another piece about the missions in San Antonio, so her importance cannot be overlooked. De Zavala shows a Spanish woman with perfect and proper domesticity who

spreads her beliefs and her influence into what is now Texas – characteristics De Zavala hoped to replicate through her preservation efforts. Including the stories of the woman in blue is significant. If De Zavala can tie Mary of Agreda to Texas, she can also tie this pious and helpful domesticity to the region, and argue a Spanish woman was in the region long before any other Spanish people; and she, not the missionaries, had a major influence on the inhabitants.<sup>15</sup> It was not the Spanish missionaries who did all the work. The Native Americans were already waiting on them because of the spiritual visits of the perfect and much-loved Spanish woman. The story provides a strong if nuanced affront to Anglo domesticity in the region, and argues in a public, written forum that Spanish forms took root in the 1600s.

We can contrast these early examples with episodes from De Zavala’s own life which appear in *History and Legends*. In the section on Mission San José de Aguayo, De Zavala details the history from its creation to the present. She notes “it is a matter of regret that the earliest records of Mission San José have so far not been found” (124) and then she goes on to document what mission records do exist – both ensuring she is archiving the records that remain while also preserving and lamenting that some of the records have been lost. De Zavala then describes the architectural design of the mission as well as the artwork that once covered the thick stone walls. She reminds the reader that “relic hunters and vandals” (124) destroyed much but also notes that according to the mission’s existing records, Texas soldiers held the mission and its art in high regard and

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<sup>15</sup> This idea of women influencing or working to change the domesticity of colonized women of course continues with U.S. encroachment when Anglo women were sent into Native and Mexican American homes to help influence domestic practices. See Beth Piatote’s *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature* (2013), Margaret Jacob’s *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (2009)

“were careful of the property that nothing was injured” (131). She seems to suggest that true Texans gave the missions their proper regard and should continue to do so today. De Zavala notes that the “De Zavala Chapter, descendants of the heroes of Texas, have expended several hundred dollars in repairs on this mission.” (136). She then sends out a call for additional funds. First, she establishes herself and the other women in her chapter as “descendants of the heroes of Texas.” On the other hand, she places fund raising as a proper extension of the domestic sphere, and again, calls for those funds to be sent to her home address. The work itself serves at several points as an opportunity to raise more funds for historical preservation. That she published this request in her book solidifies the Daughters’ roll in preservation and creates a permanent, physical archive to De Zavala’s efforts. Not only is she saving the missions of Texas, but she is preserving her journey to save them as well.

While De Zavala’s domestic preservation centers on public spaces and places, Jovita González provides a later example of written domestic preservation through her fiction and her folklore. And, while much of her work was never published while she was alive, her work did and does preserve Mexican American culture and folklore of South Texas. *Dew on the Thorn* records and establishes the continued cultural relevance of Mexican American folklore while creating a written archive of centuries of tradition. *Caballero: A Historical Novel* takes a fictional approach, telling many of the same stories, but centering on how those stories and patriarchal traditions affect the women in the families. Comparing González’s fiction to her folklore brings the tension in her efforts to the forefront as we see one story that tells a romantic and idealized story without judgment while the other argues for more modern roles for Mexican American

women and ends with the death of the family patriarch. Both provide an archive of preservation—packed away in González’s own archive for many years –written in acceptable forms for women at the time.

González had to navigate a number of expectations in her own life to reach a point where her work was taken seriously. This hard work and eventual recognition as one of the states foremost folklorists gave her the opportunity to preserve the culture of a region while illustrating how the women in that region could adapt to ever changing domestic demands. González was born in South Texas to a family with ties to the earliest settlements of the region. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Spanish and later an MA in history of the University of Texas. She studied at UT during a time when there were few women attending, and even fewer Mexican American women. During this time, she expanded her interest in the folklore of South Texas, and at the encouragement of J. Frank Dobie, she used the Mexican American folklore of South Texas as the basis for her master’s thesis. She negotiated complicated expectations for Mexican American women at the time, and through her association with J. Frank Dobie and other professors at UT as well as because of her membership in the Texas Folklore Society, she created a platform to preserve the Mexican American history of South Texas. Already, we see González defying many of the gendered expectations of the time while maintaining her ties to her community and her cultural expectations. While it would not have been unusual for a woman to get a degree and teach, it was a bit more unusual for a woman to get a master’s degree and use it for something other than teaching. Like De Zavala, González was interested in preserving the cultural history of Mexican Americans in Texas, and also

similar to De Zavala, in doing so, she chronicles the changing domestic expectations for women in the region while preserving a cultural archive of Mexican American folklore.

While González is fully invested in preserving the cultures of South Texas, preservation also requires her, or perhaps offers her, an opportunity to comment on the roles of women in Mexican American culture, both historically and during her own lifetime. In González's autobiography included in the introduction to *Dew on the Thorn*, after a quick recap of her family's ties to the earliest settlements of Texas, she asks, "What about the girls? We were taught at home." (*Dew* x). Immediately, González places women in the space of the home while also establishing the importance of women's roles and women's education in her life. At the same time, she clearly points to how limited girls' formal education could be. She notes that while the boys were schooled more formally, her female relatives shared "fantastic tales from medieval Spain. Before our eyes passed Christian damsels, wooed by Moorish knights, Crusaders fighting for the Holy Sepulchre" (*Dew* x) and more as education for the girls in the family. She mentions in addition to these literary studies, they "went horseback riding to the pastures with my grandfather, took long walks with father, and visited the homes of the cowboys and the ranch hands" (*Dew* x). Immediately, González makes her connections to her cultural past and to the land and the natural world around her clear. We see how those seemingly separate things can combine to create works so grounded in place and all that entails. She continues, "We knew about Sor Juana, the Mexican nun who in the seventeenth century addressed men as "foolish men who accuse women without motive". But that was not enough" (*Dew* xi). González adds, "We had learned to sew and crochet, and that was not enough either. So after talking it over with Mother and grandfather, he decided that the

family should move to San Antonio where we could be educated in English” (*Dew* xi). González clearly illustrates the importance of education to her family, and in the process, she shows how her family balanced the educational experiences of the girls with both traditional “womanly” tasks, skills needed to maintain their rural existence, and scholarly learning. By documenting these hybrid learning styles, González preserves family memories, but she also shows the various roles and expectations placed on women in her culture. She also points to the value her family placed on women’s education. While her folklore and her fiction place little emphasis on the importance of educating women, she lets us know that in her own experiences, her family moved into San Antonio so all the children could get a formal education.

González talks about the other strong women in her family who functioned as role models and family educators. She notes of her aunt, “I must add someone very special, mi Tía Lola, my mother’s sister. As a young widow, she had come to live at Las Víboras Ranch. She was a handsome woman with a will of iron and a vast store of family history. It was from her that we learned many things that made us proud of our heritage” (*Dew* x-xi). González carries on this same preservation of heritage in her own works. The description of Tía Lola feels very similar to the steadfast and respected Tía Dolores in *Caballero*. In both *Caballero* and *Dew on the Thorn*, we read about numerous strong women who don’t always fit in the molds provided to them. In *Caballero*, we see that Tía Dolores does not bow to the will of men. In fact, she seems to be the only woman Don Santiago respects. Tía Dolores seems to reside in two worlds. She is a widow, so her responsibilities within the domestic sphere have changed from their previous roles in that she has returned to a domestic space regulated by her male relatives. At the same time,

perhaps because she is not so firmly rooted in her own domestic space, her brother seems to give her more respect and tolerance than he does the other women in the home. Don Santiago listens to Dolores when he will not listen to his wife or daughters. We easily infer the regard González has for these women in her family, yet through Santiago, we also see how little respect many women received in the early days of Spanish Catholic Texas. González works through her folkloric fictions to tell the important stories that highlight her culture and the strong women who are a part of it while also noting the internal pressures and problems within the culture.

José E. Limón notes of González under Dobie's guidance at the University of Texas, "She became, in effect, one of the first professional native scholars of Mexican-American culture and very probably the first woman" (61). She often writes about vaqueros and *peones* and sometimes in a condescending tone, but "appears to be repressing a certain sense of admiration for these classes and an acknowledgement of the state of war. From the beginning this contradiction is evident in her work" (62). In her folklore, González preserves a record of Texas' Spanish Mexican past, and her efforts provide a more complete picture while also illustrating the complex roles and expectations women in society faced and successfully navigated to create spaces of their own. Limón asserts, "But if the case of Jovita González shows us anything, it reveals a woman before 'today,' at another historical moment, unsupported by the luxury of a 'growing ethnic-feminist consciousness,' who perhaps only appears only appears to 'turn a blind eye' on her role as a historical writing subject with respect to her native community" (74). A close look at the portrayals of women in her works clearly indicates that while she wrote in a way that would be acceptable to a larger audience, she

absolutely acknowledges the conflicts within her culture and the demands placed on her culture by Anglo encroachment. What we get are stories of adaptation, preservation, and resilience that function, along with her master's thesis, as critical documents in preserving an accurate Spanish Mexican Texas past.

*Caballero* may serve as the best example of the hybrid domesticity of the region. While we have no way of knowing just how much collaboration there was between González and Margaret Eimer (aka Eve Raleigh), the work is a joint effort between a Mexican American woman and an Anglo woman at a time of considerable strife between the two groups and of continued social upheaval in the region. María Cotera discusses the significance of the work, but she also notes its “uncertain status within the Chicana/o literary canon” (159). She writes that *Caballero*'s main problem may be that it “is clearly not the product of a single literary imagination. Thus questions of authenticity plague it from the start, questions that are further complicated by the fact that one of its authors was an Anglo woman” (159). It was rediscovered in the 1990s, *Caballero* was written during the Texas Centennial celebrations, but set in the period directly after the Texas Revolution. The Texas Revolution offers the catalyst for great change in the region, and I argue it also provides the first sparks of change in the domesticity of the region—both for the women already there and the women who are coming into the area. *Caballero* adroitly documents this shift. Early chapters of *Caballero* recreate life on a Spanish Mexican *rancho* in 1848 Texas. While the work is named for the head of the family, Don Santiago, the women characters and their places within the family are the central focus of the story. Doña María Petronilla, the matriarch of the family, is meek, unassuming, and deferring to her husband in all things. The daughters, María de los Angeles (Angela) and



Susanita, are each ideal versions of young nineteenth-century Spanish women: one beautiful and her father's favorite, the other less outgoing and devoted to the church. Both daughters are firmly under the patriarchal control of their father. Don Santiago, the family patriarch, sits at the head of the family flanked by his son Alvaro while the women and the feminized son Luis Gonzaga defer to Don Santiago and remain behind him in the shadows. The home is under strict and stifling patriarchal control with a rigid system of gendered rules dating back to the earliest days of the Spanish empire. While *Caballero* preserves a Spanish Mexican past that stifled women within the space of the home and is critical of Anglo encroachment, the novel also openly advocates for hybrid domesticities as a progressive step forward. *Caballero* adds to the historical record of Texas at a time where few stories told from Mexican American perspectives existed, and at the same time, the story shows the Spanish Mexican past is not perfect, but it is worth remembering as central to the formation of the region.

While *Caballero* chronicles Texas' Spanish Mexican past, the work is openly critical of Mexican American women's place in society, both in the early history of Spanish settlement and in the twentieth-century Southwest and advocates for progressive roles for women. By the novel's conclusion, each woman in the Mendoza-Soría family finds her strength and her voice while the patriarchal and unyielding male members of the family, Don Santiago and Alvaro, self-destruct. Angela and Susanita both marry Anglo men and learn to negotiate and combine Spanish Catholic and post-conquest forms of domesticity. Doña María remembers her strength and resists her husband to save her children. Doña Dolores, perhaps inspired by the strength and defiant nature of her nieces, thwarts Spanish Catholic custom and remarries while Luis Gonzaga, formerly denied his

love of painting by his father and ridiculed by his brother, finds freedom and companionship outside the confines of the Spanish Mexican home. González shows the conflicts between family and tradition and the pulls of modern society. And while she shows a Spanish Mexican past that might not be as romantic as Cleofa Jaramillo before her and Fabiola Cabeza de Baca after her typically portrayed it, she records it just the same.

Through Susanita and Angela, we witness the blending of domestic forms and expectations in post-conquest Texas. Having first defied custom by carrying on a relationship without her father's knowledge, Susanita falls further out of favor when she travels alone with a male servant to save her brother. Shunned by her father, she marries Robert Warrenner in a Catholic service outside the home. Susanita's wedding is non-traditional because she does not have her father's permission, but she wears her mother's wedding dress; an act that symbolically blends older domestic expectations with the new. Angela also subverts her father's wishes through her relationship with Alfred McLane. After her wedding, the "new Angela" (311) settles into married life in San Antonio where she works to blend Spanish Catholic ideals with her role as the wife of a prominent Anglo businessman. While she is often outside the home doing charity work, she "never oversteps the time she should be at home and she gives deference to her husband's wishes" (328) and is clearly blending older domestic expectations with the new. González and Raleigh provide clear examples of Southwestern women's efforts to negotiate the demands of the region, take control of the domestic realm, and create types of domesticity that speak to these endeavors. *Caballero* paints and preserves a vivid

picture of early Spanish Mexican patriarchal structures and domestic expectations while also illustrating the formation of early regional domesticities in the greater Southwest.

With its negative views of Spanish Mexican society, *Caballero* at the same time makes a case for the domesticity of Mexican American women and argues for complex systems of domesticity in the region long before Anglo encroachment. The novel advocates for the combination of domestic elements to create something new. *Caballero* also notes the resilience of early Spanish Mexican women in the face of suppression from within their own cultures as well as from outside their cultures. While the book is written about the Texas Revolution period, it was written during the time of the centennial celebration of the revolution. Anglos in Texas viewed the Centennial as an opportunity to celebrate the successes of Anglo encroachment. Mexican Americans in Texas were viewed as standing in the way of this progress, and Mexican American history was at best glossed over, and at worst, ignored all together. *Caballero* could have provided a chance to counter some of the misconceptions about the region and its earlier inhabitants, but despite multiple submissions to multiple publishers, the book remained unpublished until it was rediscovered and published in 1996. With its content, the novel preserves the customs and traditions of some of the first Spanish Catholic families in what would become Texas, and by the fact that it wasn't published when it was written, *Caballero* also preserves the practice of suppressing a true history of Texas while also chronicling the difficulties Mexican American women had getting their works published at all.

In González's own life, men were still very much in control. And she was often critical of the positions women could hold in organizations like LULAC. González's arguments for more freedoms for Mexican American women in her books as well as in

her life as a Texas folklore expert often contradicted with the role she played in LULAC. As her husband rose in the ranks of LULAC, González's role remained fairly stagnant. She was there to support her husband in whatever way he needed. These expectations did not only apply to González. These were the same expectations placed on all the women who were part of the organization. Women in the organization were expected to do their part by taking care of the men and raising children. In fact, one of LULAC's main goals was articulated as "the restoration of the abridged rights of Mexican American men to participate in the public sphere" (Moran González 96). There was no mention of women's rights or women's participation in the public sphere unless it was in the service of the men. On a larger scale, her works are critical of Spanish Mexican and Mexican American patriarchal society. At the same time, her works all make the case for the longevity of the people in the region. While González and Raleigh do not necessarily paint the Mendoza y Soría family in the best light, *Caballero* does give a look into Spanish Mexican society and makes the case that the women of the society at least are fully capable and fully willingly to be integrated into Anglo society. At the same time, the women make the argument that perhaps Spanish Mexican women can and will improve Anglo domesticity and Spanish Mexican patriarchy. *Caballero* presents and preserves all of these possibilities. González's *Dew on the Thorn* works through folklore to tell the stories and histories of some of the oldest families in South Texas, but *Caballero* seeks to preserve a more accurate and intimate look at what that society sometimes looked like for women. While the stories deal with a wide range of topics, concentrating on González's portrayals of women and the domestic space illustrates her views of Mexican American domesticity and its movement into the twentieth century.

While González makes it clear from the first page that this is a patriarchal society, she also works to show the agency and the adaptability of the often under-appreciated women living in this society; and at times we see women defying the patriarchal rules they lived under.

While some of the fictional plot lines in *Caballero* are based in folklore, *Dew on the Thorn* is more directly centered in the genre while still registering examples of strong Spanish Mexican women working for autonomy within the patriarchal home. The work also preserves stories handed down from generation to generation of Spanish Mexican settlers in the South Texas region. González still paints various portraits of tyrannical Spanish Mexican men, even in her folklore. The men are described in various ways: as “a tyrant by inheritance and breeding” or through their actions when one father refuses to let his daughter marry the dishonored son of another Don, but the reader gets much less commentary on the implications. González’s work here parallels many of the details we see in *Caballero*. Of one Don she notes, “His family was encouraged and expected to keep intact the customs and traditions of the mother country; the servants and *peones* were commanded to follow in the footsteps of their equals in Mexico” (12). Such a description could have just as easily been written about Don Santiago in *Caballero*; and putting the two works in conversation with one and another seems to make González’s message – at least in terms of her views of Spanish Mexican patriarchy – clear while she seems to leave her clear resistance to these hierarchies in her fiction.

At the same time, some of the women in *Dew on the Thorn* are given more autonomy than most of the women in *Caballero*. While Doña María is meek does not ask for or receive much affection or autonomy, in *Dew on the Thorn*, Doña Margarita “was

the undisputed mistress of her home” (13) and she instructed the children “in religion, told them stories, or played the harp. She ended the gatherings with prayers punctuated nearly always by commands or reproofs” (13). With the exception of Don Santiago’s sister Tía Dolores, the women in *Caballero* are not shown to have the space or ability to instruct or lead prayers. On the contrary, Don Santiago leads all the prayers, and there is little mention of any other instruction by the women in the home. Perhaps González is showing the extreme in *Caballero*, but her descriptions of women’s roles in *Dew on the Thorn* often point to a sense of domesticity and womanhood similar to the Victorian models of Anglo domesticity, presenting and preserving Mexican American women as proper models of domesticity. González works to clearly show that Mexican American women are equal to their Anglo counterparts and can and should make their own contributions to new hybrid forms. The women in *Caballero* must leave their home and their family to assert their claims to domesticity, but they arrive there just the same.

At times, González also seems to hint at the danger to women living in these patriarchal societies if they are not viewed in the same light as the ranch owner’s family. We see several examples of women being in danger or being taken advantage of simply because they are not viewed on the same footing as other women. Of one of the *peones*’ complains that the Don’s son is pursuing her daughter, the Don states, “Coop up your little chicken, for my rooster has the world to roam, I told her. What is this world coming to? In my day the daughter of a *peon* considered herself honored if the young master noticed her” (*Dew* 35). In both *Dew* and *Caballero*, this theme gets extended, with mentions in both stories of peon children having the features of the heads of the families.

The matriarchs of *Dew on the Thorn* are portrayed as elegant, intelligent, proper Spanish women capable of maintaining their homes and families no matter the conditions. First, we read about Doña Margarita Olivares. She is portrayed as the backbone of the house and as someone who has a strong position in the household. As we know, Don Francisco may have been a tyrant to everyone else, but “one look at his wife was sufficient to calm him” (13). So strong is her effect on Francisco that this stern, proper man frequently uses pet names to answer her. While we never see much respect for women in *Dew* or in *Caballero*, little moments like these seem to suggest that while women did not often get public respect, González wants us to understand they were at least sometimes recognized internally for their roles in the home. In *Caballero*, the house is a prison the women try to escape, but it does not appear in *Dew* that the woman of the household is trying to escape at all. We also see her role as teacher and religious leader. Gonzales writes of Doña Margarita, “She had a maternal feeling for the poor whom she considered sent to her by Providence. Every evening, in the *patio*, while the warm weather lasted, and in the *sala*, during the winter, she gathered the women and children around her, instructed them in religion, told them stories, or played the harp. She always ended the gatherings with prayers, punctuated nearly always by commands or reproofs” (13). Whereas Don Francisco was absolute master of the ranch, Doña Margarita had complete control in the management of the home and of the religious lives of the women and children on the rancho. We are told, “She was an excellent housekeeper and her home, which had all the comforts attainable in those days, was the center of border culture and hospitality” (15). González affirms that culture and hospitality are firmly the result of the women being in charge. She shows how Mexican American culture is

comparable to, maybe even better than, Anglo culture, and that prestige rests firmly in the hands and homes of the women.

A few pages later, González seems to masculinize Margarita's work in the home, noting that, "While Francisco was absolute master of the ranch, Doña Margarita had complete control in the management of the house" (15). By placing them both in the same sentence, she seems to equate the two and seems to point to the two of them being equally necessary to the operations of the rancho and to the fact that women's domestic expectations have always depended on the demands of the region. González notes that Margarita manages the house. A word choice that seems less domestic centered and instead, more results driven, male centered. As the center of family and religious life, González seems to contend that the home is just as integral to the ranch as everything else. While the family patriarch may appear to have complete control, nothing is successful without the careful management of the home, and Doña Margarita and many other women like her ensure the success of the family and the family business.

Later, González writes of Doña Ramona as "a tower of strength was she, and with an iron hand she ruled the *peones* who might have otherwise disregarded her position because she was a woman. He could see her, contrary to the custom of her time, riding with him and the vaqueros to the pastures whenever necessity required it of her" (20). Here, Doña Ramona provides us with a clear example of regional domesticity. She responds to the particular demands of life and of the region she lives in, and she adapts to her situation. No one thinks she is less of a woman because she takes on more responsibility after her husband dies. Her life and the region she lives in require her to ride with the vaqueros and still maintain her household. In this portrayal, Mexican



American women respond to the demands of a changing region in hybrid adaptations. González illustrates this adaptation repeatedly in both *Dew* and *Caballero*. While archiving scenes from the past, González shows how women in the Southwest have been adapting their domesticity for centuries. While there are broad ideals about domesticity and what it should cover, domesticity and domestic expectations are constantly in flux.

One of the key characteristics of regional domesticity should be that it is always changing, adapting to the conditions. González adapts to and preserves changing conditions in South Texas through her own version of domesticity. She spoke constantly to women's proper roles in Mexican society while at the same time creating new roles for herself. She worked to put herself through school, went to the University of Texas to get her Masters, and was a key member of the male-dominated Texas Folklore Society without ever leaving the confines of proper womanhood. Eventually, she married and concentrated more on her expected duties as a wife, but we know she continued to work on both *Dew* and *Caballero* throughout that time. By telling stories and sharing folklore, González catalogues Mexican American women's roles. At the same time, the actual act of writing creates new roles for Mexican American women in the mid-twentieth century. Writing and education provided avenues for freedom of expression of ideas and a chance to move out of what could be a stifling domestic realm, if only temporarily. Adina De Zavala serves as a precursor to González in some ways, while the narrative of her life may be a bit more complex than the others. Either way, both women and many others like them found ways of expressing their interests and their grievances through domestic forms of preservation considered acceptable for women to use at the time. In the process,

they documented how negotiating the particular demands of domesticity in a region creates new forms of domesticity. For these women, their domesticity is distinctly Texan.

## Chapter 4

### **Boarding Schools and the Garden Roots of Regional Domesticity**

Brenda Child contends that “The boarding school as an institution is symbolic of American colonialism at its most genocidal” (37). While officially these schools were supposed to assimilate students through formal education, the reality was often much different. The ultimate mission of off reservation boarding schools was in Pratt’s words, to “Kill the Indian, and save the man.” But, as Clifford Trafzer and Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert note:

However effective they were, these governments did not totally assimilate all indigenous people because some students retained their cultures and languages, sometimes using skills and knowledge learned at boarding schools to preserve Native American beliefs, religions, medicines, literatures, histories, and other elements of their rich cultures. (29)

The Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, was one of those off reservation schools, and with their outing programs and focused attention on agriculture and gardening, a close study of the school offers opportunities to see how students combined the traditional with the new to create and document new hybrid practices.

Native American children arriving at government-ran boarding schools were immediately subjected to a system of total control with a goal of complete erasure of their ties to culture, family, and the land. School officials cut their hair, threw their traditional clothing away, and forbade students from speaking their native languages. Officials regimented all aspects of the experience with schedules for waking, eating, bathing, studying, and socializing; and in the early days of boarding schools, children were usually forbidden from going home for the summers and officials discouraged students’

families from visiting. These strict sanctions meant students spent years separated from their families, and these detachments from family inevitably lead to a loss of language and connection to culture. Yet, even from within a system of total control, students managed to carve out little spaces of their own and found ways to remain tied to their families and cultures, even if covertly. For many, this connection was music or sports or writing. But, for some female students at the Sherman Institute, gardens could also provide that means of escape while sustaining a connection to Native practices. Trafzer and Sakiestewa contend, “Children belonging to many diverse tribes from across the length and width of the United States attended Sherman Institute, often forming a new identity tied to their shared experiences at the school” (176). Brenda Child gives another example:

My grandmother was an Ojibwe speaker who learned English when she began her schooling, but she also picked up words and phrases in the Dakota language because of her close associations with these Dakota-speaking schoolmates. This peculiarly pan-Indian quality of the boarding schools is not what assimilationists, who were committed to the repression of tribal languages and culture, had in mind when they founded the institutions. (14)

For my purposes, I argue that, for the female students at Sherman, this shared identity often expressed itself through gardens. Students learned new practices from the curriculum at Sherman, but they also acquired new skills and practices from each other, resulting in new hybrid forms. Through an examination of the Sherman Institute and its policies towards female students paired with analysis of Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Gardens*

*in the Dunes*, I argue boarding school gardens become a place of preservation and hybridity, a method of community building and balance, and sources of hybrid, sustainable practices that act as Southwestern regional domesticities.<sup>16</sup>

Still operating as a Native American high school today, the Sherman Institute opened its doors in 1902 when the Perris Indian School relocated to a more urban area with better water access in Riverside, California. According to Trafzer and Sakiestewa Gilbert:

The founders of Sherman Institute intended the school to redeem Indian people for the glory of God and mankind. They intended to use the school to assimilate students by physically separating them from their cultures, languages, kin, leaders, and homes. The United States shared this goal of assimilating indigenous peoples with other governments around the world.

(28)

The school's biggest backer, Frank A. Miller, who owned a large hotel in the area and was a major stockholder in the trolley car company, hoped the school would serve as a tourist attraction and that its students would provide cheap labor to the community. The school originally housed students in grades one through grade eight, but in 1916, it expanded to include up to the tenth grade (Paxton 176). The Sherman Institute taught traditional subjects, such as math, spelling, and writing, but government officials created the school to teach Indian pupils industrial trades that they could use on the reservation (Sakiestewa Gilbert 44). In many cases, the students trained to work in low paying jobs or to help to white families in the area. In fact, the school did become a major source of

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<sup>16</sup> See [shermanindianmuseum.org](http://shermanindianmuseum.org) for a photographic archive of the Sherman Institute, its landscapes, and its agricultural and ranch programs.

labor for the area, with both male and female students frequently working in the community.

No detail was overlooked in the planning and construction of the Sherman Institute. The school grounds eventually consisted of eleven buildings, all created in the Mission Revival style. This element was meant to evoke a mythical California mission past which had become incredibly prevalent and popular after the release of Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*. Not only did this design technique express ties to California's mission past of converting and "civilizing" the Indians of California, similar to what the Sherman Institute hoped to do, but by tying the school's architecture to *Ramona*, Harwood Hall hoped to cash in on the tourist boom brought to Southern California by the novel's popularity. From its mission style buildings to Alessandro Lodge, the older boys' dormitory, and Ramona Hall, home to the older female students, Sherman Institute is inextricably tied to the myth of the Southwest and to sentimental ideas about California's Spanish mission past. Naming the buildings after the most famous sentimental novel written about California also points to the tourist attraction aspect of the Sherman Institute. The names Alessandro and Ramona would be instantly recognizable to many who visited the school. The irony of using the names of *Ramona*'s main characters in the construction of the Sherman Institute should not be overlooked. The associations with the names also tied the students there to the vanishing Indians in *Ramona*. As the novel draws to its sentimental close, Alessandro, the young Native American male, is dead at the hands of an Anglo man, and the mixed-race Ramona has married into old Spanish aristocracy and has effectively lost her Native identity.

Hall did not stop his transformation of the new space in Riverside with the buildings. He also sought to completely alter the landscape of the school, removing the native plants and trees already in the area and working to create something he thought would be more appealing and more in line with his ideas for the students in his new school. Trafzer and Sakiestewa Gilbert report:

When designing and building Sherman, officials destroyed the natural environment around the school, intentionally killing the native vegetation and replacing it with foreign plants such as grass, palm trees, bushes, flowers, and citrus trees. Sherman's new landscape offered a graphic physical symbol of change, and a new order of civilization, replacing the crude, unordered native landscape of southern California. (4)

Hall and other officials believed, as did the U.S. government, that by removing students from their native land and placing them within a system that officials believed was more ordered and more sophisticated, these students could flourish. However, for many students, being uprooted from their homes and families made it that much harder to succeed in an unfamiliar environment, and the students looked for any connections they could find to their old lives. For my purposes, I argue many students were able to find those connections through one of the things Sherman tried so hard to control and to use as a method of control, which was the natural spaces and gardens of the Institute itself.

The mission of the Sherman Institute, like that of other boarding schools, was to assimilate students into American ideals and methods, and ultimately, to teach them the skills they would need to work in service roles in the communities. While students were often told they could learn trades they could use on the reservation or out in the

communities, the reality was that many of the skills they learned were not transferable back to the reservation and that they would not always have opportunities to use their trades in the community. In most cases, especially for the girls, boarding schools trained them to work as domestic servants in white homes. Sakiestewa Gilbert asserts, “Teachings deemed practical, such as farming, cooking, and other industrial skills, had a fundamental role in the curriculum at every level” (41). In fact, learning trades and other important skills often took center stage in students’ educations, and for many students, learning these practical skills took the form of outing programs.

Harwood Hall promised backers that the school would provide a source of cheap labor for the community, and he lived up to his claims. Trafzer and Sakiestewa Gilbert note:

At best, the outing system worked from racist preconceptions in order to “uplift” Indian people by providing the skills and outlooks necessary for them to compete and succeed in the white world. At worst, though, outing programs at Indian boarding schools served as employment agencies, sending young Indian people to perform dangerous, unskilled tasks at discount wages and without the protection and supervision that Indian school administrators so often promised to worried parents. (108)

In its earliest days, stretching back to when Sherman was still the Perris Indian School, Sherman Institute focused mostly on sending its female students out to work in the community. Sakiestewa Gilbert notes:

During the 1900s, school officials at Sherman Institute viewed ‘Outing’ as a way to fulfill Riverside community’s growing labor needs. Through the



Outing program, girls cooked, cleaned, washed, and took care of children for white families. School officials wanted their Indian pupils to be exposed to American influences, however, pupils usually ended up working as domestic servants. (47)

The program continued to gain in popularity, so soon many of the male students at Sherman were also participating in the outing program. For the students, outing programs provided experience in the world outside of Sherman and a source of income, although the amounts the students received varied and the work hours were often long. As an example, Sakiestewa Gilbert writes that “In the early twentieth century, Hopi girls in the Outing program worked at least eight hours a day, six days a week, and received \$10 or less a month” (47). Money was not only an incentive for the students, adding revenue was also the driving force behind the school’s use of outing programs. Students who lived off campus as part of the outing programs paid for their own food and room and board at their employer’s home, and “instead of paying the pupils directly, the employer sent the money to the school, where officials kept some of the earnings and placed the rest in the student’s bank account” (Sakiestewa Gilbert 47). Sherman received government funding based on students enrolled, and the students in the outing program were technically enrolled and attended classes at Sherman or at the local schools in the communities where they worked. The outing program allowed Sherman Institute to enroll higher and higher numbers of students without overcrowding issues and without additional expenditures.

While both male and female boarding school students all endured near constant surveillance outside and inside the outing program, the female students usually faced the

strictest requirements and control. These restrictions often stemmed from two things. First, even though Anglo women were beginning to take on new roles outside the home, expectations for female boarding school students were based firmly within Victorian codes of womanhood. As Barbara Welter notes, True womanhood required women to display “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” (152) at all times, and school officials expected Native girls to adhere to these same strict standards. However, at the same time, school instructors and officials assumed Native women lacked a natural sense of True Womanhood and given the chance, they would easily stray from its dictates. The various expectations about women’s work that the Native American girls were raised with, which varied from tribe to tribe or pueblo to pueblo, were rarely considered. Girls sent into outing programs at Sherman and other boarding schools often went into host homes with a long list of expectations centered firmly within Victorian-era codes of womanly conduct. The Sherman Institute Museum archive includes several letters to host families of students in the outing program removing the Native girls living in those host homes because the families did not maintain a close enough watch on the girls or gave them too much free time. Second, the prevailing sentiment of the time held that Native women were the key to assimilating Native Americans families on the reservations, but they would need to learn domesticity first. Amanda Zink argues:

The domestic curriculum Reel and others wrote and implemented was founded on white racist assumptions that Indian parents – and particularly Indian mothers – were sorely lacking in their ability to raise children who could in any way adapt to life under the new regime of settler colonialism. (201)

Boarding schools were a necessary component of training young Native girls to adapt on their own and to learn how to take knowledge back to their families to help them convert as well. Native girls could learn proper domesticity based on Victorian ideals and then take back those new skills to the reservations and influence others to let go of the traditional ways. As K. Tsianina Lomawaima asserts:

Federal policy makers intended to create a new kind of Indian through the moral, spiritual, and physical training of the boarding schools. For Indian girls, that meant a process of civilization derived from the Victorian model of middle-class white domesticity, a template requiring alteration to fit the lower level of physical organization and mental capacity inherited by Indians. (230)

Boarding schools served as places for Native girls to learn to become domestic help either in the homes of middle-class white women or as wives to their future Native husbands, but Native girls possessed their own ideas about women's domestic roles. While they were expected to adhere to Victorian models, female students in Indian boarding schools learned to combine what they knew with what they were learning, and they worked to understand the ways their newly acquired knowledge and skills could help their families back home. Child uses the example of star quilts. She writes, "Since the girls brought the domestic art of quilting back to their tribes from boarding school, Native American women have become renowned for their skill and decorative quilts are now the most highly prized item at give-aways during tribal celebrations (16). The result is hybrid forms of domesticity – about both survival in boarding school and adaption, survival, and continuance afterward.

Sakiestewa Gilbert provides an example specific to Hopi girls at Sherman, but this case also serves as a template for what other students may have felt. Sakiestewa Gilbert writes:

The Hopi pupils at Sherman Institute did not abandon their indigenous education. Instead of allowing their boarding school experience to destroy the Hopi way of life, Hopis at Sherman Institute maintained the integrity of their culture, made accommodations to succeed at school, and used the skills they learned to contribute to their village communities. (xxix)

A similar outlook was shared by other students at the boarding school and points to an active effort to resist total assimilation and an attempt to look for ways to make the boarding school routine fit into their traditional upbringing. For Native American girls in boarding schools, there were less opportunities to make the experience really theirs, but they negotiated the conditions they were given to preserve their cultures and ties to home. Zink argues Native women and girls learned the language of domesticity in boarding schools, and then used that language to speak back to Anglo domesticity while asserting their own “sovereign domesticities” (16). Gardens, both at boarding school and when the girls returned to their homes or started their own new homes, work along these same lines and provide examples of domesticity rooted in the region and built on the combining of cultural expectations. These gardens act as a concrete, rooted example of regional domesticity in the Southwest.

Through Sherman’s agricultural programs, most notably at the Sherman Ranch, the school provided opportunities for both boys and girls to simulate life on their own farms and ranches. For some students, agriculture had always been central to their

cultures, and working on the Ranch was an extension and allowed them to connect to something they found familiar. The male students tended the livestock, took care of the farm equipment, and did the large-scale planting that sustained the school, but for the girls, as a facet of the domestic space, the kitchen garden was their domain. Child writes, “Sherman Institute in California had the best-fed children of all the government boarding schools, and the students there worked hard to produce fruit and milk on the school farm” (36). The gardens grown and protected by the Native girls chosen for the Ranch program had a direct impact on the health of their fellow students and again shows how gardens are an important part of women’s domestic spaces and are an extension of production and preservation in the home space.

While boys in boarding schools were assigned the agricultural tasks, kitchen vegetable gardens were designated as feminine spaces and gave the female students a chance to be active agents in their educations but also in the preservation of their own cultures and traditions. For students at the Sherman Ranch, the kitchen garden was an extension of the home and was located next to the clothesline and firmly within the fenced in yard, keeping the garden locked safely within the domestic space of the home. Sakiestewa Gilbert notes, “Viewed by school officials as a ‘little training school in itself,’ the Ranch incorporated academics and manual labor to advance the U.S. government’s policy of practical education” (44). The Ranch covered nearly 100 acres and was some of the most fertile farmland in the region. In addition to the domestic skills of ironing, sewing, and childcare the women learned to do so they could work in Anglo homes, female students assigned to the Sherman Ranch learned a wider range of skills that were needed to run a farm household of their own. Sakiestewa Gilbert notes the girls “were

taught to make butter, milk a few cows, care for some poultry, and raise vegetables necessary for farm meals” (45). A promotional pamphlet published by the Sherman Institute in 1909 details girls’ roles at the ranch:

Girls receive instruction and training in all that pertains to the duties of ranch housekeeper — such as caring for the home, cooking, kitchen gardening, care of poultry on a small scale, care of milk, and butter-making. Along with the ranch work the pupils-, both boys and girls, get the same school advantages as at Sherman proper. No department of Sherman is more popular for its valuable opportunities and instruction than the ranch. (*Sherman Institute* 18)

If we are to believe Sherman’s claim this was the most popular place on the campus, it is easy to assume this is true because of the relative freedom and autonomy students had there. Ranch students were not subjected to the same rigid schedule as their counterparts on the main campus, as the crops and animals on the Ranch were not on a set time schedule. Not only did the girls at the Ranch feed the other students assigned there, but we know the Ranch produced a great deal of the food consumed at the whole institution.

At boarding schools, Native girls were expected to learn to take care of every aspect of the Victorian home, and in many cases, this extended to gardens. Gardening was incredibly popular at the turn of the century, and Victorian women were at the center of the popularity. Early works aimed at women gardeners offered practical advice about creating garden spaces in undeveloped spaces while later works around the turn of the century focused more on the practical use of gardens mixed with an aesthetic consciousness towards those spaces (Bilston 2). Gardens became a natural extension of

the home, a space literally outside but still firmly connected to the space of home. Gardens offered women a chance to control nature while remaining firmly within womanly expectations. In fact, as Welter notes of the Victorian-era view of proper womanhood, Victorian women “were expected to have a special affinity for flowers” (165). These expectations about gardening and its increasing popularity among Victorian-era women made home gardening for the female students at Sherman not only acceptable but necessary as part of their assimilation into middle class Anglo ideals. On the other hand, gardening also allowed Native girls to create unique domestic spaces in the absence of home. For many of the female students, maintaining the family garden at home was an acceptable place for Native girls to train and learn customs, traditions, and stories as well as methods for growing and preserving goods. Working in the gardens of the Sherman Ranch provided an opportunity to learn new gardening techniques while also using the skills they brought with them. The girls were not necessarily replacing a traditional system with something new, but instead incorporating the best of both, and in the process, creating new forms of regional domesticity. Gardens provided opportunities to show adaptability from within the conditions of settler domesticity while also preserving cultural practices for future generations.

As the most contemporary work I use in my dissertation, Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Gardens in the Dunes* critiques American imperialism, westward expansion, and Indian removal and assimilation while illustrating the centrality of the late nineteenth century to the continued conversations of women writers in the greater Southwest. *Gardens in the Dunes* repopulates and repurposes the female-dominated, feminine spaces of Victorian gardens as a mode of critique, and in the process, Silko illustrates the central role of

hybrid garden spaces to domestic preservation and continuance. With their participation in the Sherman outing program, Silko's female characters Indigo and Hattie witness and experience examples of female gardens that document women's control of garden spaces throughout centuries while often also defying many of the Victorian norms of the time that were often so centered in garden spaces. Because of the spiritual strength and practical knowledge these characters gain, their travel through colonial spaces enables them to reassert their claims to feminine, natural spaces of their own.

In *Frontiers of Femininity*, Karen Morin writes:

Masculinist political, corporate, educational, and religious institutions produced a hegemonic version of upper- and middle-class womanhood in the late Victorian period that rested on an ideology of women as gifted with superior moral character. In such hegemonic constructions of gender difference, bourgeois women were not only to be moral and innocent, but bound by duty and self-sacrifice to their families, and by extension, to society and nation. (4)

The late nineteenth century saw increasing urbanization and industrialization in both Europe and the U.S. For Victorian women and men on both continents, this rapid development meant a growing division between the public, masculine spaces of work life and the private, feminine space of home and family life. In *Putting Women in Place*, Mona Domash and Joni Seager argue that this division was "essential to the ideology of an emerging capitalist system" (5) and that "In the Victorian ideal, women were in charge of creating in material terms a sanctuary from the masculine, public world. And this sanctuary was more than an escape; the home was meant to be an environment that



actively shaped character and behavior” (7). A Victorian home’s garden was an extension of this sanctuary, and while these sometimes massive and even often over the top gardens were paid for through men’s labor, they were assigned to the feminine, domestic sphere. Victorian women often had full control over their design and maintenance. Much like the other women in my dissertation who have used various methods from autobiographies to scrapbooking to control the narratives about their lives and customs while documenting the formation of new, hybrid forms of domesticity, for Native girls both before, during, and after boarding school, gardens offer these same chances at control and preservation. For the Native women who attended the Sherman Institute, opportunities to create and work in their own garden spaces continue this narrative. Silko’s Indigo, the main character in *Gardens in the Dunes*, takes this concept a step further and shows an international approach to Sherman’s use of gardens to educate and control girls and a fictional critique to Sherman’s outing programs.

Stephanie Li contends the gardening in *Dunes* is domestic resistance “against both cultural and physical genocide” (20). I agree, but I add that this resistance through gardens also speaks to a new form of domesticity, one based on the geographic, political, and cultural demands of the region. As Silko notes in *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*, “Survival in any landscape comes down to making the best use of all available resources” (35). For Indigo, those demands included understanding the land where she grew up and using the knowledge that the “deep sand held precious moisture from runoff that nurtured the plants; along the sandstone cliffs above the dunes, dampness seeped out of cracks in the cliff” (Silko 14) and comprehending how she could combine that deeply ingrained knowledge with what she learned abroad. For the girls working in kitchen

gardens at Sherman, officials expected that they would gain new skills they could then take home to their families, but the girls were also honing skills they learned at home and bringing their cultural knowledge of gardening to Sherman. And while the Sherman Institute completely remade the landscape of the school to symbolize transformation and control, the kitchen gardens provided foods native to the area and relied on the female kitchen gardeners to help them flourish while Indigo's garden is not completely transformed, it is simply enhanced.

For Indigo, as she escapes the Sherman Institute and accompanies Hattie and Edward across the U.S. and Europe as part of Sherman's outing program, gardens illustrate Indigo's ties to home even when she is overseas. Wherever she goes, she carries the knowledge her grandmother taught her about the gardens in the dunes with her, and she uses those lessons as a measure to compare the new information she receives. As she experiences other gardens through Sherman's outing program, she applies what she knows about her own garden spaces with what she sees in the new spaces. In the process, she collects knowledge about gardening practices as well as actual garden specimens that she eventually takes back to her own garden, which becomes a hybrid space based on the experiences and demands of the region. A garden in the literal sense is not mobile. It is literally rooted in place, which makes it regional. Add the conditions affecting the region and combine the interactions between different groups in the region, and the result is a hybrid domestic space. While Indigo travels abroad, she remains spiritually tied to her garden in the dunes of the greater Southwest, and she consciously makes decisions and connections based on her understanding of her own garden. Indigo collects seeds and bulbs from the places she visits and eventually brings them back to her own garden,

providing a practical, if fictional, example of women actively creating hybrid garden spaces as a response to colonial practices.

Garden hybridity and connections to culture are central themes in Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes*, and the fictional work offers a detailed portrait of a young Native girl navigating settler colonialism. As Mary Magoulick notes, "Silko's women help each other and the land to survive. Nature emerges as a source that may be shaped in various ways, but (at least in the novel) only flourishes with the care women provide, while it heals and helps them in return" (22). With their participation in the male dominated world of Victorian travel, Silko's female *Garden* characters Indigo and Hattie experience examples of female gardens that frequently defied norms and expectations of the time; and because of the spiritual strength and practical knowledge these characters gained, their travels enable them to reassert their claims to a feminine space, or garden, of their own.

As Indigo travels across the U.S. and abroad, she never loses a connection to the gardens where her grandmother raised her. In fact, she collects seeds and bulbs to bring back to her garden, always hoping the garden is the key to reuniting her family. The story centers on Indigo, a young, Sand Lizard girl taken from her family and the safety of her grandmother's garden and placed in a Native American boarding school—the Sherman Institute. After several months at Sherman, Indigo escapes into the orange groves surrounding the school, in effect using gardens as a means of protection. At the edge of the groves, she finds the home and gardens of Victorian botanist and opportunist, Edward Palmer, and his wife Hattie. Indigo finds shelter in the gardens and immediately feels a connection to what she experiences there. Silko writes of Indigo, "She was not so far

away from home: some of the same birds lived here – little speckled cactus wrens were calling one another around the lilac bushes, and though she could not see him, a desert curved beak greeted the dawn with trills of praise” (71). Indigo is drawn to the highly stylized Victorian gardens because even with European elements, they are rooted in place. The animals living in the gardens and the flowers and fruits that grow there must all adjust to the elements in order to survive. It seems an easy stretch to say the Indian girls working in their kitchen gardens at Sherman Ranch would recognize these same connections and feel something of home in the Ranch gardens they raised. Indigo further recognizes the usefulness of the garden and laments she does not have time to collect seeds to take back with her. She remembers, “Grandma Fleet always advised the girls to collect as many new seeds as they could carry home. The more strange and unknown the plant, the more interested Grandma Fleet was; she loved to collect and trade seeds” (84). Grandma Fleet welcomed hybridity in her garden, and if she traded seeds, she seems open to growing new foods in the gardens in the dunes, just as Indigo will eventually bring new seeds and new techniques to the gardens. Grandma Fleet shows us an example of a regional domesticity in action. She creates her garden based on her experiences in the region and her interactions with other groups in the region.

Soon after her arrival in the garden, Hattie spots Indigo hiding among the plants. Hattie is a newlywed, who having gone off to college only to have her thesis about women’s roles in early Christianity denied and to be attacked by a fellow student, returns home and is told to stay away from intellectual pursuits. Eventually she marries Edward and while she may not meet the four tenants of True Womanhood, she settles into her role as a Victorian-era housewife. Immediately following the wedding, Edward leaves on

an expedition to the Caribbean, and Hattie works to get comfortable in her new home. As Magoulick notes:

Throughout the novel we see gardening as a fundamental means for building community and learning life's most important lessons, especially among and from the point of view of women. Through their devotion to their gardens, the women build worlds that endure to nurture body and soul – as food and as sources of beauty. (30)

Here, Hattie's garden functions as a meeting place between Hattie's world and Indigo's, and as a space it offers solace to both. While she waits to see if Indigo will take the food she left for her and come out of the lilacs, Hattie loses herself in her plans for the gardens. Hattie "paced off the width of the grassy area and noted the measurements on one of the note cards she carried in her pocket" and decides "the rectangle of lawn outlined with lilacs was wasted space she could put to good use" (73). While Indigo does not immediately come out into the open while Hattie is in the garden, Hattie's immersion in the experience of planning the space interests Indigo and offers a connection between the two of them. With Edward away, Hattie centers her attention in the gardens and begins immediately to control those spaces. She hopes her interest in the gardens and in their new home will convince Edward she is not upset about leaving for his voyage before their honeymoon. And now, she hopes her encounter with Indigo will encourage Edward to let her help the girl find her family.

Domosh and Seager write, "The very act of movement through space, as well as the distance that travel put between them and the strictures of home, freed some Victorian women to other sides of their personalities" (143) and these women "traveled to escape

the strictures of European or U.S. Victorian culture, and to gain a sense of control over their own lives” (145). Eventually, Edward agrees to let Indigo travel abroad with the couple as Hattie’s personal attendant, a version of the outing programs Sherman used to provide cheap labor to Riverside’s residents. While male students were often sent to neighboring farms to work, and we learn Edward employs boys from Sherman in the summers, placing young Native women in homes was much more popular. As noted previously, female boarding students lived in homes in the community and acted as babysitters, dish washers, housekeepers, and cooks. Sherman controlled the small amounts of money students made after paying room, board, and transportation related to their jobs; the school had complete control of where students worked, how much they were paid, and when they could return to school (Trafzer et al 48). Hattie takes advantage of the popularity of this practice to keep Indigo returning to the boarding school and thus begins Indigo’s study of feminine garden spaces in the U.S. and Europe. Through their travels in Europe, Indigo and Hattie come into contact with gardens and women who do not fit the traditional modes of Victorian expectations; and Indigo uses these encounters, this new knowledge, and the seeds and bulbs she collects, to return to her home in the desert Southwest and create her own hybrid garden domestic space to sustain her own family.

When centered on U.S. soil, Silko provides two very different examples of gardens in Victorian era America, but both are feminine spaces. The first garden, Grandma Fleet’s garden in the dunes of Arizona, works with and through the natural elements and provides not only sanctuary, but also food, nourishment, and safety to its inhabitants – the Sand Lizard people and other indigenous groups. Henri Lefebvre

maintains that “The more a space partakes of nature, the less it enters into the social relations of production” (83). This assertion seems especially true of Grandma Fleet’s garden. While the garden is staged, at least to some degree, to make sure the garden produces year after year, it is still a decidedly natural space. The garden is not involved in the social forces of production but seems in opposition to the production that surrounds the garden on all sides. As cities and their inhabitants seek to gain more, build more and control more of the land and its inhabitants, Grandma Fleet’s garden serves as protection against these elements. She also ensures preservation by saving seeds from each year to use the next and as mentioned previously, by trading for new seeds and plants from other people she meets, effectively encouraging hybridity and community in the space of her garden. The garden in the dunes is sophisticated. It may be sparse on the surface, but well-honed techniques kept the garden going and its people nourished for generations. As Terre Ryan contends:

Grandma Fleet's practices look simple compared to the botanical theatrics that Indigo later encounters in the Northeast, but her efforts demonstrate a highly sophisticated understanding of desert agriculture and the continuation of agricultural traditions that had been in practice for thousands of years. (118)

The techniques Grandma Fleet uses in her garden are based on a natural use of the foods it produces and on the assumption that some of the fruits and vegetables will be left to go to seed so that a new crop will be possible the next year. Many of the female boarding students at Sherman, similar to Silko’s fictional Indigo, brought this same kind of knowledge with them from their own mothers’ and grandmothers’ gardens. Indigo

combines these tenets with the new traditions she learns abroad as part of her outing program to form her own hybrid domestic space in the same way girls working on the Sherman Ranch melded what they already knew of gardening and food production and preservation with the new techniques they learned at boarding school. The result is regional domesticity in natural spaces. Using new and old techniques in gardens, a decidedly feminine space, is progressive, adaptable, hybrid, sustainable, and enduring.

It is only with the arrival of white settlers that the Sand Lizard gardening system begins to falter and is unable to provide enough food for the people. U.S forces continue to push Native people in the area out of their homes and spaces and force them further into the desert and into the Sand Lizard gardens. The garden cannot sustain the influx of people, and the old practices of leaving seeds in the garden for next year are abandoned in favor of getting a little to eat now. Silko writes, "Before the summer rains ever came, the people were starving. They ate the dried-up seed pumpkins and squash left in the garden the year before as first harvest offerings; they consumed seeds set aside for planting next season. They ate everything they could find" (18). We see directly how spaces, in this case the garden space in the dunes, are both shaped by colonization and are perhaps created as a response to colonization. Not only does the garden fail because of the large number of people it is trying to support, but the space of the garden becomes the center for these displaced people as well. It goes from a garden supporting Indigo and her family to a refugee camp and hiding place for hundreds of people.

As Edward, Hattie, and Indigo move towards their trip to Europe, their last stop in the U.S. is the home of Edward's sister, Susan, and her husband. Here the reader gets the best example of a traditional Victorian garden, and it stands in stark contrast to almost



every aspect of Grandma Fleet's garden. Terre Ryan notes "Susan's baroque theatrics are a grotesque example of Victorian extravagance, yet they indicate that what she wants is power . . . if she cannot control her own life, she can still make the earth move" (125). For Susan and the other women in the story, the garden represents a chance for power and control. The same should be said of the Ranch gardens at the Sherman Institute. Every second of the girls' lives were regulated and controlled – what to wear, what to cook, where and how to work, but the girls had ultimate control over their kitchen gardens. While they were likely told what to plant, the production and life of the garden was ultimately in their hands. Gardens offered a sense of familiarity and a chance to control a space. Not being satisfied with the garden as it is, Susan remakes her gardens in the image of a traditional English landscape garden. Lefebvre notes, "It is becoming impossible to escape the notion that nature is being murdered by 'anti-nature'- by abstraction, by signs and images, by discourse, as also by labour and its products" (75). While Susan's garden is still a female-controlled space, her garden is a strong example of Lefebvre's notion. Susan takes special care to remove everything from the garden and start completely from scratch, and no expense is spared. What she wants is total control. Susan's insistence on removing everything native from the garden and replacing it with other plants seems a direct parallel to both Sherman's own removal of the native plants around the school and an absolute critique on the U.S. policy of removing Native Americans from their homelands, and most importantly maybe, it is about ultimate control. As Susan's remade garden takes shape, she decides something is missing and locates two beech trees to be moved from an old farm through the city and into the garden. As Indigo watches the moving of the trees, she "was shocked by the sight:

wrapped in canvas and big chains on the flat wagon was a great tree lying helpless, its leaves shocked limp, followed by its companion; the stain of damp earth like dark blood seeped through the canvas” (Silko 183). According to Terre Ryan, "The tree scene also conjures images of the forced relocation of America's indigenous peoples from their native lands and of Indigo's displacement" (124). Susan’s garden serves as a reminder of not only the removal of others from the land, but also the Victorian importance of the social production of space. All the preparations and changes to the garden are made solely to use as the setting for a gala Susan is throwing.

As Edward Said writes in *Empire, Geography and Culture*, there seems to be “little notice of the fact that the extraordinary global reach of classical nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European imperialism still casts a considerable shadow over our own times” (5). In the U.S., the removal of indigenous people and the closing of the frontier made the American West open to both foreign and domestic travelers. The very idea of traveling to national parks in the U.S., a popular form of leisure even now, was built on the removal and destruction of the indigenous people who first inhabited the land. And as we know of the Sherman Institute, boarding schools often marketed themselves as tourist attractions and capitalized on this new domestic travel. In Europe, the colonization of other lands and countries provided opportunities for both leisure and profit. It is through this kind of travel that Indigo and Hattie encounter European gardens that are in direct contrast to the traditional views of Victorian gardening and feminine roles. Hoping to collect citron cuttings that can be propagated in the U.S. and sold for profit, Edward, along with Hattie and Indigo, eventually make their passage to Europe. As a botanist, Edward would seem to have a connection to the natural world, but this is

not the case. Edward's only interest in botany or gardening is for financial gain. Just as the male students at Sherman gardened on an industrial scale as a means to provide food for the school, and thus make money for school officials, Edward's forays into the natural world have always been for fame, prestige, and fortune. As Angelica Köhler points out "Palmer has sold his knowledge to colonizing imperialist enterprises; these try to make money by breaking down other countries' dominance in raising exotic plants whose possession has just become popular" (238) during this time in American history. It is this imperialist enterprise and a decidedly colonial mindset that enables Hattie and Indigo to go to Europe and experience gardens that will challenge these colonial and male-dominated Victorian notions. On the other hand, Indigo is caught up in the colonial process. She is only in Europe because she was forced out of her home and into an off-reservation boarding school, and she will have to rebuild her garden if she returns because westward expansion has upset the natural balance of the space.

Upon arriving in Europe, Hattie, Edward, and Indigo first go to Bath to stay with Hattie's aunt, Bronwyn. Aunt Bronwyn's home in a former nun's cloister sits close to the river and is surrounded by decaying rock walls overgrown with wild vegetation. Bronwyn's white cows roam freely throughout the property. Inside, "the stone masonry of the old cloister did not tolerate casual renovation. Long ago workmen on the old cloister complained that stones loosened and removed by day were found in their former locations the following day" (Silko 237). From the moment they enter Aunt Bronwyn's gardens, Hattie and Indigo are taken by the variety of plants and stones. The social function of this natural space is in total contrast to the intended use of Susan's garden in the U.S, but it shares a similar history. The stones in Aunt Bronwyn's garden represent

the remains of cultures long gone, many of them wiped out by European colonization over hundreds of years. Susan's garden stood for her ability to control aspects of her life, and conceal others, and the design focused primarily on impressing people at the gala. Bronwyn's garden, on the other hand, is about preserving the cultures that came before us, about providing food, and about the blending of cultures, something Indigo wants for her own garden. The fact that Bronwyn's garden still exists speaks to hybridity, life, function, and preservation. The main area is divided into sections containing indigenous English plants, plants left by the Romans and Normans, and finally fruits and vegetables from the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Indigo is fascinated by the flowers and plants in the garden and is surprised to see corn, a familiar sight to her, growing in the garden too. Bronwyn tells Indigo that many of the vegetables and fruits in the garden were first cultivated by Native Americans and that many of the other plants in the garden were "unknown in England until the arrival of the Romans" (244). Silko works to directly connect Native American gardening and agricultural practices to the sustainability of entire cultures over centuries and suggests Sherman's agricultural practices were intended as ways to sustain only the school but are based in traditions the Institute worked so hard to erase from its student's minds.

The group next ventures towards Corsica, where Edward hopes to illegally obtain citrus medicus cuttings to sell in the U.S. Bronwyn urged the group to meet up with a friend of hers, the *professoressa*, Laura. Edward jumps at the chance to perhaps find "the oldest varieties of Persian roses" (Silko 281) hidden somewhere in Laura's garden, and thus a chance to profit from the sale of these specimens. When Laura and her husband bought the property, the gardens were overgrown and in ruins. As they began to try to re-

establish the gardens, they “found a minotaur spying from the shrubbery in the same area, and when a careful survey was made after the first discoveries, a Medusa head was discovered at the foot of an embankment” (Silko 286). This portion of the garden was left mostly as it was, with the natural overgrowth often disguising the statues until a heavy rain or other natural occurrence brings them back into view and is reminiscent of Grandma Fleet’s practice of leaving some of the vegetables untouched and overgrown to ensure the garden would produce the next year. As they travel through the gardens, “Hattie recognized azaleas and rhododendrons among the overgrown holly and brambles; otherwise, Hattie would have believed they were in a primordial forest” (Silko 288). By letting the garden grow wild, the garden moves ever closer to its original, natural, and unstaged state. In another part of the garden, Indigo finds a figurine with snakes for limbs and instantly makes a connection to the stories Grandma Fleet told about the big snake that lived in their gardens. She is fascinated by the hybrid gladiolus growing amongst Laura’s collection of fertility figures and hopes to take some of the gladiola roots back to her garden. Suzanne Ferguson notes “through contact with the pagan and Christian past, Indigo and her American guardian, Hattie, both come to understand an interrelatedness of people across cultures and time in their shared respect for the earth and its creatures” (36). While Hattie and Indigo make valuable connections, Edward is stunned that the artifacts, which might be quite valuable, are left in the natural elements. “He did not approve of such a careless attitude towards rare artifacts” (291). Edward is unable to see the cultural significance of the garden and its natural state because it is a feminine space, but Hattie and Indigo see another example of a garden with connections to other gardens and with a purpose.

As the novel ends, Hattie, having endured her husband taking all her money and then dying, and then being brutally attacked, finds her sanctuary and her happiness in Aunt Bronwyn's garden full of pagan symbols. For Indigo, as Stephanie Li notes, "as a traveler, Indigo comes to appreciate those aspects of nature that, like her, are mobile and possess meaning that can be transplanted across geographic spaces" (29). Indigo's travels broadened her view of garden spaces and of the connections between women of various cultures, but she also develops an even stronger connection to her garden in the Arizona sand dunes. No matter where she goes, Indigo is always thinking of home and considering how the knowledge she gains from travel can benefit her home when she returns. The female students at Sherman and other boarding schools learned the same things in their travels from their homes in Arizona, California, Nevada, and other states to boarding schools and specifically, in the gardens of the Sherman Institute. A. Lavonne Brown Ruoff writes:

Indigo's and Hattie's travels in England and Italy provide each with a greater knowledge of Old European religion, culture, agriculture, and horticulture. Indigo learns about the existence of new plants and methods of agriculture unknown to her people. When she reunites with Sister Salt, Indigo brings with her a precious collection of seeds and knowledge that she uses to restore the old gardens in the dunes. (17)

For Indigo, traveling throughout the U.S. and Europe to view various female-centered garden spaces provides the knowledge that cultures and people are connected in very intricate ways, and that this connection and hybridity can form the basis for her own existence and domesticity back in her own garden in the dunes. With the knowledge of

regionally specific planting practices she learned from Grandma Fleet, a generational understanding of seasons and rainfall patterns in her Arizona garden, seeds she collected through her travels, and the experiences she gained by visiting the non-traditional gardens of Aunt Bronwyn and Laura, Indigo returns to her gardens in the dunes and develops ways to sustain herself and her family. Silko writes, “Even from a distance the bright ribbons of purple, red, yellow, and black gladiolus flowers were impossible to miss, woven crisscross over the terrace gardens, through the amaranth, pole beans, and sunflowers” (474). Indigo created a hybrid garden, where the traditional plants her family grew there for generations intermix with the new varieties she brought back with her from her travels, or officially, from her time in the Sherman outing program. This is regional domesticity. Her combining of the traditional with the new provide an opportunity to sustain her family through new means she combines with the old. Not only are the gladiolus pretty, but Indigo and her family are able to eat them as well. As Linda McDowell remarks, “Travel, even the idea of travelling, challenges the spatial associations between home and women that has been so important in structuring the social construction of femininity in the ‘West’, in Western social theories, and institutional practices” (206). For Indigo, travel has indeed challenged and changed their spatial associations. Through the knowledge Indigo gained abroad as part of the Sherman outing program, she asserts their claims to spaces of her own – a hybrid space built on generations of family knowledge combine with new techniques learned about boarding school. And while the Sherman Institute’s goal was always to assimilate Indian children and make them good domestic help, Silko’s Indigo serves as a reminder of resilience even while under the constant threat of erasure. For the Sherman Ranch girls who

travelled willingly or unwillingly to the Sherman Institute, gardens provided an opportunity to connect to Native practices school officials were trying to erase while also offering a chance to learn new techniques to blend with the old. The result is a regional domesticity rooted in the garden spaces of the Southwest; places where women still practice hybridity, production, and preservation while remembering the practices and women who came before them. Gardens offer a chance to control a space and act as a natural place of hybridity.



## Conclusion

### **Regional Domesticities in the Digital Age**

Throughout my dissertation, I argued that for Native American and Mexican American women in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, using popular forms of literature and preservation served as a powerful tool to fight erasure and demonstrate progressive hybrid domestic forms. The women in my study used sentimental fiction, autobiography, scrapbooking, folklore, and public preservation to repopulate the Southwest with the women who lived there for centuries but who were constantly erased or denigrated in the popular literature of the time. In the process, these women document how women of color in the greater Southwest navigated the demands of an Anglo domesticity firmly invested in the idea of True Womanhood and often convinced that ideal was something women of color could never obtain. Works by Ruiz de Burton, Winnemucca, De Zavala, González, Sekaquaptewa, and Silko speak back to these notions and demonstrate the power of using popular literary forms to influence public opinion. While much has changed since these women wrote their stories, many things have stayed the same. Women are still overlooked and underestimated and vestiges of the “proper” roles of women remain, and women of color are still fighting to make sure their cultures are not erased.

A quick search of the term “modern domesticity” through a popular search engine returned numerous articles about the state of women and gendered expectations in the twenty-first century. Domesticity is not just a narrow field only a select few people study but instead is something we should all be interested in. Perpetuating gendered expectations for women is a multibillion-dollar, and often digital, enterprise. The cult of

domesticity adapted to a changing, digital world just as women have, and these unattainable ideas still wield incredible influence. Laura Turner argues:

In our ever-more interconnected world, women are sharing more and more of their feelings—but it isn't always dissatisfaction with their role at home. In some ways, websites like Pinterest have become shrines in the new cult of domesticity. Over 80 percent of Pinterest users are female, and boards filled with pristine Restoration Hardware rugs and immaculate floral arrangements can be more tyrannical than inspirational, continuing to exert pressure on women to make their homes a perfect place of rest and repose in this hectic world.

Our domestic places are now influenced by digital spaces. Today's social media sites and forums act as the new *Godey's Lady Book*, the next chapter of the latest sentimental fiction tale is broadcast by an over-sharer on Facebook every day, and sites like Pinterest and Instagram show and tell us what our homes should look like, what foods we should cook, and how we should raise our children while simultaneously serving as digital scrapbooks that document our hopes, desires, successes, and failures. The rhetoric is often still the same, and women are still responding to issues often rooted in centuries of colonial domestic expectations; the modes have just changed. Still, not everything on social media perpetuates these ideas, and the beauty of our electronic age is that we have the choice to turn it off, look away, or move on. Or, maybe more importantly, we can become well-versed in the rhetoric, learn how to use the sites, and understand the reach and influence of these platforms. In other words, women can learn the popular forms of

literature and use them in the same ways the nineteenth-century women in my study studied and used the popular literature of their time.

Social media is full of women using the platforms to counter stereotypes, illustrate the expanded roles of women in our region, and preserve culture traditions. Immediately, one very current example comes to mind. Recently, I read an article from *Navajo Times* about a young, Navajo skateboarder and weaver who became a viral sensation as part of a TikTok challenge. Naomi Glasses posted a video of herself skateboarding on the Navajo Nation while wearing traditional Navajo clothing, and the video quickly gained in popularity. The videos brought Glasses a lot of media exposure, and she is using her popularity to bring attention to facets of Navajo life and to promote causes she believes in. At the same time, she illustrates the idea of hybridity so central to my dissertation. She is a traditional weaver, but she is also a skateboarder, and she found a way to use both to help the causes she believes in. Rima Krisst writes, “Glasses was also chosen to raise awareness about a new ‘Dine Skate Garden’ project in Two Grey Hills where there are no outdoor recreation facilities.” Glasses brings attention to her culture, preserves traditions through weaving, and uses her social media presence to affect for her community. As Krisst notes, “Glasses, who calls herself a modern day Navajo woman, has seamlessly stepped into the role of public figure and Diné lifestyle ambassador.” And just as Silko used her garden in the dunes of Arizona to document expanded domestic practices and roles for Indigo and the Sand Lizard people, Glasses now uses a skate garden on the Navajo Nation for the same purpose. She has stepped seamlessly into the tradition of Native American women in the Southwest using popular literature to document their region and explain expanded domestic practices and roles.

As one of the most popular social media platforms, TikTok may offer the most potential as a place to promote cultures and cultural expression. Michelle Greenwald notes, “An estimated 56% of U.S. consumers under 24 were on the platform last year. On average, they spent 52 minutes per day, and among pre-teens and teens, its estimated to be about 80 minutes.” And the number of users continues to grow. The potential audience on this platform offers the potential to reach audiences that could never be reached with traditional print means or even traditional media campaigns. Next, it is easy to use. Users just open their phones, record a video, and upload it to the platform, and you do not have to be an influencer to reap the benefits of potentially thousands or millions of people seeing your post. One of the most popular trends involves dancing, and Mexican American and Native American women are using this trend to introduce elements of their cultures to new audiences. Thousands of videos appear weekly of women dancing folklorico or traditional Native American dances for a potentially limitless audience. In the process, the women are promoting cultural awareness and creating an archive of their experiences. Just as De Zavala saved her experiences in a series of scrapbooks and González preserved a Spanish Mexican past through her folklore, women today do the same thing with social media with the potential to reach an untold number of people with no experience or understanding of their cultural heritages.

Finally, the pandemic and ever-continuing quarantine forced many social causes to focus their activism on online platforms. In many cases, this move accelerated the ability of these groups to gain more attention and bring in new members. Instagram is usually associated with lifestyle influencers and self-image, but social justice causes are

finding it can also serve as a vital method of reaching interested and mobilized followers.

According to Shannon Ho and Phil McCausland, activists are learning that Instagram:

provides an important dynamic: a young audience that is receptive to social justice issues on a flexible medium for sharing content. Some use it to educate viewers on policy and candidates, while others broadcast protesting experiences and strategize about where the movement goes next – sometimes literally, as they provide live updates on protests and marches.

Women in the Southwest have always found ways to voice their activism and to reach and mobilize an audience. Winnemucca used a speaking tour, perhaps the social media of that era, to voice her grievances with the federal government and to reach an audience that was ready to act on her cause. De Zavala locked herself inside the Alamo to gain the attention of the local media and inform more people about her fight to preserve the space. Modern Southwestern women do the same things with social media platforms. As just a few examples, Fronteristxs, a New Mexico based artist collective is focused on ending migrant detention and the carceral state, Latinx Parenting, based out of California, focuses on social justice and intergenerational healing through parenting workshops and support, and finally, thewokespanishteacher focuses on teaching the Spanish language, providing support for other teachers, and working to bring attention to the need to decolonize spaces and ways of thinking. These three examples are only a small sampling of the way women of color are using digital spaces to decolonize the Southwest while speaking to their hybridity and adaptability in the face of constant and persistent domestic rhetoric.

What we can assume for the future of regional domesticity studies is that the field will continue to be an essential tool in literary studies, women and gender studies, and as I argue, regional studies. Studying nineteenth-century domestic literature and preservation lays the groundwork for contemporary research questions and points to the formation of these new hybrid forms I call regional domesticities, which hold near limitless possibilities for continued and expanded study. The greater Southwest as a region is in constant flux, and so, the domestic demands of the region are constantly changing too. The women of the region have traditions of adapting to the conditions of the region while fighting to preserve their cultures and working to ensure equal treatment for themselves and others, and they will continue to do so.

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