The Literary Fictioning of John Gregory Bourke's Imperial Nostalgia

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A LITERARY FICTIONING OF JOHN GREGORY BOURKE’S IMPERIAL NOSTALGIA

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Toni K. McNair

2010
Dedication

I dedicate this to the Mescalero Apache Tribe for guiding me to this area of research – for their ethnographic and oral history interviews, access to ceremonies, friendship and humor. Further, I dedicate this work to the men and women who serve in the United States Army, past and present. The events they witness and what we tell of them are not a text, but remain a real reason historians and anthropologist remain dedicated to their crafts. Finally, I dedicate this to my son Michael, for all his love and support, and for being the best kid on the planet.

“This is the publication of the research of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that the actions of people shall not fade in time, so that the great and admirable monuments produced by both Greeks and barbarians shall not go unrenowned, and among other things, to set forth the reasons why they waged war on each other.”

Herodotus – Father of History, arguably one of our first examples of an ethnographer – b. 450 BCE
A LITERARY FICTIONING OF JOHN GREGORY BOURKE’S IMPERIAL NOSTALGIA

by

TONI K. MCNAIR

AS

BMS

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at El Paso
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of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History
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Preface

After a year researching Apache war veteran history, I chose to change my thesis and work in a different direction. What follows is a very brief sketch of the experience. My relationship with the Mescalero Apache Tribe of Mescalero, New Mexico began in 2000 as a business relationship while I was assigned to Fort Bliss, Texas and in that capacity I coordinated and conducted two annual conferences at the Mescalero Inn of the Mountain Gods. After retiring from the U.S. Army in 2003, I entered the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and in 2005 participated in a six-week archaeological dig at Three Rivers, New Mexico on Paleo-Indian ruins. For additional credit I was given the opportunity to conduct ethnographic interviews with Lorraine Second Evans, whose family includes the Apache Medicine Man. I met with her at the summer Coming of Age Ceremony held on the Mescalero Apache Reservation feast grounds during Fourth of July week. My first impression of the feast grounds came from the powerful image of an American flag flying high on a teepee pole. Though I knew little Indian or Apache history well, I was struck with the symbolism of patriotism for a country that attempted to destroy their ancestors, ancestors that include the famed Geronimo and Cochise.

Though I had been interviewing soldiers for nearly twenty years as part of my career field, this was my first opportunity at an ethnographic interview. In addition to on-site experience at the archeology dig, as a history major the only educational background I had in anthropology at that time were introductory courses in physical and cultural anthropology; in addition, I had very little previous contact with American Indians while serving in other countries during my military career. After some initial discomfort, I was put at ease by my informant and as we sat in her tent, was introduced to several friends and family members, most of whom were military veterans. In addition to sharing normal life experiences, I believe it was my status as a veteran that gave us common ground. Lorraine provided a wealth of ethnographic information on the anthropology and history of the Mescalero Apache Tribe, which includes the Mescalero, Lipan and Chiricahua bands. During that weekend I was privileged to
meet several members of the tribe, observe private ceremonies, ask questions and with permission from the supervising professor, share a particular artifact I unearthed at the dig that resembled a small ceremonial grinding stone. This particular stone appeared to have a thumb print indentation on one side and first two digit finger imprints on the other from years of usage; in addition, there was a substance on the grinding edge, which when unearthed was sparkly and bright red. The stone held significance to the members who saw and held it that weekend and they became very interested in our work on the dig site. One member offered to take me around the reservation and show me some ancient archaeological sites never before seen by outsiders but unfortunately I was never able to take him up on the offer as I had to get back to dig duties and school.

They made me feel at home and to reciprocate I invited Lorraine and her husband to our campsite for dinner a few weeks later to show them our dig work. Lorraine brought her husband, a female relative and her husband. Both men were veterans and in addition to sharing a meal, the camp and the dig site, we veterans shared our military experiences. After the dig was over, I thought of my experiences often but returned back to school to finish my undergraduate work and then enter graduate school in history in fall 2007. In the fall of 2008 I was seeking to research Apache war veteran history, and contacted the Mescalero American Legion, whose President is Cooney Starr, husband of Lorraine’s female relative and who had come to dinner at our campsite in 2005. Fortunately he remembered me and was enthusiastic about my project to do historical research on Apache war veterans.

I conducted four oral history interviews in November, 2008, which resulted in one research paper and the decision to pursue this topic for my graduate thesis. I continued to conduct monthly site visits to Mescalero, establishing relationships and contributing to the Tribe by staying at the Four Diamond Inn of the Mountain Gods. Though my friendships were deepening and various members continued to share their history, I was not gaining further veteran interviews. After nearly a year, I abandoned the project
due to time constraints and the realization that by inquiring about war experience my project had the potential of unlocking previously repressed horrific episodes.

One of the questions I posed to the war veterans I interviewed in 2008 was to ask what historical research they wanted to see done. One particular interview took six hours to complete because the veteran suffers from occasional flashbacks from serving in the early years of Vietnam. He interwove the interview questions to his own order while sharing with me a vast amount of history and anthropology of the Mescalero Apache Tribe. He wanted historical research done on the white man, because in his mind, history had been written extensively about Geronimo and the Apaches. He felt the same lenses had not been turned back on the white man. He also intimated that the Apache had known some white men as friends and not all were enemies.

With this in mind, and from a previous reading of José David Saldivar’s *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*, I became interested in John Gregory Bourke. Travel writing has always interested me and within my educational background in ancient and medieval history I had examined travel writing before, though with the understanding that certain elements of the narratives could veer from historical facts if there were other goals such as colonizing. My initial impression was that I would find a travel writer who was complicit in American imperialism in westward frontier expansion and there I would find an individual who wrote untruths with intent to sell the American public on resettlement to the west at the expense of Indian tribes.

What I found however could not have been further from that impression. Reading Bourke’s diaries and published books and articles, and his biography by John C. Porter, I found an individual who dedicated years to his country, often serving on horseback in the hot southwest desert, and who wrote copious notes on everything he saw and experienced. He served side by side with Apache scouts from the beginning of his service in the southwest, and documented their cultural practices and language, and lobbied relentlessly in his later years to have Geronimo and the other Apache prisoners released and
relocated to suitable lands. His diaries show a man who believed that white industrial expansion was inevitable, a fact he was witnessing and not necessarily promoting, and that the U.S. government’s ultimate failure was its refusal to understand Indian (and later Mexican-American) culture. He felt assimilation was better than complete destruction of Indians, but that assimilation would take generations and forceful abandonment of tribal culture was not in anyone’s best interest.

As a military veteran, I may perform a certain amount of bias towards John Gregory Bourke’s military service, which began at age sixteen and ended upon his death at 49, most of which was spent living under the military hardship conditions of the southwest desert region. I am also a woman and a feminist with an understanding of rights movement history and ongoing struggles to be heard. As a student who has majored in history and minored in anthropology, I feel that both disciplines in this case should be defended in the context from which Limón and Saldívar portray them, in addition I do regard Bourke’s anthropology and history to be exceptional considering the man in his time and within context. A closer reading of Saldívar and José E. Limón, led me to compare the sources with the statements they make, and what I found was, at a minimum, a stretching of the evidence and at its most inflammatory, an invention of fact that on the surface sounds quite believable and authoritative. However, I argue their statements about Bourke are literary constructions that result in a fiction and the narratives fail. This fictioning of Bourke’s imperialist nostalgia fails to place him into context of his anthropology and history, it also dismiss Bourke’s contributions to history, anthropology and to documenting the actual lives of American Indians, Mexican-Americans, American and military cultures.

Highly problematic at times, I feel that statements made by Limón and Saldívar make in reference to Bourke, anthropology and history, have been constructed to fit into an argument they are attempting to make of the ethnographer’s role in imperialism, violence and racializing. I can understand to some extent the point both are trying to make and appreciate the complexity of their arguments within postmodern thought and cultural studies, however, this does not relieve them of responsibility to portray
the text they analyze as it actually is. The critique I maintain is not aimed at the theoretical frameworks they promulgate for the study of culture, but in the means about which they do so as it pertains to John Gregory Bourke.

I want to thank Cooney Starr, Lorraine Second Evans, Philbert Choneska, Vernon Scott, Ray Shush and Gervase Peso of the Mescalero Apache Tribe for sharing their histories, artwork, and friendship in support of my research. I would also like to thank Dr. Jeffrey Shepherd for his continued support throughout the thesis process and more importantly for sharing his insights and experiences with his long and continuing research on behalf of the Hualapai Indians. Additionally, I would like to thank the UTEP Special Collections staff for their assistance with the microfilm collection of the John Gregory Bourke Diaries.
Abstract

Nineteenth-century Army Captain and American ethnographer John Gregory Bourke (b. 1846 – d. 1896) meticulously described and documented a vast amount of information on military life, geography, ecology, and people on both sides of the Mexican-American border, offering observations and opinions of American, Mexican, Mexican-American, Apache, Pueblo, Zuni and Plains Indian cultures. Because of his ethnographic studies of Mexican-Americans along the Rio Grande, cultural studies scholars, José E. Limón and José David Saldívar have identified John Gregory Bourke as complicit in the U.S. government’s imperialist project. Referring to Renato Rosaldo’s anthropological theory of imperialist nostalgia, These authors declare Bourke’s work is entirely underpinned with social theories of Franz Boas’ anthropological project or with English evolutionary anthropology, which according to them, was typical nineteenth-century evolutionary practice that subsumed humanity to grand narratives and analogies of natural history or different degrees of progressive evolution (and on the surface appears to refer to social Darwinism). Limón says Bourke made war and anthropology because it made for good military intelligence, and Saldívar says Bourke was Mexican and Indian hunting. Both authors carefully select certain sentences from Bourke biographer John C. Porter and Bourke’s published journals to make their argument. Using a postmodern stance that intentionally blurs the lines of history, anthropology and literature, the authors put Bourke on an archetypical path of the knightly quest in the form of a literary romance. I argue the authors selectively use facts that fit their arguments by leaving out details or misplacing words that would in fact change their narratives. They take postmodernism to an extreme and generate a fictional literature of John Gregory Bourke which has little bearing to actual events, the lives and culture he described, and to the realities of context or anthropological and historical methodologies.
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Introduction

Nineteenth-century Army Captain and American ethnographer John Gregory Bourke (b. 1846 – d. 1896) meticulously described and documented a vast amount of information on military life, geography, ecology, and people on both sides of the Mexican-American border, offering observations and opinions of American, Mexican, Mexican-American, Apache, Pueblo, Zuni and Plains Indian cultures. Because of his ethnographic studies of Mexican-Americans along the Rio Grande, cultural studies scholars, José E. Limón and José David Saldívar have identified John Gregory Bourke as complicit in the U.S. government’s imperialist project. Referring to Renato Rosaldo’s anthropological theory of imperialist nostalgia and his ideas of ‘the being there of travel writing,’ Saldívar declares Bourke’s work is entirely underpinned with social theories of Franz Boas’ anthropological project, which accordingly, was typical nineteenth-century social evolutionary practice that subsumed humanity to grand narratives and analogies of natural history. Limón on the other hand, states Bourke wholly absorbed and unquestionably accepted English evolutionary anthropology with its central idea that societies progress through different degrees of evolution (both of which on the surface appears to be referring social Darwinism to Boasian theory).¹

Limón says Bourke made war and anthropology because it made for good military intelligence, and Saldívar says Bourke was Mexican and Indian hunting, but I intend to show how both carefully select certain sentences from Bourke biographer John C. Porter and Bourke’s published journals to fit their arguments. Using a postmodern stance that intentionally blurs the lines of history, anthropology

¹ Social Darwinism was a consequence of Herbert Spencer’s theory of social evolution, which he believed to be progressive and it was he who coined the phrase “survival of the fittest.” In the nineteenth-century, Western societies believed they were at the pinnacle of social evolution, and social Darwinists interpreted natural selection to mean that if evolution was progress and only the fittest survived, then it was the right of Western powers to dominate those who were less technologically advanced. Conquest of an inferior society by a superior one was the result of actions of natural law and hence not only moral but imperative. See McGee, R. Jon and Richard L. Warms, Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History. Third Edition, (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004) p. 8. Despite the use of theories like his to justify colonial conquest, Spencer himself adamantly opposed British imperialism and criticized his nation for “picking quarrels with native races and taking possession of their lands.”
and literature, the authors put Bourke on an archetypical path of the knightly quest in the form of a literary romance. However, their postmodern methodology is taken to an extreme beyond textual analysis and intertextuality. Blurring of history, anthropology and literature is not uncommon in certain postmodernist theory and methodology, but I argue, they go beyond blurring and textual analysis, regardless of theoretical approach, by misrepresenting the text they use to reference Bourke.

It is my aim to demonstrate how Limón and Saldívar, in their attempt to uncover the connections of travel writing with ethnography and how they were used to legitimize the U.S. government’s imperialist project in the nineteenth-century, selectively used facts that fit their arguments by leaving out details that would in fact change their narratives. By taking postmodernism to an extreme, they generate a fictional literature of John Gregory Bourke to fit into an imperialist nostalgic framework, which has little bearing to actual events, the lives and culture he described, nor to the realities of context or anthropological and historical methodologies.

The scholarly reviews of Limón's *Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas* (1994) and Saldívar's *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (1997), are generally positive and laud the authors for their contributions to cultural studies. Outside of Lazaro Lima’s book, *The Latino Body: Crisis Identities in Cultural Memory*, published in 2007, which discusses Bourke’s “American Congo” in much the same way as Limón and Saldívar, little if any critique of Bourke can be located. I am critical of the authors’ literary fictioning of John Gregory Bourke only and do not evaluate the texts beyond the author’s stated aims and methods, and the

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statements they make pertaining to Bourke. I do not dismiss Bourke’s involvement in the American colonialism in its expansion west, but instead to focus on source analysis to demonstrate how the authors’ statements are constructed and misrepresent Bourke, his anthropology and history.\(^3\)

My methodology simply puts the evidence side by side to bring forth the construction of the statements made by Limón and Saldívar about Bourke. I use no particular theoretical approach; however, this research gives me the opportunity to employ a dual approach from anthropological and historical viewpoints while exploring postmodernism, and as such, terminology is employed from both fields; for example, in anthropology, a person one interviews in an ethnographic setting is an informant, whereas in history, a person one interviews for oral history is an interviewee. I pay particular attention to the sources referred to by Limón and Saldívar, who did not use the John Gregory Bourke Diaries, but relied on John C. Porter and Bourke’s published journal articles, such as “The American Congo,” *Scribner’s Magazine* (1894); “Folk Foods of the Rio Grande Valley and of Northern Mexico.” *Journal of American Folklore*, (1895); “Notes on the Language and Folk-Usage of the Rio Grande Valley (With Especial Regard to Survivals of Arabic Custom) The Journal of American Folklore, (1896); “Popular Medicine: Customs, and Superstitions of the Rio Grande.” *Journal of American Folklore* (1894); and “The Miracle Play of the Rio Grande.” *The Journal of American Folklore* (1893).\(^4\)

My aim is to reveal how their statements about Bourke are constructed and it is vital to quote their work verbatim and often at length. I also do not want to risk distorting certain evidence with my own arguments and paraphrasing. To avoid the overuse of lengthy quotations I have placed verbatim quotations in the appendices and compare a few from each author within chapter two. Of particular

\(^3\) As a minimum, by virtue of being an American citizen and furthermore a soldier, Bourke was complicit with American imperialism, as any American citizen or soldier may be considered today.

concern within this thesis is to place John Gregory Bourke into anthropological, historical and military
context, and postmodern methodology in relation to anthropology or history.

In the first chapter I discuss who John Gregory Bourke was, and attempt to place him into
context of his anthropology and history. Next, in chapter two, I take the statements made by Limón and
Saldívar about Bourke and attempt to demonstrate how the statements have been constructed from the
evidence which they cite. Finally, in chapter three, I attempt to explore postmodernism in anthropology
and history, beginning with Renato Rosaldo’s theory of imperialist nostalgia, the history and
philosophies behind postmodernist thought and its critique of the theories of anthropology and history.
Here too I also attempt a broad discussion of basic fundamentals in the history of anthropology and
theory, and in history and historical research.

It is my hope this work is significant by using a dual approach of anthropology and history to
postmodernism, to create a clearer understanding between the two. More importantly, I hope to bring
forth the John Gregory Bourke Diaries as a rich source for new and continued research into
anthropology, history, geology and ecology, and most importantly, the culture as he documented them in
the nineteenth-century. Very little real work has been done on the diaries outside of Porter’s biography,
though his published works are often cited as authoritative sources within Native American scholarship.
The diaries are massive and can be difficult to master, however, I firmly believe that the potential these
diaries offer for future research are immense and should not be regarded as mere writings of nostalgia
for the very forms of life Bourke was destroying, as Limón and Saldívar would lead us to believe.
Chapter 1: Who Is John Gregory Bourke? The Man in Context of His Anthropology and History

John Gregory Bourke began his military career in 1862 when he enlisted in the 15th Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry and fought with the Union in the American Civil War. He was in two of the top ten deadliest battles of the Civil War, first at Stone River, Tennessee December 30-31, 1862 and Jan 1-3, 1863 for which he received the Medal of Honor at the age of sixteen, just months after enlisting. He later served at Chicamauga, September 19-21, 1863. Bourke continued his service until the war ended and entered West Point in October 1865, graduating in June 1869 where he was sent west for assignment with the Third Cavalry. He served primarily in the southwest until his death in 1896, after 34 years of military service at the age of 49.

His first assignment in the southwest was in September 1869 at Fort Craig on the Rio Grande and at Camp Grant in Arizona Territory. From the beginning of his assignment to the Rio Grande Valley which stretched from El Paso, Texas to Taos, New Mexico, Bourke wrote extensive descriptions, personal observations and opinions of the land, people and military life and continued to do so until the day of his death. His ethnographic skills were recognized by John Wesley Powell and Bourke was selected for additional duties as an ethnographer for the Bureau of Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution in 1881. The John Gregory Bourke Diaries are preserved at West Point and available on microfilm. From these diaries, Bourke published several well known books and journal articles in the late nineteenth-century, including On the Border with Crook; An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madre: An Account of the Expedition in Pursuit of the Hostile Chiricahua Apaches in the Spring of 1883; and The Medicine Men of the Apache: Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1887-1888.”

5 Bourke published the following works in addition to journal articles noted above; An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madre: An Account of the Expedition in Pursuit of the Hostile Chiricahua Apaches in the Spring of 1883. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1886; Mackenzie’s Last Fight with the Cheyennes: A Winter Campaign in Wyoming and Montana.
In addition to the John Gregory Bourke Diaries, another insightful source on Bourke is in his biography written by Joseph C. Porter, in *Paper Medicine Man: John Gregory Bourke and His American West*. Porter used Bourke’s diaries and vast resources found in various private collections, the Smithsonian Institute, Southwest Museum Library, Center for Plains Studies, West Point and the U.S. Army Military History Institute. Throughout the biography, Porter cites specific Bourke diary entries and upon review of the diary itself, his narrative is accurately portrayed.

The Bourke diaries are currently being transcribed into print form by Charles M. Robinson III. There are three volumes available to this date, each being published two years apart. Volume I covers November 1872 – July 1876, Volume II July 1876 – April 1878, and Volume III June 1878 – June 1880, and this is only takes us mid-way through diary thirty. The problem with Robinson’s transcriptions are that he ‘chooses’ which diaries to translate directly and paraphrases others he feels are less important. In addition, Robinson missed an important opportunity to catalogue diary, page and entry number in his transcription, making it difficult to locate a specific entry. Bourke annotated his diary dates, pages and entry numbers in the original diaries which Robinson could have placed within his volumes. Porter remained numerically true to the diaries and one can locate the original information, whereas with Robinson’s work, you literally have to pour through pages of Bourke’s work to find specific...
information. However, Robinson’s otherwise painstaking and accurate translations are an excellent source to turn to when fatigue from reading Bourke’s handwritten diaries sets in or when the microfilm copy is somewhat diminished.

Another valuable resource is the University of Northern Colorado’s Museum of Anthropology publication of *Vocabulary of the Apache or ‘Inde’ Language of Arizona and New Mexico collected by John Gregory Bourke in the 1870s and 1880s*. Approached from a linguistic viewpoint, the introduction discusses Bourke’s methods and more importantly a history of linguistics in anthropology since his time. The publication is a combination of two manuscripts, the West Point collection and a collection found at the Nebraska State Historical Society. When Bourke was collecting nearly twenty five hundred Apache words, the notion of the phoneme and rigorous sound analysis was not yet articulated and would not be for another sixty years. Bourke worked through bilingual Spanish-Apache speakers, which meant his recording was phonetic. Editor Carol J. Condie states that Bourke seemed to have a good ear for most segmentals but was somewhat weak in hearing tone and glottalization. Subsequent work has proven some of Bourke’s conclusions about Apache history wrong – for example, he states a word proves linguistically that Apaches have never been potters, but always basketmakers. Condie points out that Bourke could not have known that archeologists eighty years later would demonstrate that at least some Apaches had been potters of long standing. Condie nonetheless claims that the job Bourke performed was thorough and painstaking “If the caveats are kept in mind, the vocabulary and ethnographic notes should prove valuable to scholars working today.” Here too we learn that Bourke was unknowingly recording words of warpath language, a special language considered crucial to the success of Western Apache warriors.6

Bourke is known in history as an aide-de-camp to Brigadier General Crook and was with Crook when he brought Geronimo in peacefully to end the Indian Wars. Beginning his military career at the

age of sixteen, Bourke saw many battles of the Civil War, to include Battle at Stone River with 24,645 casualties dead and Chickamauga, with casualties of 34,624 dead. According to his biographer, he did not write much about his experiences in the Civil War and only mentions it as “fearful days of carnage.” Bourke had an aptitude for language and excelled in Spanish and French at West Point, an institution that continually tried to recruit him to teach Spanish to cadets, though he declined.7

After commissioning at West Point, Bourke’s first assignment was to fight and subdue Apaches. The Apaches had been fighting the Spanish since the 1600s, and after Mexico’s achieved independence in 1810, became Mexico’s “problem.” The Apaches were excellent equestrians and skillful raiders which created the serious tensions that culminated in 1837 when Chihuahua began offering to trappers, mountain men and other Indians a bounty of $100 for an Apache warrior’s scalp, $50 for a woman and $20 for a child, even though the Apache did not scalp. This longstanding Mexican – Apache hatred would be of serious consequence when Anglo-Americans began arriving in the area after the 1820s. The Apache believed Anglos would be a natural ally against Mexico being a common enemy, however Anglo misunderstanding of Apache and treachery enacted would cause the same level of hatred with Anglo as between Mexican and Apache. According to Porter, Bourke’s legacy is his eventual understanding of America’s failure to understand the Indian. Early on, Bourke fought alongside Howard B. Cushing, and though Bourke notes Cushing’s bravery, upon Cushing’s death in battle, he also believed it was Cushing’s disregard for Indian scouts that got him killed.8

For the military, the desert southwest was / is a hostile environment of extreme heat and cold, poisonous reptiles, difficult terrain and problems with potable water or no water. Additionally, military service is monotonous and arduous at the same time. Porter states that Bourke turned to writing and describing as a means of fighting demoralizing military conditions which led many soldiers to alcoholism and desertion. Bourke felt it was common sense for Americans to acquaint themselves with

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8 Ibid., quoted in Porter, p. 6.
Mexicans and Indians. In Diary 30, Bourke remarked that the United States may claim the Southwest but “ethnographically the region never ceased to belong to Mexico.”

During his first assignment, he had time to get out and ride horses around the region and it was during this time he began to document Mexican-Americans along the Rio Grande. In Diary 30, he writes of duty, his quarters in one room with earth floor and roof, where the roof was caving in and being held up with a cottonwood branch. He had a bed, mirror, a couple of pegs to hang his uniform and sword on, three pine shelves filled with books, a round table with two chairs, a wash bowl, and an iron poker used to stir up a fire, or Espindiva, “the Mexican boy, who in the wilder freaks of my imagination I looked upon as a valet.” Bourke also lists his daily routine of reveille, stable call, breakfast, guard mounting, cavalry drills, reading, lunch, reading again, afternoon ride of 8-10 miles, stable call, parade, supper and more reading. He states when there was nothing to do he would ride out to Jornada del Muerto, otherwise known as “Journey of Death,” a ninety mile waterless shortcut on the Old Camino Real from El Paso to Santa Fe which had claimed the lives of hundreds of travelers.

Following is an example of Bourke’s work along the Rio Grande. Riding through what Bourke called the villages of Paraje, Man Marcial and Contadera, he writes “The inhabitants were very poor and the houses, of adobe, ill-furnished, the peculiar features being that the main room was well supplied with settees and mattresses upon which the men of the of the house could take their siesta in the afternoon and the walls were covered with cheap looking glasses as decoration.” Bourke goes on to describe clothing the men wore as wide-brimmed sombrero, course white cotton shirts and loose pants of cotton, with women always being attired in loosely flowing robes of calico or gauze, and instead of hats or bonnets they folded a shawl or “rebosa” around the head and shoulders to completely conceal their faces except for the left eye. Speaking of the women Bourke writes:

9 Ibid., page 11, FN 34.
I figure these were as a rule, tall straight and graceful, the erectness of figure and graceful undulation of movement being attributed to their constant practice of carrying heavy loads of water upon their head. In person they were so far as my observation extended, neat and clean, bathing frequently in the large “acequias” or irrigating canals which conducted the waters of the Rio Grande to the barley fields and vine-yards. Frequently in my rides across the country, I came upon bevies of women – old matrons, pretty maidens splashing in the limpid water, the approach of a stranger being the signal for a general scramble until all were immersed up to their necks…they never seemed to mind it in the least and I may as well admit, I rather enjoyed these unexpected interviews.11

Discussing Bourke’s work on the Rio Grande, Porter states (in almost obligatory fashion) that though Bourke was never free of some ethnocentric prejudice toward the Mexican population, he condemned other Anglos who did not attempt to understand their Hispanic heritage.12

Bourke became Crook’s aide-de-camp in September of 1871 and served alongside him for fifteen years, influencing his policies towards Indians. To demonstrate how difficult military service could be during this time, the first action by Crook upon his arrival in 1871 to Camp Grant, was to put the officers, enlisted men and Indian scouts through a seven hundred mile endurance test in 115 degree heat conditions as a means of assessing his unit. According to Porter, Bourke developed the intellectual rationale for Crook’s Apache policy. Bourke argued that Apache warriors raided, robbed and killed their enemies because it was the only way to gain distinction within the tribe. This seems most likely a simplified rationale for their strategy, as will be discussed later, Bourke’s influence on Crook and saving Apaches lives is relevant. Initially working with Mexican captives that had been raised among the Apache, specifically Severiano, Jose, Antonio Besias and Mickey Free as translators, Bourke began documenting and describing his observations of Indian scouts in his diaries in 1872, paying special attention to scouts that acted as liaisons between the officers and the Apache.13

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11 Ibid., p. 252.
13 Ibid., p. 21.
Bourke was assigned to Washington from 1880-1881 to write a commission report on the inspection he and Crook conducted on the Ponca reservation. During his assignment, Bourke met John Wesley Powell in January 1881. As director of the Bureau of Ethnology, created in 1879, Powell was crucial to the development of American anthropology in the late nineteenth-century and for setting the standards that governed field anthropology during the Victorian era. By the time Bourke met Powell, he had eleven years of fieldwork among Southwestern and Great Plains Indians. In addition to Apache,
Lakota and Cheyenne, he conducted research on Papagos, Hopis, Hualapais, and Navajos. Porter states that because of his extended personal experience amongst Indians, “Comparison of his early efforts with his later fieldwork reveals his developments as an ethnologist,” and there is an observable change in Bourke’s perceptions which caused him to go back and discard previous work. Porter adds, that while other officers scorned Indians, Bourke was fascinated with them and comfortable with the Apache scouts he lived with daily, and could sit among Cheyenne, Arapaho, or Lakota easily and share meals.14

Bourke developed a biographical method as a means of analyzing groups, with the intent of observing individuals from birth to death and observing how the group culture affected the individual within it. According to Porter, Bourke’s generation of military scientists reveal the motives and reactions of well-meaning scholarly persons as they encountered the complex and hard realities facing American Indians. Though Bourke was influenced by the theories of American Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) and Englishman Sir Edward Burnett (E.B.) Tylor (1832-1917), he and Powell were influenced by ethnographic methods developed from the Scottish Enlightenment. Not citing a specific scientist or philosopher of the Scottish school of thought, Porter does relate the intellectual belief systems Bourke developed with their philosophies. First, empiricism was an absolute and required an emphasis on description and classification. Secondly, the Scots argued that all human nature was essentially similar, and that all people in all places at all times were basically the same, and racial differences had no bearing on the unity in human nature. Through stages of social development, societies grew over time, and by researching non-industrial cultures, the living history of industrial civilization could be observed.15

Porter seems to think there is a contradiction within the Scotch method because it appears ethnocentric on for placing the west as most advanced, but applies cultural relativity on the other, a belief that each culture must be seen on its own terms. Because it rejected the racist theories of mankind

14 Ibid., p. 74.
15 Ibid., p. 74.
the Scotch tradition was not influenced by the impact of romanticism and social Darwinism that profoundly affected other fields. Differences were explained by varying degrees of social evolution not as innate, biological and racial evolution. Instead they focused on subsistence modes of existence, such as hunting and gathering, herding, agriculture and commerce. “Bourke, even during his most strained relations with Indians never resorted to racial explanations.” Using the Scotch tradition, Bourke employed a comparative method which required the study of a particular culture in an attempt to place them within a mode of subsistence. Then he could understand how their social organization had evolved and where it stood, whether through a hunting- gathering, herding, agricultural, and commercial social framework. This comparative method required facts and close observation which required extensive fieldwork in which to gather information that could then be assessed to find potential underlying laws of progressive development.

This is an important distinction in ethnological thought and theoretical models for its time and will be discussed further in chapter three. What is important here, is that John Gregory Bourke followed a different school of thought outside of the racist social Darwinism of his day, and it influenced the way in which he obtained and described cultural information as it theoretically denies racial inferiority. According to Porter, Bourke doubted civilized society (i.e. one built on commerce) could claim any moral superiority and that when he would become sickened at the sight of warriors mutilating their fallen enemies, Bourke never ascribed it to an inherent racial or cultural defect. Instead he argued the warriors of the Plains were in the hunting stage of human progress and that the behavior was consistent within the economic demands of hunting culture. 16 Bourke states “We enlightened people who prate so much about our goodness and elevation would do just the same thing, under the same circumstances...we have little more morality than the savage, mean as he is; but we have a great deal more (commercial made) bread and butter.” Here Bourke is implying that ‘we’ as in the supposed more

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16 Ibid., pp. 75-77.
advanced group would have done the very same thing had ‘we’ been hunter-gatherers, and that as commercial societies, ‘we’ are no more moral or savage, but just have more bread and butter. To clarify, let me add hunter-gatherers are a group of individuals who are mobile and move from food source to food source based on seasonality and accordingly it is held as the most successful means of social organization for survival. Unlike herding, agriculture or commercial organization, all of which are always subject to weather, population, disease and various other ecological conditions, the hunter-gatherer group moves to food sources and tends to maintain egalitarian relations among the population as each individual has responsibility, unlike what we have witnessed since the formations of cities, which have resulted in continual warfare over resources, patriarchy and other various ways in which we have demonstrated our human capacity for self destruction.17

According to Porter, Bourke’s major influence was Hubert Howe Bancroft. Bancroft, like Morgan searched for evolutionary similarities based on inductive reasoning from masses of ethnographic data. However, unlike Morgan, Bancroft argued that one absolute pattern or standard could not evaluate the progress of all societies. A mode of thought similar to later Boasian anthropology, societies had to be viewed by the circumstances of history and the environment of that society, which affected cultural development. In his “Memoranda for Use in Obtaining Information Concerning Indian Tribes,” Bourke laid out his methods for concentrating on getting certain specific details of tribal life with the intent of learning how material culture and spiritual beliefs affected the life of an individual, and from the empirical data he could then situate the data into the theoretical approaches listed above.18

17 For a measurable study of the health and well-being of nomadic / hunter-gatherer groups versus agricultural, stationary groups, see Nadine R. Peacock and Robert C. Bailey, “Efe: Investigating Food and Fertility in the Ituri Forest.” New Directions in Anthropology, edited by Carol R. Ember, Melvin Ember and Peter N. Peregrine, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc. 2004. The Efe were measurably healthier due to their ability to move around for subsistence compared to the stationary, farming Lese.
18 Ibid., p. 79.
As ethnologists, Bourke and others were working in a time, after centuries of warfare and struggle between Indians and whites, was entering its last major phase. By the 1870s, white expansion showed it would not be stopped and it looked as though white settlement would end any hope for the preservation of Indian life in the west. Bourke, at the time, could not have possibly known the resilience among Indians in the twentieth-century to maintain their way of life and their adaptation to the reservation and observation of their sovereignty of Indian nationhood. In his mind, and others like him, according to Porter, they saw their jobs as ethnologists critical to stopping the physical destruction of Indians and the alternative that they abandon their tribal culture and ‘civilize’ was a means of survival, which in effect meant that cultural extermination was the better option over physical extermination.19

Bourke and many of his contemporaries maintained they had an important mission. One was the belief, based on white settlement that was irrevocably destroying native traditions, they were compelled to chronicle aboriginal cultures before they disappeared. Rapid white expansion in the post Civil War era added a sense of urgency, as they believed native cultures would vanish within a generation and salvage anthropology was a means of retrieving details before they were lost to history.

In response to critiques against salvage anthropology, as Limón and Saldívar demonstrate, a critique which states ethnographers were salvaging but did nothing to stop the destruction and even facilitated Indian destruction, I will say this: first of all, John Gregory Bourke influenced General Crook’s policies towards Indians to bring them in with the idea that cultural assimilation was better than destruction. Additionally I would ask, are we to believe an ethnographer like Bourke (there were only a handful across the United States) could actually stop modern American industrial progress or control the situation single-handedly? Bourke would spend years trying to obtain the release and fair treatment of Geronimo and the Apache scouts he served with, to no avail and further to his detriment. As far as countering the argument that the cultural information ethnographers obtained facilitated the destruction

19 Ibid., p. 80.
of tribes, there may be truth to that argument and many skeletons in the anthropological closet; however, the argument I believe can also made that the tribe would have been destroyed regardless because of U.S. government policies of expansion, and at the very least, cultural information important to many tribes later, after forced assimilation, was at least salvaged and documented.

There was a utilitarian purpose to their methods for if knowledge could be scientifically harnessed it could help determine Indian policy and help ease Indians into white ways. According to Porter, Bourke never questioned the idea that Indians would have to assimilate to survive. Over time Bourke had a growing suspicion that white society, as he saw on the frontier, was not a worthy model for Indians to emulate, and his writings are often reflective of his opinion that there was more honor and decency among Indians than his own people. Additionally, Porter states that without Bourke and those of like mind, Indian and white confrontations in the late nineteenth-century would have been even more violent.  

In the remainder of this chapter, I seek to contextualize the history of anthropological science during Bourke’s time with some fundamentals of anthropological intent and foundations. Kenneth L. Feder and Michael Alan Park, authors of *Human Antiquity: An Introduction to Physical Anthropology and Archaeology*, lay out what I believe is the clearest understanding of anthropology’s historic ties to the expansion of Western powers, imperialism the fact that all creation myths are created equal for humans. “For much of the history of our species, people have addressed the question of where we came from with myths – stories involving magic and gods…virtually every culture has had its own myth explaining the creation of the earth, of plants and animals, and of human beings.”

The authors are more concerned with the Hebrew creation myth because of it is the basis of the Judeo-Christian tradition which has had an important impact on many aspects of the development of Western civilization, including the ways in which people have asked and answered questions about the

20 Ibid., pp. 88-89.
21 Ibid., p. 21.
history of their world and its inhabitants. “This creation myth, in other words, has deeply affected how Western peoples have studied the past,” because the point of mythmaking is the construction of satisfying stories aimed at explaining some aspect of reality and reinforcing or maintaining a social or political order.22

To briefly summarize the author’s concern, they place the “scientific revolution” and the contributions of geology and biology into history to contextualize science in the nineteenth-century. This scientific revolution began to crystallize with Scottish geologist James Hutton’s Theory of the Earth, published in 1788, that put forth geological uniformity, earth’s processes viewed through repetitive processes such as erosion and weathering, which placed the earth at least hundreds of thousands years old. Biology contributed to scientific knowledge, when Englishmen Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace came to the same conclusions about natural selection separately in the 1830s. Darwin did not feel the world was ready for this information and delayed publication of “On the Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection,” until 1859, which sold out in the first day.23

Cultural evolution is also a historical process. Prior to the Renaissance and Age of Exploration, Europeans knew few other cultures outside of their own. In the Judeo-Christian creation myth, Adam and Eve were the ancestors of all human beings and after their eviction from the Garden of Eden, their direct descendants spread across the land. “Imagine the European’s surprise when early explorers brought home stories of previously unknown people – people not mentioned in the Bible” who looked different and acted different. Many were perplexed and tried to fit new people into the Biblical story, others however, were digging up artifacts such as stone tools. The Bible did not mention those either, as the oldest tools discussed in the Bible are found in Genesis 4:22 as brass and iron.24

22 Ibid., pp. 29-31.
23 Ibid., pp. 21, 29-31.
24 Ibid., p. 35.
In 1836, Christian Jurgensen Thomsen of the Danish Museum of Copenhagen produced a guidebook describing the museum’s collection of artifacts which he organized in three prehistoric ages – stone, bronze, and iron. “Inherent in Thomsen’s three-stage system was the notion that human culture had changed through time in a patterned and comprehensible way.” In 1863, Charles Lyell published *The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man*, which presented detailed evidence for the association of some stone tools in association with fossils of extinct animals. Others applied the notion of cultural evolution even more broadly. Anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor published *Primitive Culture* in 1871, and argued culture was ultimately a single body of information of which different human groups had greater or lesser amounts. Tying culture to the physical sciences Tylor believed “uniformity, which so largely pervades civilization, may be ascribed in great measure to the uniform action of uniform causes.” He saw human history as proceeding towards increasing rationality.25

American anthropologist and cultural evolutionist, Lewis Henry Morgan published *Ancient Society* in 1877 which suggested all cultures change through time, evolving through stages of “savagery,” “barbarism,” and “civilization.” Accordingly, cultures could get stuck at a particular level if certain key inventions and advances were not made – the bow and arrow, the domestication of plants and animals, and the smelting of iron, resulting with modern primitives being frozen. Though Tylor and Morgan’s cultural evolutionary theories are now discredited, “they were important because they recognized that human beings and their cultures have undergone great change, just as plants and animals have done.” By the late nineteenth-century, the data could no longer be ignored and fit into the Biblical 6,000 year history as evidence for a long history and an ever-changing earth and humanity was mounting in the newly developing field of anthropology.26

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25 Ibid., pp. 34-37. Note, Lyell’s first publication *Principles of Geology* was published in the 1830s; Sir Edward Burnett Tylor *The Science of Culture*, found in cited source, pp. 41-55.

26 Ibid., p. 37.
As discussed earlier, Bourke was influenced by the Scottish school. In addition to major contributions in geology, Porter relates a brief summary of the Scot’s contributions to social science. The Scot’s theoretical approach to social science was the result of eighteenth-century efforts to establish an empirical basis for the study of man and society, which resulted in moral philosophers whose works were studied and emulated in late-eighteenth and early nineteenth-century United States. “The Scots provided a major component of the reigning paradigm in American science until the 1830s.” This research strategy however, dominated American anthropology until the early twentieth-century with its fundamental understanding, that any social analysis required a conceptual order through which social scientists could render the social world meaningful: economic analysis or modes of existence became a central feature for Scotch social science. However, while social change was usually progressive, with generally one stage following the other, it was not inevitable for all societies to move in a linear pattern as some may stagnate or even decline.27

To demonstrate how the science and history of anthropology is often misrepresented, Saldívar, one of the authors analyzed in the next chapter, states “While a good part of Bourke’s essay is structured around the ‘being there’ of travel writing and ethnographic thick description, it is also entirely underpinned with the theories of Franz Boas’ anthropological project. Anthropology for Boas and his generation, as Nicolas Thomas puts it, was a modern discourse that had subsumed humanity to the grand narratives and analogies of natural history”28


28 José David Saldivar, Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997. p. 165. Here Saldivar is referring to Nicolas Thomas’ Colonialism’s Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government, N.J.: Princeton University Press, who argued that historicized, ethnographic explorations of the colonial experience are the most fruitful approaches to understanding colonialism’s continued effects. He draws on travel, anthropology, and government as vehicles that gave nineteenth-and early twentieth-century Europeans exposure to colonized populations and provided a language through which to discuss them.
The author relates little understanding of Franz Boas, and it is important to clarify Boasian anthropology. First of all, it is unlikely that Bourke was influenced by Boas as Franz Boas’ first job in the United States was in 1888, just eight years before Bourke’s death in 1896 and long after Bourke had been conducting ethnographic descriptions. Boas contacted Bourke in 1891 to prepare an essay on Apache mythology, and saw in Bourke’s work something of relevance to the future of anthropology. But to set the record straight, Boas put forth not humanity as natural history, but argued against cultural evolutionism and grand theories of universal human culture. In *The Methods of Ethnography*, Boas attacks evolutionary theorists, and defines the position that came to be called historical particularism, that is, rather than operating under the constraints of some universal law, cultures are *sui generis* (that is, they create themselves), thus cultures can only be understood in reference to their particular historical development. “The further pursuit of these inquiries emphasizes the importance of a feature which is common to all historical phenomena. While in the natural sciences we are accustomed to consider a given number of causes and to study their effects, in historical happenings we are compelled to consider every phenomenon not only as effect but also as a cause.”

Considered the father of American anthropology, Franz Boas (1858-1942) had an enormous impact on the history of anthropological method. He brought a rigorous approach to ethnographic fieldwork, condemned arm-chair anthropologists, and demanded the careful collection of data. He rejected comparative models of the unilateral evolutionists of his day, repudiating social Darwinism and evolutionary speculation that marked anthropology (and everything else) during his time. He supported the theory of biological evolution, but maintained that sweeping universals of social evolutionists were not scientifically valid, debunking their ideas that similar cultural traits were the result of parallel developments driven by some universal evolutionary law. Boas demonstrated cultures have similar

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traits for a variety of reasons, including diffusion, trade, environment or historical accident and such traits could not be used for universal stages of cultural-evolution. He believed one must examine cultural customs from three fundamental perspectives that look at environmental conditions, psychological factors and historical connections. Of these he felt history was the most important because societies were created by their own historical circumstances, and to explain cultural phenomena, one had to study the historical development of the societies in which they were found.\textsuperscript{30}

Renato Rosaldo, considered a postmodern anthropologist and cited often by the authors analyzed in chapter three because of his theory of imperialist nostalgia, weighs in on Boas and states in \textit{Culture and Truth}, that some anthropologists believe multiculturalism could benefit from the concept of culture advanced by Franz Boas, a key founder of modern anthropology: “Boas argued for the integrity of separate cultures which were equal with respect to their values. Differences between cultures with respect to technological development conferred them neither moral superiority nor moral inferiority. The historical importance of Boasian cultural relativism and related efforts to combat racism cannot be denied.”\textsuperscript{31}

One of the clearest arguments I found reflective of Bourke’s work, and which demonstrates a reason for continued ethnographic studies, its history and the complications made by recent scholarship of ethnography and imperialism within postmodernism (discussed further in chapter three) is, oddly enough, found in \textit{Cultures of United States Imperialism}, edited by Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease. Two current ethnographers weigh in on textual literary analysis of anthropological work. In “We Think, Therefore They Are: On Occidentalizing the World,” Deborah Gewerts and Frederick Errington discuss a recent book, \textit{Gone Primitive} by Marianna Torgovnick that “provides a fascinating examination of the


way ideas of the primitive are structured in a variety of Western texts, ranging from art to anthropology.” The argument they make can be complicated to follow but is noteworthy.  

Torgovnick states that ideas of the primitive have been constructed and manipulated to uphold Western male conceptions of themselves as in control and dominant over those they define as a less developed ‘other’; primarily women and non-Westerners. Gewerts and Errington, as ethnographers, are concerned with analysis beyond texts and believe that textual focus adopts political implications of rendering virtually irrelevant to ‘us’ the lives that actual, non-generic ‘others’ in fact lead. They critique Torgovnick’s rendering of anthropological ‘text’ as establishing a “product of our imaginations…we live in the world, they live in our imagination.” They fear that textual focus on orientalizing, like orientalizing itself may curtail our understanding of those socio-historical forces of systematic connections, those forces which articulate between and shape our lives and theirs in a world system, and in turn may well foster Occidentalism.

According to the authors, Occidentalism, coined by James Carrier refers to the fact that anthropologists’ views of the West are often central to their exposition of the other and tend to be naïve and commonsensical. Carrier warns that reliance upon what is at best a partial understanding of the West is dangerous, “because knowledge of the alien is produced through dialectical opposition with knowledge of the West [thus Occidentalism] and cannot be treated as curious…indeed if we are to understand Orientalism we have to take account of anthropology’s Occidentalism.

According to the authors, both West and others become understood in reified, essentialist terms, and each is defined by its difference from the other element of the opposed pair by defining lives actually lived as irrelevant to our own. To view ourselves as disconnected, or absolved from obligation to know the other misinterprets who ‘we’ are to include the effects ‘we’ have in the world. “They’ are

33 Ibid., pp. 637-637.
34 Ibid., p. 637.
related to ‘us’ in ways other than through texts we have written about them, their lives and our lives have significance for, and influence on them and us, in ways that are not exhausted by regarding them as constructs reflecting our fears and hopes.” Gewerts and Errington go on to state, though it may be useful, it is not sufficient to demonstrate how we create ‘other’ for our own purposes regarding ‘other’ as only constructs versus real lives. “Textual focus on Orientalism gets both us and them wrong.”

Using Margaret Mead as a prime example of an ethnographer whose work has been the victim of much ‘textual’ analysis of orientalizing and racism, the author’s point out that Mead in fact did Orientalize in her ethnographies of Samoa, and at the same time, she used their examples of freedom to articulate gender roles that critiques “our” (assuming a unified we) way of marginalizing and stereotyping gender, thereby Occidentalizing us, to good effect. In addition, Gewerts and Errington point out that many anthropologists since Mead have found the same cultural information she recorded, so there is a reality to her work that exists in the actual lives lived in Samoa. “It’s true, ethnographers have written ethnographic accounts which construct the primitive in ways that reflect their own psychological dilemmas and socio-cultural concerns, and we agree that deconstruction of their ideas and others of the primitive may be a useful tool, however…from what we can tell, Torgovnick…did not, as a matter of policy consult what other ethnographers working in same place as Mead (and Malinowski) have written.”

Gewerts and Errington argue that what ‘we’ call primitive exist as more than literary products, and exists beyond our ethnographic texts, and argue that we must not be completely pre-occupied with issues of textual representation, “they are lives affected in important ways by our Western power, interests, and ideas,” and focusing on how ethnography and anthropology got it so wrong, though reflection is important, does not consider the real lives lived by ‘them.’ In other words, it is still all about us only.

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36 Ibid., p. 650.
The author’s relate a valuable insight into their position. Gerwerts and Errington have conducted ethnographic field work amongst the Chambri tribe of Samoa, the same group Margaret Mead studied, and I think it is a fitting end to this chapter, because they demonstrate the ‘us’ and the ‘them’ in a real world condition, which is what I firmly believe John Gregory Bourke intended with his ethnographic studies of Native Americans and Mexican-Americans. The authors relate that a luxury resort is being built for wealthy Americans, and wealthy Germans, who are aware of colonial history and their colonial past and are exploiting the resort knowing the guests will go through museums also. The Chambri will become maids and caretakers and used for the edification and entertainment of guests, and they will be paid to present themselves as professional primitives. In doing so, Chambri will not only experience class inequities for the first time within their home territory, but also engage in forms of indigenous ethno Orientalizing, portraying themselves or perhaps in resistance to images they think we have of them – images that may well be what Mead once wrote about them. “We do not know what will happen. But we are glad that as ethnographers we have the privilege and responsibility to be there to try to tell the complex story.”37 A story that may well be used by the Chambri themselves, possibly to assert sovereignty against government encroachment, or for posterity, in the same vein that an outside might perform the function of history for Native American Tribes.

**Bourke and Apache Scholarship**

Before closing this chapter, I would like to briefly mention the importance of Bourke’s work to Apache scholarship. The Bourke Diaries’ past usability and future research potential for Native American scholarship is vast. In the following pages I show just a few samples of Apache history where his ethnographies and memory were used as a source of information. Eve Ball, who, as one of my

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37 Ibid., p. 652.
interviewees said “wrote what we know to be true,”
conducted extensive interviews of Apaches, the elderly survivors of the Apaches wars and wrote In the Days of Victorio and Indeh: An Apache Odyssey. In writing her interview of Daklugie about the Cibicue Massacre (August 30, 1881), Eve Ball notes he was very young at the time but that his father had participated and witnessed much more than he had. In discussing the courts martial and subsequent hangings, Crook was dissatisfied with the story and immediately began meeting with the Indians to get their side of the story. According to Daklugie, Captain John Bourke says, “There was a coincidence of sentiment among all people whose opinion was worthy of consideration, that the blame did not rest with the Indians…No one had heard the Apache’s story, and no one seemed to care whether they had a story or not.”

In writing Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place, Angie Debo uses Bourke extensively as a source of information and as an ally of the Apache. Discussing General Crook’s staff, she notes “As his aide-de-camp, the general had alert, able Second Lieutenant John Gregory Bourke, who proved his loyalty in many battles, became an interested observer of Apache customs, even learning their language, and by his brilliant writing preserved an invaluable record of the campaigns.” In describing the Consolidation Policy (1860s-1870s) and how things went wrong, Debo quotes Bourke: “It was an outrageous proceeding, one for which I should still blush, had I not long since gotten over blushing for anything the United States Government did in Indian matters.”

Debo also quotes Bourke, who thought Apache leaders – he named Geronimo, Loco, Chatto, Nana, Benito, Chihuahua, Mangus, Haahnteney and Gil-lee, were “men of noticeable brain power, physically perfect and mentally acute – just the individuals to lead a forlorn hope in the face of every obstacle.” Debo relates how Bourke watched some little boys, tired of swimming, play at fighting.

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38 AVI#2 conducted by myself November 8, 2008.
41 Ibid., p. 95.
Mexicans. Three of the boys, representing the enemy, ran, dodged, and hid, trying to elude their pursuers, “who trailed them to their covert, surrounded it, and poured in a flight of arrows.” They “killed” one and seized the others, carrying them into captivity. In the excitement the “corpse” rose up to watch. Bourke observed of Apache boys: “In such sports, in such constant exercise, swimming, riding, running up and down the steepest and most slippery mountains, the Apache passes his boyish years…no wonder his bones are of iron, his sinews of wire, his muscles of India-rubber.”

This is not to say that anthropology has been exempt from criticism from Native American scholarship. Vine Deloria Jr., in Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto, criticizes anthropologists who have worked with Indian communities. In a humorous though quite serious chapter “Anthropologists and Other Friends,” Deloria enlightens us that into each life rain must fall, but the Indians have been cursed above all other people in history because they have anthropologists. Being prominent members of the scholarly community they infest the land of the free “and in the summer time, the homes of the braves,” Deloria discusses how easy it is to identity the anthropologist readily available on the reservations:

“Pick out a tall gaunt white man wearing Bermuda shorts, A World War II Army Air Force flying jacket, an Australian bush hat, tennis shoes, and packing a large knapsack incorrectly strapped to his back. He will invariably have a thin sexy wife with stringy hair, an IQ of 191, and a vocabulary in which even the prepositions have eleven syllables. He usually has a camera, tape recorder, telescope, hoola hoop, and life jacket all hanging from his elongated frame. He rarely has a pen, pencil, chisel, stylus, stick, paint brush, or instrument to record his observations. This creature is an anthropologist.”

Deloria’s main point in the chapter is that anthropologists in the past have reckoned Indians as folk with culture and that these ideals have influenced young Indians in negative ways and too often Indians have

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42 Ibid., 185.
been flattered and went along with reportage that caused damage to tribal relations and relations with the U.S. government. He does not dismiss the use of anthropology for Indians, but does, as many Native American scholars do, believe that the research must be obtained and used for the benefit of the tribe.43

In conclusion, by placing John Gregory Bourke into context within history and ethnography, I have attempted to humanize and make relative Bourke’s understanding of the world of anthropology during his time. A core value of historical scholarship is context, and contextualizing the history of anthropological thought and how Bourke approached his ethnographic collection, a much more nuanced understanding of how he believed, thought of American expansion and pursued data collection provides a baseline understanding as we enter chapter two.

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Illustration 1.2 John Gregory Bourke Diary 1 page 125.

Friday January 31st 1873 - Went to Camp.

A glacier - Made trip in 4 h. 30 minutes.

Saturday February 2nd 1873 - Remained at Boswell.

Sunday February 2nd 1873 - Returned to Sulphur Springs, where we found a Consul from General Coeur.

Made trip in 1 h. 30 minutes.

Monday Feb 3rd 1873 - Marched S.W.

across Sulphur Shale, about a 1/2 mile to the 2nd conner in Willow Creek, where we

found + he + a family of five young consuls. + he + a

fine looking Indian, of about 30 years, straight

as a rush - 6 feet in stature, dark brown skin,

black eyes, firm mouth, a kindly and even somewhat

universally expression, looking the determined look of the Southerners.

He seemed much more real than the other wild Indians I have seen and

it
Chapter 2: The Literary Fictioning of John Gregory Bourke’s Imperial Nostalgia

In this chapter I show how José E. Limón, in Dancing with the Devil: Society and Cultural Poetics in Mexican-American South Texas, and José David Saldívar, in Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies, create arguments that John Gregory Bourke was complicit in the U.S. government’s imperial project through his travel writing and ethnography. I argue the authors select certain text that fits their arguments and leave out details that would in fact change their narratives, thereby completely taking Bourke out of context. Both state they are using postmodern methodologies that intentionally blur history, anthropology and literature as a means of uncovering the connections between the nostalgia of ethnography and imperialism. Blurring of the lines of history, anthropology and literature is common in certain postmodern methodology, however, they take an extreme position which, instead of demystifying their topics of investigation, creates new myths and in the end generates a fictional literature of John Gregory Bourke.

As stated in the introduction, I am critical of the authors’ literary fictioning of John Gregory Bourke only, and do not evaluate their works beyond their stated aims and methods, and the statements they make pertaining to Bourke. It is not my intent here to settle the point of Bourke’s involvement in U.S. expansion, or the possibility he racialized Mexican-Americans and Indians; instead I focus on the sources Limón and Saldívar use for their analysis to demonstrate how their statements are constructed and misrepresent Bourke, anthropology and history.

My methodology simply puts the evidence side by side to show how Limón and Saldívar construct their arguments, paying particular attention to the sources referred to by Limón and Saldívar. This means they had access to the very information in which I use to disprove their arguments. Since my aim is to reveal the construction of their arguments, it is vital to quote their work verbatim and often at length, secondly, I do not want to risk distorting certain evidence with my own arguments and paraphrasing. To avoid the overuse of lengthy quotations I have placed verbatim quotations in
appendices. When discussing the authors’ particular aims and methods, I do a limited amount of paraphrasing, using their terminology which at times can be elusive to the reader, though I will attempt to identify these instances within the text.

Limón and Saldívar state they use a postmodern blurring of history, anthropology and literature, to deconstruct Bourke’s work on Mexican-Americans along the Rio Grande, specifically *mexicanos* of South Texas. The full account of all statements made by both authors about Bourke would be too vast for a complete evaluation here, however, to get to their main arguments, I have organized the chapter under the following subjects: authors’ intent and context; racism and anthropology; the Garza affair; American Congo; Gathering Folklore; and Bourke’s Imperial Nostalgia.

Both authors state they are placing John Gregory Bourke into historical context with the intent of exploring his complicity in acts of violence and racism within U.S. cultures of imperialism. The main objective Limón and Saldívar intend is to connect ethnography to John Gregory Bourke and his fashioning of imperialist nostalgia. By arguing for the inclusion of Mexican-American culture in the historical narratives, they make a valid point, however, I argue that the means by which they attempt to accomplish this not only violates history and anthropology, it diminishes the valid point in which they are trying to make. I believe they choose John Gregory Bourke because he wrote “American Congo,” and happened to be a military officer and ethnographer, a combination that fits nicely into Reynato Rosaldo’s theory of imperialist nostalgia, if we overlook certain evidence.

**Authors Intent**

Jose E. Limón is an anthropological folklorist, trained in philosophy and English, and received his PhD in cultural anthropology. He sets out to “construct an ethnographic essay and historical account of a subaltern population of *mexicanos* in South Texas which examines expressive culture.”

44 See [http://www.nd.edu/~iuplr/documents](http://www.nd.edu/~iuplr/documents) for Limón Vita.
what he identifies as the “experimental moment” in anthropology, Limón discusses the three characteristics of the ‘moment’ which involve a reflexive awareness of the textual and ideological character of ethnographic inquiry and writing, and that is first located by “blurring the textual genres of ethnography, literary criticism and history in a cross-disciplinary appropriation of literary criticism of anthropology and vice versa.” The second characteristic of the ‘moment’ is to shift anthropology away from traditional subjects of inquiry such as values, social structures and myth and towards anthropology itself as a social process. The third characteristic is derived from anthropology’s “uncomfortable proximity with western colonialism” and concerns itself with the socially dominated “other” in textualization, by recognizing “ethnography’s persuasive and political rhetoric on culture, as well as a deconstruction of the history of anthropology as cultural discourse.”

Limón examines ethnographies written since the 1890s, which he considers to be written representations of south Texan mexicano population, that were accomplished by the fieldwork of his predecessors John Gregory Bourke, J. Frank Dobie, Jovita Gonzalez, and Americo Paredes. Limón wishes to construct and deconstruct these written representations as symbolic action and cultural practices, “as expressive culture about expressive culture,” and considers this work to be part of a growing deconstructive understanding of the history of ethnography. His goal is to do a historical ethnography of the writing of culture of south Texas Mexican-Americans, and to interpret the writings in their historical moments. The author uses Antonio Gramsci for his theoretical position and Gramsci’s commentary on the state and society to pursue connections between warfare and society to show how war, literal or metaphorical is antagonistic and is fundamentally what shapes class formations in modern societies.

Limón begins with the initiating moment of political domination by gunpoint and American Orientalism: “Lurid descriptions circulated of the tactics and military conduct of these south Texas

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45 Author1, pp. 8-9, Appendix I, P8-9.
46 Ibid., p. 12, Appendix I, P13. War is a self-evident antagonism.
rancheros, charges that would seem untenable and uncharacteristic of settled subsistence agriculturalists, Catholic, with families, defending their land from invasion. Indeed, by all accounts, including American, these allegations are more likely psychological projections-displacements-of the outrageous conduct of the American forces as it crossed the Mexican south Texas and into Mexico. This total warfare included the wanton killing of civilians, raping, plundering, and desecrating of churches.”

Limón then discusses the situating of military posts throughout south Texas as the first step in the colonial project and that appropriation of *mexicano* land impoverished the society and continues today to be ideologically sanctioned with racism, prejudice and linguistic xenophobia. “For the moment, let us simply note the affirmation that of an Anglo by way of other Anglos, of a warlike state of affairs in south Texas keyed on racist premises, massive wanton killing, and the appropriation of land.” Balanced with a discussion of *mexicano* raids in the context of fighting over contested land, this is the social context in which Limón undertakes “an interpretive application” of John Gregory Bourke. Bourke, according to the Limón, excelled in languages at West Point which facilitated to some degree his ability to “learn at least something of the language of those (emphasis mine) Indian peoples, who were readily available on reservations after being defeated and no longer active enemies by the 1880s.” It was this facility for language, and Bourke’s Catholic religion which explains why he was drawn to the Mexican-descent population he encountered in southern Arizona and learned Spanish.

Bourke actually began to compile Apache vocabulary within two weeks of service with Apache scouts in the winter of 1872. According to Porter and based on the relationships Bourke maintained with the Apache scouts throughout his life, they appreciated Bourke’s genuine interest in them and

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47 Ibid., p. 23.
48 Ibid., pp. 23-26, Appendix 1 P21-P29.
reciprocated by cooperating with him to document their language. This genuine friendship with the Apache scouts, to Porter, is what insured Bourke’s future as an ethnologist.49

Saldívar is an Ethnic Studies professor trained in English and Comparative Literature50 who sets out to find how discursive spaces and the physical places of the U.S.-Mexico border inflect the material reality of cultural production, and thereby, putting forth a new model for cultural studies which challenges the homogeneity of U.S. nationalism and popular culture. He argues for including the border experience in cultural studies and strives to “show how to treat culture as a social force, how to read the presence of social contexts within cultural texts, and how to re-imagine the nation as a site within many ‘cognitive maps’ in which the nation-state is not congruent with cultural identity.” Saldívar attempts to identify the “emerging dominant, which places histories and myths of the American West and Southwest in new perspective.” His reasons for doing so are linked to the current crisis of border crossing and illegal immigration which he argues was created by discourse established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Because the “legacy of conquest has not gotten through to official American culture,” he states his work joins the dynamic work of new western American historians, new Americanists, and cultural studies workers in critiquing how the American imaginary continues its discontinuity between American frontier and la frontera.51

Saldívar introduces us to the soldier-anthropologist Bourke, who in 1894 produced the first ethnographic study of the U.S. Mexico borderlands, ‘The American Congo,’ “If the force field of American border studies was hegemonically conceived by Bourke on the swirling countercurrents of the Rio Grande in South Texas in the American age of empire, Chicano/a cultural studies has had to contest Bourke’s crude and violent mappings and representations of empire,” writes Saldivar, “Against


50 http://ethnicstudies.berkeley.edu/faculty/profile.php?person=14

Bourke’s cultures of U.S. imperialism, I pose Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), a historical romance about Alta California and the American 1848.”

Here, it appears that Saldívar is crediting John Gregory Bourke for establishing American border studies, and because of Bourke’s crude and violent representations, he must counter it with a historical romance. It is a strong statement which sets the tone for the remaining arguments Saldívar presents against Bourke. According to Saldívar, it is Bourke’s American studies in the 1890s that allows us to begin asking to what extent anthropology, ethnography and travel writing legitimated the imperializing project: “Occasionally, as in the work of a Gilded Age, frontier Americanist-ethnologist like Capt. John Gregory Bourke - commissioned as a first lieutenant at West Point Military Academy in 1869, an Indian and Mexican hunter, and later a friend and colleague of the Smithsonian Institution’s Maj. John Wesley Powell and follower of Franz Boas and Hubert Howe Bancroft - all of these force fields are embodied simultaneously.”

In chapter three, I will discuss Pauline Marie Rosenau’s rules for postmodern deconstruction. However, here Saldívar demonstrates to the letter exactly what Rosenau put forth. Briefly, rule one is to “find the exception to the generalization, push it to the limit and make the generalization appear absurd” the generalization is that ethnographers were complicit in U.S. imperialism; though John Gregory Bourke may have been the exception to this rule based on his writings and reputation, by pushing Bourke to the limit, Saldívar can use him to make the generalization appear absurd, as well as the Smithsonian, Bourke, Bancroft and Boas. Following Rosenau’s second rule, “avoid making absolute statements,” Saldívar avoids making absolute statements about Powell, Bancroft and Boas, such as who they are and why they are involved in the discussion; instead they become “force fields embodied.” The third rule has one “cultivate intellectual excitement with startling and sensational statements,” and here Saldívar delivers with the statement of Bourke’s Mexican and Indian hunting, yet, following the fourth

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52 Ibid., p. 13.
rule, Saldívar ‘remains obscure enough so as to protect himself from serious scrutiny.’ Rosenau’s final rule requires the “employment of new and unusual terminology so that familiar positions do not seem familiar and other scholarship appears irrelevant.” The majority of Saldívar’s statements employ new and unusual terminology, such as molar and molecular dialectics, etc., so that familiar positions of imperialism are no longer familiar and other scholarship, such as that pertaining to anthropology, Boas, Bancroft, or to Powell and the Smithsonian appear irrelevant.

Racism and the Anthropological Project

Both authors examined here refer to Bourke’s use of the ideas of evolutionary anthropology. Both authors cite Bourke biographer Joseph C. Porter throughout their text as their authoritative source on Bourke, and Porter’s chapter on Bourke’s theoretical position as an ethnographer, but seemingly chose not to use. As we will recall, Bourke followed the theoretical ideas of the Scottish school of social development and of Bancroft, who defined social evolution according to means of subsistence, i.e. whether the society subsists by hunting and gathering (groups that rely on undomesticated plants and animals for food supply, and usually highly mobile to adapt to available resources), herding (often semi-mobile, rely on domesticated animals), agriculture (stationary, cultivation of plants and domestication of animals) or commerce (societies based on commercial exchange). The argument is that we as humans evolved our societies by the means of subsistence that we chose. For Bourke and the Scottish school of thought in which he applied, these ideas of social evolution did not imply that all societies progressed in linear directions nor were they structured around ideas of race.

The way in which the authors present Bourke’s evolutionary anthropology infers a direct racism involved with social Darwinism of the day, which was the warping of Darwin’s theory, or man’s evolution from dark to light, savage to civilized, and was commonly used to define racial constructions often used to justify imperial conquest. The authors use vague terminology to refer to evolutionary
anthropology while assigning to Bourke an ideology of racism. In various instances, Bourke actually discusses civilization and progress as good (or even apparent) as often as he despises both. Bourke, operating in the last half of the nineteenth-century likely had no reason to doubt the intent and success of the United States’ move west and genocidal removal of Indians. As addressed previously, his ideological position rested on the idea of peaceful removal and cultural assimilation as a means of countering genocide and extermination of Indians.

However, the authors present Bourke, Boas and anthropology quite differently. Limón states, “At a theoretical level, he wholly absorbed and unquestioningly accepted the contemporary dominant anthropological paradigm of the day, that of English evolutionary anthropology with its central idea that different societies represent different degrees of progressive evolutions.”

Saldívar on the other hand states, “While a good part of Bourke’s essay is structured around the ‘being there’ of travel writing and ethnographic thick description, it is also entirely underpinned with the theories of Franz Boas’ anthropological project. Anthropology for Boas and his generation, as Nicholas Thomas puts it, was ‘a modern discourse that ha[d] subsumed humanity to the grand narratives and analogies of natural history.’” Both statements are vague and technically incorrect, and I think more importantly could easily leave the reader to believe that Franz Boas was not only racist but that he and Bourke should be avoided and discarded. In addition, Saldívar brings the ‘being there’ of travel writing into his discussion of Rosaldo’s imperialist nostalgia, however, Rosaldo never mentions travel writing within the imperialist nostalgia dialogue, but discusses agents of colonialism such as officials, constabulary officers, missionaries, and other figures from whom anthropologists usually dissociate themselves from.

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The ‘being there’ of the ethnographer is found in Rosaldo’s ‘Grief and a Headhunters Rage’ and Saldívar takes it out of context here.\textsuperscript{56}

**The Garza Affair**

Saldívar refers to Limón’s reference of Bourke and the Garza affair, and devotes more focus on “The American Congo,” which is discussed later in this chapter. Limón, however maintains a lengthy discussion of the Garza affair. Accordingly, after Bourke received disfavor in Washington which kept him at the rank of Captain, he continued his twin professions of making war and anthropology, now, however, the Other was the *mexicano* population of south Texas, where the native population was not exactly on a reservation. Limón quotes Bourke’s opening statement in the article: “The following material, collected by me during the time I was in command of the post of Fort Ringgold, Texas, may be of interest for the light it throws upon the character of the Mexican population of extreme southern border...As many of these Mexicans were engaged in armed attacks upon Mexican territory, and in armed resistance to the American troops sent to suppress them, it became my duty to make as earnest a study of their character and condition as means would permit.”\textsuperscript{57}

Limón then elaborates that Bourke is referring to the activities of *mexicano* journalist, intellectual, and guerilla leader Catarino Garza and his followers. He relates that Bourke was ordered by the United States to suppress Garza, a south Texan, and goes on to argue that Garza provided the technical excuse to suppress guerilla movements favor of dictators who were protected by American investors for the United States. There may be some historical truths in here somewhere, however, Limón leaves out an incredible amount of information that is pertinent to the actual events that occurred.


I use verbatim quotation at this point, and it is intentionally lengthy, to demonstrate one episode discussed and how much Limón fails to mention or misconstrues, thereby creating a false construction of events. Limón states that of course Garza fought back, considering Anglo domination of mexicanos:

According to Porter, in one particular engagement, ‘Bourke sent patrols into the chaparral where there was a brief, vicious skirmishes that included hand-to-hand encounters between the soldiers and the insurrectos…the Garzistas rallied with the cry ‘Kill the d_____ Gringos,’ quoting Bourke, Porter continues, specifying warfare reminiscent of reports from Vietnam: “These fights in the chaparral were ugly and brutal; a testament to this is that some soldiers carried shotguns loaded with buckshot rather than army issue carbines or rifles” (Porter 286-87).

“And, also anticipating Vietnam, Bourke entered a mexicano village, Uña de Gato, and “delivered bombastic and threatening speech in Spanish telling the ‘assembled…that I intended to come out and burn their huts to the ground if I learned that they harboring or aiding any of the Mexican revolutionists…”’ (Porter 285) Eventually assisted by his old enemies, the Texas Rangers, Bourke and his troops succeeded in violently suppressing the Garzistas but never captured Garza himself.59

First of all Porter makes no mention of Vietnam anywhere in any portion of his book, Limón inserts this, but makes it appear to be part of Porter’s quote. The following is what Porter and Bourke actually say of the Garza affair within the source cited by Limón:

Bourke mentioned Catarino Garza by name during the summer of 1891, but his diary first referred to Garza’s “party of revolutionists” or “band” in September. His campaign against Garza would earn Bourke a permanent and controversial place in the history of southern Texas. He learned that Catarino Garza had raised an armed force to topple the government of President Porfirio Diaz in Mexico. Garza indicted the Diaz regime in his newspaper El Libre Pensador, which he had published in Eagle Pass, Texas in the 1880s and in Palito Blanco, Texas in the early 1890s. Bourke noticed that “the sympathy of the population of the Rio Grande with Garza is scarcely disguised.

The Mexican government demanded that the United States enforce its neutrality laws because Garza based his organization, including its armed force, in Texas. In turn, the federal government instructed the state of Texas, federal marshals in Texas, and the United States Army to stop the Garzistas from operating on Texas soil. Bourke appreciated the diplomatic rationale behind the decision of the United States government, but he did not think it was practical. He knew the population of southern Texas was largely Hispanic, and that Garza moved through his vast geographic area with impunity. Also, he pointed out, many southern Texas – Mexican-Americans and Anglos-openly supported Garza. (Only two troops of cavalry and two companies of infantry were mustered to patrol an area of five hundred square miles) By October 1891 Bourke asked to withdraw his units from the field, insisting that he was only wearing out men and animals in a futile task.

58 Ibid., p. 29. Porter discussing and at times quoting Bourke from diary 106. Appendix 1 P34-36.
59 Ibid., p. 29. Porter discussing and at times quoting Bourke from diary 106. Appendix 1 P37.
Initially, Bourke and other army officers were content to let federal marshals deal with Garza; however, dissension among civilian officials forced the army to become more active. Sheriff W.W. Sheely of Starr County alleged that three deputy federal marshals in southern Texas and the United States collector of customs in Rio Grande City, F.D. Jodon, actually assisted Garza.

Some county sheriffs, deputies, and other officials also helped the Garzistas. Wild rumors flourished, and the selling of information about the Garzistas became a thriving enterprise. Informants sold American officials and Mexican consuls false or greatly exaggerated details.”

“Bourke, other officers, and their units had to respond to each rumor, no matter how improbable, or be accused of laxness by the Mexican government. Bourke’s patrol to Uñña de Gato Ranch is merely one example of many such fruitless ventures. “On 8 October 1891, the Mexican consul in Rio Grande City sent Bourke information that “insurrectos” were hiding at Uñña de Gato Ranch about seven leagues north of Roma, Texas. At Four o’clock the next morning Bourke, a sergeant, three privates, and a teamster set out for Uñña de Gato where they found seven families. Bourke delivered a bombastic and threatening speech in Spanish telling the “assembled…that I intended to come out and burn their huts to the ground if I learned that they were harboring or aiding any of the Mexican revolutionists in their attempt upon the integrity of the Mexican Republic with which we were at peace.

(After inspecting for signs of hiding revolutionaries, Bourke and soldiers returned to Fort Ringgold frustrated and exhausted) Bourke complained in November that “so many miserable lies and ‘fake’ rumors had reached me in regard to the Garza business that I felt I ought not to trust anybody, but seek knowledge for myself.”

Because of his fluency in Spanish, Bourke often gathered his own intelligence. He visited Hispanic festivals, parties, theaters, and circuses. Dressing in nondescript civilian clothes, he drank the “fiercest of mescal and the vilest of whiskey” as he eavesdropped on conversations in saloons and restaurants’ on both sides of the border.

Porter states Bourke may have been scornful of Garza believing they should not launch a struggle from Texas, but was also critical of the Díaz regime in Mexico, and based on what he had heard along the border, Bourke claimed Díaz had ordered the summary executions of sixteen Mexican officers in Northern Mexico and in one month, the Mexican Army had “shot to death without trial” twenty-six suspected Garzistas.” Porter also states Bourke concluded that only the Mexican army could prevent open support for Garza. He notes that Bourke had discovered that the Mexican government bribed some federal marshals to kidnap American citizens thought to be pro-Garza, whereupon they were
interrogated and murdered. According to Bourke, Mexican authorities had killed not less than one thousand persons along the Rio Grande in the past thirty years.\(^{60}\)

Limón clearly intended for his readers to perceive Bourke as an unjust killer, or why would he insert Vietnam into the phrase, though he does so in such a way as it would appear his authoritative source Porter says it, thereby lending the notion credibility. He incorporates his own statements within Porter as a means of creating authority in his statement. As we can see in the full rendering of events as recorded by Bourke and discussed by Porter, Limón left out some crucial details that in fact would turn his statements on their head.\(^{61}\)

Limón goes from here to relate how Bourke, when he was not making war on south Texas \textit{mexicanos}, spent his spare time to study culture and folklore. He suggests there is no evidence that Bourke felt personal or racial animosity toward “those Indian peoples he fought and studied,” and that Bourke thought they may have been more humane than his own white culture, “Yet, even though these Indian tribes had inflicted many more casualties upon his troops than the Garzistas, his manifest attitude toward \textit{mexicanos} is often markedly ethnocentric and racist. Why? Why, toward a people culturally closer to him than Indians?” \(^{62}\)

First of all, I do not believe Limón clearly demonstrates that Bourke was racist toward \textit{mexicanos}, second of all, this statement appears considerably inappropriate as towards ‘those’ Indians, as Limón puts it, which I would argue shared at least several years of daily habitation and to a certain extent, a military warrior culture with Bourke, one in which soldiers live together, fight together, and see and make death together. Bourke and ‘those’ Indians served side by side for several years, they fought, ate and slept together, and were warriors together. It is because Bourke was a soldier and had been for decades during some of the most brutal warfare this country witnessed on its own soil, he had an


\(^{61}\) Other incidents as this one are located in Appendix 1

enduring respect for his fellow Indian warriors and enemy alike. The border affairs between Mexico, the United States and Texas would likely unsettle even the calmest military officer.

The American Congo

Of all of his published works, “The American Congo,” is Bourke’s most easily contested article. A quick reading could render the article as a travel guide filled with racism and evolutionary arguments. A careful reading of the text, within the context of Bourke’s previous work and diaries entries renders a description of a very poor population of *mexicanos* on this side of the border, who resisted being controlled by Mexico, the United States or Texas, and had been subject to decades of ongoing violence from all sides, lawlessness and drought. Bourke states on page 606 that “if we were to enter the homes of these people and mingle among, it is evident they are an interesting subject for ethnology and anthropology.” He states they resist categorization into any stages of evolution, in other words they are not hunter-gatherers, herders, agriculturalist or commerce societies. Here, Bourke illuminates the problem the misunderstanding of anthropology to history and arguments that the study of groups of people as different, especially within social evolutionary contexts, causes marginalization of those groups. This argument is treated to some degree in chapter three, however, it is important to remember the arguments from chapter one of ethnographers Gerwerts and Errington concerning the real effect the West has on other groups and that “us” and “them” is not just our imagination. The study of human groups and culture is the project of anthropology and ethnography and continues to this day; though not perfect, anthropology has a strong track record of defending marginalized groups from government and environmental encroachment on their livelihoods and their very survival.

Bourke published this article a decade before Joseph Conrad published *Heart of Darkness* which rules out any notion Bourke was aiming to claim the same literary themes as Conrad, though international news of the Congo may have been readily available to Bourke. The critiques of “The
American Congo” sound familiar to Chinua Achebe’s scathing literary critique published in 1975, of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* which charged it with being racist. Conrad based *Heart of Darkness* on his experience working in the Congo in 1890, when what he saw profoundly shook his views of the moral basis of colonization, exploration and trade, and the civilizing mission in general. As a commission would later establish, under Belgium King Leopold II, that between 1885-1908 masses of Congolese men were worked to death, women raped, hands cut off and villages were looted and burned to exploit resources from the Congo. Interestingly, if one reads the introduction on Conrad in the Norton Anthology of English literature, one might think Limón obtained his ideas about Bourke directly as the introduction infers, i.e. Conrad is influenced by growing up as a Pole under Russian control, and Limón’s position that Bourke was on a redemptive mission, a knightly quest if you will, because he was an Irish Catholic influenced by the domination of Protestant England.63

African author Chinua Achebe, who wrote *Things Fall Apart* in 1958, challenged the West’s entrenched impressions of African life and culture by replacing simplistic stereotypes with a complex society still suffering from the legacy of colonial oppression. In 1977 he published an essay ‘An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s Heart of Darkness,’ where he charged Conrad with racism and dehumanizing Africans, and charges similar to those we see from Limón and Saldívar’s against Bourke. Shocking the literary community, Achebe has held firm on this position, however his arguments have been successfully argued against by such scholars as Cedric Watts, who in a 1983 essay “A Bloody Racist: About Achebe’s Views of Conrad,” defended *Heart of Darkness* as an anti-imperialist novel because part of its greatness lies in the power to expose racial prejudice and brutal exploitation.64


64 Ibid., pp. 2713-2714.
Throughout “The American Congo,” Bourke discusses the extreme poverty a particular group of Mexican-Americans along the Rio Grande faced, and the causes behind their situation, which were the result of long episodes of violence; a sustained draught; abandoned commercial ventures from the railroad expansion; and other reasons such as banditry, and the politics of a group who crossed over from Mexico awaiting an opportunity to return, and who refused to become American. Here we have a population of desolately poor but resistant people, and as Bourke most carefully points out, they resisted and had always resisted encroachment by Gringos or domination by Mexico. However, it is easy to see how this article could be rendered a racist travelogue. Our two authors do just that, but take interestingly different turns on the events. Limón begins by quoting Bourke: “If we enter into the homes of these people and mingle among them, it soon becomes evident that we have encountered a most interesting study in ethnology and anthropology; they constitute a distinct class, resisting all attempts at amalgamation. There are to this rule, as to all rules, notable exceptions, and there are on the river some few representatives of a higher stage of evolution; but, in general terms, the Rio Grande Mexican resists to-day, as he has always resisted, the encroachments of the Gringo, and the domination of his own Mexico.”

For Limón, this is Bourke’s own ambivalence for being Irish Catholic, and using Gramsci’s theory of the organic intellectual whereby, traditional intellectuals become subject to the pressures of class warfare and take sides. Limón defines Bourke here as functioning on behalf of and directing the ideas of the class to which he organically belonged. Bourke effectively directs his stereotypic ideas of class and culture in published attitudes towards *mexicanos* as a reinforcing ideology on Anglo-American audiences. Limón states this is the discontinuity with Bourke’s (otherwise ideological Anglo
identity) that produces his unconscious ethnic identification with *mexicanos* which is registered through Bourke’s cultural poetics of folklore and society.\(^{65}\)

Saldívar on the other hand, after citing Limón, is not so idealistic, though he hopes not uncharitable. Saldívar postulates that the force field of American border studies in the United States was conceived by John Bourke because of this article, and has had to be challenged because of Bourke’s plethora of imperializing crude acts in classic American frontier chronicles: “Bourke’s title “The American Congo” immediately allows us to metonymically and synecdochically associate his brand of “American studies” with immediate acts such as conquest, underdevelopment, intervention, intrusion, and domination of the local mestizo/a inhabitants.”\(^{66}\) Saldívar then states “The American Congo,” is one of our first constructions of U.S. Mexico borderlands and is cast as a literalized episode of rhetorical and anthropological war between the two shifting Americas, “built on what Jacques Derrida called the ‘violence of the letter’ by one culture on another.” To Saldívar, Bourke is enacting the traveling tale that constructs an ethno-racial, male, soldier-culture collector in the wilderness, surrounded by exotic animals, plants, and human cultural practices.\(^{67}\)

**Gathering Folklore**

On the gathering of folklore, Limón discusses Bourke’s sheer hyper descriptive practices of collecting *mexicano* culture and states: “Bourke never attributes genius to *mexicanos*, but he uses two closely interrelated scholarly strategies that, if seen in social context, have a redemptive ideological effect; even if that effect is not consciously intended. The first is the representation of sheer folkloric abundance among the people, and the second, the historical displacement of meaning through his evolutionary theory of survivals.” He begins by discussing Bourke’s article, “The Folk-Foods of the Rio

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\(^{67}\) Ibid., p. 167, Appendix 2 P34.
Grande Valley and of Northern Mexico,” stating that what Bourke offers is not a thick description of culture as [Clifford] Geertz would have it, but rather cataloging observations in evolutionary style. Limón cites George Stocking, and says this descriptive practice is based on European contact with savages and used to explain and justify social evolution, and the role of ethnographic data becomes a major theoretical reorientation rather than a description, and that while imputing and degrading the character of the mexicano, his textual rendition provides a rich abundance of cultural poetics, and in his evolutionary view, these abundant folkloric practices acquire interest because they are fascinating as survivals.68

In this particular article that Limón is discussing, Bourke states his reasoning for gathering this information from the “river Nueces, in Texas, to and below San Luis Potosi, in Mexico, about a thousand miles,” and how within just two years the area he observed had become a sealed book to botanists, anthropologists, folklorists and the explorer. Bourke also discusses the extension of train lines and problems of colonization in these geographical areas. What I believe is more important to context though, is Bourke’s opening paragraphs explaining why he was gathering this information. Bourke writes:

It was with no intention of invading the literary province which Brillat Savarin has made so eminently his own that I began the compilation of this series of notes upon the habits of life of the race which almost exclusively populates our southern boundary; my purposes were more strictly military than those which animated the brilliant author of “La Phisiologie du Gout.” I figured to myself that should history repeat itself, and an army from Europe attempt to overthrow the government of Mexico, it should be again the policy and duty of the Americans of the north to push to the rescue of the sister to the south, and aid her in her struggle upward and onward in the path of civilization. It might perhaps happen that an officer would find himself beleaguered, and supply trains cut off, in which case there would be no alternative but of surrender or retreat, unless he could provide food for his troops from the resources of the country.

He goes on to relate that all of this cannot be created in vain and he should try to discover if not always in intelligent certainty what the vast country has “and then the thought came to me that after all, man’s

noblest pastime is not in constant and irritating preparation for war, but in adding all in his power to knowledge which might, to some extent, make men wiser and happier.” He then discusses a brief history of geographical movement of fruits and other plants.69

In this same article, Bourke discovers a beverage discussed by the Chiricahua and used by Mexicans to ward off heat and thirst. For the entire passage, see appendix 1. A note on Bourke’s idea of Mexican race: “The Mexican is tenacious of old usages; this is because he is the descendant of five different races, each in its way conservative of all that had been handed down from its ancestors; these races, it needs no words to show, were the Roman, the Teuton, the Arab, the Celt, and the Aztec.” Further a note on his sources for gathering information in Texas and Mexico: “From no source did I receive greater help or encouragement in the preparation of this article than from the ladies of Mexico and southern Texas whom it was my great fortune to meet; I found them eager to impart information, ready to concede deficiencies, anxious for the introduction of accessories of which they have heard more than most Americans would imagine, and possessed in an eminent degree of that true home spirit which impels every lady to the desire of becoming a ‘laf-dig,’ lady, or loaf divider.”70

Limón states that applied here in the article, and “perhaps everywhere in nineteenth-century evolutionary studies,” is the construct of “survivals,” for all of its ethnocentric bias, which for Bourke, may participate in a redemptive mission. “For Bourke, much of what he is observing in south Texas has historical meaning beyond itself, and once again we find ourselves in a rhetorical poetics of Orientalism.”71

Bourke’s Imperialist Nostalgia

Throughout this section, Saldívar discusses Bourke’s ethnography and war often and makes to following remarks that are constructed to argue for “what Renato Rosaldo calls ‘imperialist nostalgia,’

70 Ibid., p. 55.
nostalgia for the very forms of life they intentionally altered and destroyed.72 “Bourke’s eminent career as a frontier ‘Americanist’ requires a more precise exploration, which I will elaborate below, but even in modest outline form his project as a soldier-ethnologist is a rich and intricate thematization of the famous frontier field imaginary of the United States. As his biographer Joseph Porter puts it, Bourke’s “fascination with the land, the history and the peoples of the Southwest” not only “compelled [him] to keep extensive diaries” (1986) but to reproduce in the writing of cultural poetics the paradoxes of Gilded Age imperialist formation.”73

What Porter actually writes on the referenced page is somewhat different: “A fascination with the land, the history, and the peoples of the Southwest, a habitual tendency to observe and study, and boredom with military routine compelled Bourke to keep extensive diaries. As soon as he arrived in New Mexico, he began to make descriptive notes. By 1872 the diaries had settled into a careful pattern of detailed observations and personal opinion. Bourke made rough notes during the hectic rush of the day which he later organized and rewrote into his diary. Fellow officers recalled that during onerous Indian campaigns Bourke would be working on his diary each night when others were dropping away from exhaustion. An Apache considered it bizarre that Bourke was always ‘writing, writing, writing.’ Who did Bourke think he was, the warrior demanded, a paper medicine man?”74

Saldívar continues that “After graduating from West Point Bourke was ordered by the War Department to Fort Craig, New Mexico where he began his military and ethnographic espionage, observation, and destruction of Pueblo Indian cultures. “It was during his ‘after hours’ that he wrote his prodigious diary entries, ‘studied up’ the native American Indians of the region, and mastered the Spanish vernacular language of the Nuevo Mexicanos. According to Porter, a pattern developed in New

73 Ibid., p. 161.
Mexico after Native American Indian (and later Mexican) hunting, Bourke ‘stoically worked on his diary, recording incidents and details of that day’s march noting the natural scenery, and making cartographic and geological notes’ (Porter:16)”

Porter writes of referenced page of Bourke’s diary writing (after discussing Bourke joining a military column in December, 1871 on a punishing march across the San Pedro River toward Saddle Mountain, where the long hours, cold weather, and the terrain made terrible demands on the men’s stamina) “Despite his exhaustion at the end of each day, Bourke stoically worked on his diary, recording incidents and details of that day’s march, noting the natural scenery, and making cartographic and geological notes. After one hard march the soldiers and Indians were dismayed to find that their daily issue of beans was two-thirds dirt; enraged, Bourke condemned the offending contractor and asserted that ‘for this item of rascality his name should never again be allowed to appear on an army contract in Arizona – The officer who rec[eive]d such stuff should be cashiered.’ Bourke fretted that his column would see no fighting. On 16 December an advance party of Apaches from Bourke’s unit surprised a camp. The hostile Indians fled, and everything in their rancheria fell into the hands of the army, depriving the Indians of food and clothing during the coldest part of the year. After the soldiers and warriors destroyed everything, the Apaches began a victory celebration. Some of the dancers dressed themselves in calico and ‘feigning the manners of women received the advances of their male companions.’ Shocked but nonetheless intrigued, Bourke carefully recorded the details of the elaborate victory dance in his diary.”

Saldívar confuses who wrote what in the following statement and assigns Bourke an incredible amount of accomplishment for subduing the Apache himself: “Throughout much of the 1870s Bourke waged a war against the American Indian tribes of the southwestern United States and was primarily

responsible for what his biographer called “the only successful campaign against the Apaches since the acquisition of the Gadsden Purchase (Porter:20)” Porter actually writes the following:

On 3 February 1873 they met Cochise in a canyon in the Dragoon Mountains. Bourke found Cochise to be a handsome man of about ‘fifty winters, straight as a rush, six feet in stature, deep chested, roman nosed, black eyes, firm mouth, a kindly and even somewhat melancholy expression tempering the determined look of his countenance. He seemed much more neat that other wild Indians I have seen and his manners were very gentle,’ Bourke wrote. Cochise politely greeted Bourke and the others. Cochise said that he did not approve of Chiricahua raids into Mexico; however, the Mexicans had killed many of his people, and his younger warriors wanted revenge. If the Mexicans wanted peace, asked Cochise, why did they not approach him as the Americans had done through Howard? “After the inconclusive meeting with Cochise, Bourke returned to the war against the hostile Apaches. The major offensive ended 6 April 1873 with the surrender of Chalipun, a powerful chief, and three hundred of his followers at Fort Verde. Although some columns remained in the cordillera searching for a few holdouts, the campaign was over. Bourke wrote, ‘Thus terminated the first and only successful campaign against the Apaches since the acquisition of the Gadsden Purchase.’ He had good reason for his ebullient mood. After three years of fighting the Apaches, the peace meant that he could begin to study these people who so fascinated him.

Now Saldívar constructs the following statement to declare that such writing was typical of Bourke’s diary entries: “The soldier-ethnologist and newly self-made ‘engineer officer’ thus turned his attention to the Lakota and Cheyenne peoples and their native cultures. Typical of his diary entries during this period of ethnographic writing and military conquest is the following: ‘the sooner the manifest destiny of the race shall be accomplished and the Indian as Indian cease to exist, the better’ (Porter:49).”

Porter is writing about the Plains Indian Wars that took place in the Spring and Summer of 1876: “Despite his relative tolerance, Bourke could not accept some things about Plains Indian culture. Although he had witnessed the violence of war since his sixteenth year, Bourke was sickened at the Plains Indians’ practice of mutilating their foes. He witnessed several examples of mutilation during and after the Rosebud fight. He recalled one wounded Lakota warrior who fell into Crow hands: ‘They said life was not yet extinct and the Sioux was moving when they came up. He was not moving much when the left. My informant told me they cut of the legs at the knees, the arms at the elbows, broke

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open the skull and scattered the brains on the ground.’ The mutilation of fallen enemies sparked his ambivalence toward the Indians. During ‘my intercourse with various tribes of the American aborigines, I have not seen enough nobleness of mind among them all to make a man as good as an ordinary Bowery tough[;] the sooner the manifest destiny of the race shall be accomplished and the Indian as Indian cease to exist, the better.’ In anger he wrote; ‘After a contact with civilization of nearly 300 years, the American Tribes have never voluntarily learned anything but its vices.’ Having vented his anger, Bourke temporized. He excused the behavior of the Crows and Shoshonis, charging that it was all the fault of the Lakotas and Cheyennes in the first place.”

Here is an example of how Saldívar constructs the text for his argument: “In 1881, Lt. Gen. Philip Sheridan readily agreed to Bourke’s personal request to be reassigned as an “ethnologist” for the Third United Cavalry, for he concurred with Bourke’s assessment that there was institutional value in documenting what we now call the cultural poetics of ‘the people whom we so often had to fight and always to manage’ (Porter 1986, 280).” On page 279 leading up to Bourke’s statement, Porter outlines how in 1890, Bourke was fighting reassignment out of Washington. Crook had passed away, there was no longer concern by Washington for the Chiricahuas, whom Bourke continually tried to get released, and that Nelson Miles wanted Bourke gone. By this time Bourke’s health was failing and after successfully publishing two books, and in the middle of writing three books, Bourke firmly believed that his years (nearly 28 in active service, over 20 in combat) of frontier duty entitled him to a comfortable station and he did not want to give up his scholarly life for garrison duties back the frontier. In trying to make his case to Secretary Proctor, according to Porter “He stressed the personal danger and hardship involved in doing research among tribes like the Lakota, Cheyenne, Apache, or Navajo. No one ‘questioned General Sheridan’s right to make such a detail or envied me my acceptance,’ Bourke

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argued, finding it paradoxical that there was no military value to his books about the ‘people whom we so often had to fight and always to manage.’ Proctor said only that others had raised the question about Bourke and that it now must be faced.”

And finally, one last example of Saldívar’s construction of Bourke’s activities:
“From Chicago, he embarked on a fin de siglo tour that took him to Idaho, Texas, and New Mexico. In Santa Fe he began his fieldwork at the Pine Ridge Agency, observing and writing an account in his diary of the sacred Oglala Sun Dance. As Porter writes, Bourke was “amazed, moved, and impressed by what he saw”.

On page 93-94, Porter writes:
Bourke was amazed, moved, and impressed by what he saw, but with his intellectual mind-set he was not confused or puzzled. He perceived ‘parallels’ in other cultures to the various phenomena of the Sun Dance. The content of Bourke’s anthropological beliefs prompted his use of the word ‘savage’ which was a classification of one of the stages through which societies ‘progressed.’ As already noted, these theories prompted both ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. This can be seen in an exchange between Bourke and an Oglala chief, Red Dog. Worried that Bourke would not comprehend the Sun Dance, Red Dog said, ‘My friend, this is the way we have been raised, Do not think us strange. All men are different. Our grandfathers taught us to do this. Write it down straight on the paper.’ ‘You speak truly. All men are different. This is your religion, the religion of your grandfathers,’ Bourke responded, as he watched a warrior tear himself free of the sacred tree. ‘Our grandfathers used to be like yours hundreds of thousands of years ago, but now we are different. Your religion brought you the buffalo, our brought us locomotives and the talking wires.

Though Porter reminds us of the Scottish school of theory that Bourke employed and that Porter found to be contradictory in its ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, I would argue that European prehistoric archaeology could well justify Bourke’s comment above. In an effort to bring forth a hidden Mexican-American border culture, Limón, focusing on a vague English evolutionary theory and Saldívar who chooses specific wording from referenced sources to get the reader into believing Boas was a racist anthropologist, ethnography by nature is racist, that John Gregory Bourke was Mexican and Indian hunting, while writing in his spare time about the quaint Indian culture after he subdued them onto

reservations. Both construct a literary fiction of John Gregory Bourke that dismisses the evidence found in the very sources they cite.

Chapter 3: Imperialist Nostalgia, Anthropology, History and Postmodernism

Both authors examined in the previous chapters stated they were using a postmodernist position to connect John Gregory Bourke and his complicity to imperialism and connections to imperialist nostalgia. This chapter explores postmodernism in anthropology and history and is organized as follows: first I begin with a discussion of Renato Rosaldo’s theory of imperialist nostalgia, a theme that is central to the arguments José E. Limón and José David Saldivar make; secondly I discuss the history of postmodernism as it relates to anthropology and history, and some of the critiques made by postmodernism within and outside the fields of anthropology and history (often the arguments are similar or occur between the fields); and finally, I conclude with a discussion of consequences of postmodernism to anthropology and history.

Studying anthropology and history led me to very interesting areas of research over the years, including pre-gunpowder technology histories and prehistory. I was completely unprepared for postmodernism when I found myself surrounded by it in the last two years of my graduate studies. At first confused, then, intrigued by the arguments being made from a postmodern perspective, I became familiar with and even used to the ideas put forth. Over time however, I started to feel that history and anthropology needed to be defended against many of the postmodern arguments I found within the literature.
This particular research project led me to gain a rather strong opposition to postmodernism in anthropology and history. A deeper exploration into postmodernism that I attempt to provide in this chapter has lessened some of that opposition and I found a certain understanding and respect for postmodernism’s critiques of anthropology and history. However, while I may be less vehement about postmodernism, and have gained a deeper understanding to its positive contributions, I must admit I am still not keen on postmodernism. It lacks rules and without rules, there is chaos, and with chaos there is slippery slopes and those slopes seem to me to have the anthropologist and historian slipping into the literature department and self-destructing from what I believe to be very important fields of inquiry into our human past, present and future. Too often postmodernism in history and anthropology forgets there was time before the modern era that may have bearing, it also tends to forgets the classic literature of our fore-bearers.

Because I have spent many years studying pre-gunpowder technology and pre-histories, I do not merely give the obligatory nod to Herodotus; I have used The Histories in my research, Thucydides too, and combined with new findings in archaeology there is still much to learn. I do believe in the positive found in the Enlightenment, considering where it came from and where it led us as thinking humans, and I firmly believe in anthropology and its history of combating racism and understanding our humanity. Historians and anthropologists before us wrote as men and women in their times, and I agree with the authors that are explored in this chapter, that the classics should not be abandoned and should be read in their original form. For history this can encompass over 2,500 years of written history, and there are many good examples over the past 250 years of anthropology theorizing about the universals of humanity and we can learn much from history and anthropology about our predecessors to understanding of our past.

In an essay called “The Misrepresentation of Anthropology and Its Consequences,” Herbert S. Lewis summarizes the problem well as it relates to anthropology. He argues the fact that the critiques of
anthropology from within and from without since the late 1960s has resulted in several academic generations educated on the attacks against the field, but rarely with the actual theoretical works and ethnographies of earlier anthropologists.\(^{83}\) I would argue the same can be said for history. As with the charges leveled against anthropology’s past of exoticizing “Others” and treating culture as isolated, critics accuse all histories written before the late 1960s as riddled with Eurocentrism, and pro-western Othering in the name of imperialism or nation-state building, thereby leaving them unconsidered and deemed unworthy for further exploration.

My thesis has concerned itself with a postmodern approach that creates a fictional literature of John Gregory Bourke’s imperialist nostalgia. What is imperialist nostalgia? Renato Rosaldo’s theory of imperialist nostalgia is referred to by both authors examined in this thesis. Rosaldo is a postmodern anthropologist and ethnographer, most well known for “Grief and a Headhunter’s Rage,” an ethnographical essay on the Ilongot tribe of headhunters of the northern Philippines. In this ethnography, Rosaldo breaks away from traditional anthropological writing which had previously been presented as scientific reports and scientific models, and he brings in a conversational tone with first and second person narrative.\(^ {84}\)

“Grief and a Headhunter’s Rage” illustrates how postmodernism can operate in ethnography, and focuses on the anthropologist’s experience away from the object of study. Briefly, Rosaldo comes to understand why the Ilongot hunted heads out of grief only after his wife and anthropologist, Michelle Rosaldo, fell off of a cliff to her death during their fieldwork in the Philippines. His ethnography becomes a personal narrative and shows two sides of an anthropologist’s understanding of those they study, in this case, before his wife’s death, he could not understand why the Ilongot hunted heads out of grief and planned to record what they said but without understanding their meaning. After his wife died


suddenly, he went through obvious personal trauma and loss and came to understand the rage in grief (from the suddenness of her death) he felt as the same human reaction the Ilongot felt when neighboring tribes killed family members and to put away their rage from grief, they had to headhunt or they could not survive the loss. His postmodernism is demonstrated through turning back on the anthropologist, in this case himself and discussing the process of ethnography.

Rosaldo’s theory of imperialist nostalgia is found in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, which opens with the essay discussed above. Imperialist nostalgia, according to Rosaldo, is how agents of colonialism often display nostalgia for the colonized culture as it was traditionally, before they encountered it and altered or destroyed it. One example he gives is how people destroy their environment and then worship nature, in any version “imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of ‘innocent yearning’ both to capture people’s imagination and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination.” Rosaldo goes on to state this type of nostalgia often occurs with a peculiar sense of mission, such as “the white man’s burden,” when civilized nations stand duty bound to uplift so called savages after destroying their livelihoods and culture; but he goes further, as he states nostalgia is an emotion that also evokes innocence and creates a (false) distance between the destroyer and from the destroyed. In the case of John Gregory Bourke, Limón and Saldívar attempt to demonstrate how Bourke’s activities along the Rio Grande were responsible for acts of destruction and how his writings about culture, as published in journals meant for public consumption, illustrate a nostalgia for Mexican-American and Indian cultures in their traditional forms that he in fact is responsible for destroying.

To define postmodernism and how it has been conceived and used in anthropology and history, I will discuss what it means and where it has originated. To discuss postmodernism requires a discussion of post-structuralism as it becomes apparent in the literature that it is often post-structuralism that is technically being used for something termed postmodernism. Postmodernism in its simplest form is a

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broader category covering a range of tendencies in contemporary culture that share a focus on artistic and intellectual inquiry into representation rather than reality. Postmodernism is the result of backlash against the idea of the modernity of the expert such as the historian or artist who stood ‘outside’ of the society with special skills, who could access truths to the human conditions, such as the historian or the artist. Conventional history is modernist as the historian employed expert techniques to access truths not visible to the lay person.86

The ‘postmodern’ ideas of language and writing come from structural/post-structural theories. In history, these critiques are aimed at empiricism developed by Leopold von Ranke, whose empirical method was forged in the 1830s in opposition to the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel. Hegel deemed every historian was a product of their own times and modes of thought, [thoughts which the historian brought in to see the data] which resulted in idealism and a gradual unfolding of a transcendent idea or spirit embodied in a historical community. Ranke, on the other hand, proposed the concept of historical knowledge obtained from analysis of the documentary record, the primary sources. To Ranke, from sources historical facts could be found about any events with the understanding that every period possesses its own unique character, but was sequentially linked to that which succeeded it. Because of this, history could be understood in the whole, as a linear process connecting the past to the present. His legacy to historical scholarship has been great, his emphasis on careful study of documentary sources as a primary concern in historical scholarship and his respect for historical difference, continue to serve as fundamental tenets of the discipline. Rankean empiricism was adopted by many and became over time an unwavering commitment to empirical method, focused on scrupulous evaluation of primary sources aimed at reconstructing the past on its own terms.87

In anthropology, many postmodern / post-structural critiques are aimed at historical particularism pioneered by Franz Boas. Boas, trained in the physical sciences, brought a rigorous approach to ethnographic fieldwork with an emphasis on the careful collection of ethnographic data and rejection of comparative methods over field experience. Boasian anthropology was a reaction against the unilineal evolutionists of his day, and those who obtained data about other cultures from various sources and from the armchair created theories of cultures which often resulted in social Darwinism and evolutionary speculation. Boas believed that to explain cultural customs, one must examine them from three fundamental perspectives: environmental conditions, psychological factors and historical connections. The best explanations of cultural phenomena were found by studying the historical development of the societies in which they were found, primarily through extensive fieldwork.88

Postmodernism/Post-structuralism has different meanings for different areas of scholarship, but its direct effect on history and anthropology can be traced to the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), a structuralist and chief proponent of phenomenology, a philosophy which draws distinctions between perception and intuition. Saussure opposed the view that language mirrors thought, or any correspondence or intrinsic link between a name and its object. His emphasis was on the internal structure of language without reference to the outside world. Its meaning lay within that structure, viewed as a whole. The relationship between word and object is replaced by ‘signifier’ (word) and ‘signified’ (concept). To Saussure, language is autonomous and not dependent on reality. Although it is a social institution, its changes are independent of its speakers’ will, which has implications for the idea of language structuring thought. He emphasized the relation of sense to structure and use, regarding interpretation as misguided and subject to the errors of intuition. The idea being that a source was accessible to others by virtue of their membership in the same language system. Language was seen as an entity in itself, used for communication, but not created by the user. It did not reflect reality, but

created it. This theory, unlike phenomenology, allowed for objectivity, but not individuality, nor for context or situation.\(^8^9\)

To put his view more technically, we could say a tree (signifier) reflects the concept of a tree (the signified) and this in turn reflects the tree in the real world (the referent). He argued that language constructs meaning through a system of binary oppositions, such as a tree is a tree because it is not a cabbage etc., and the meaning is derived from a system of difference within a linguistic system, therefore we should not examine words that denote the real world, but their connotations or relationship with other signs in the system. When applied to understand ideas about masculinity, the significance of this idea had immense potential. For example, male competiveness would not be a biological necessity but a cultural expectation produced in language. This potentially subversive power of structuralism was demonstrated in the 1950s by cultural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who argued that identical cultural-linguistic structures underlay western and allegedly ‘primitive’ cultures, which implied a rejection of the idea societies could be categorized in terms of progress towards modernization.\(^9^0\)

In the 1960s and 1970s structuralism began to influence historical writing. In 1966, literary critic Hayden White argued that historical writings were structured around the classic literary forms of plot (or tropes) – comic, tragic, satirical, and romantic - and that these shaped historical writing more than evidence did. Historical writing was just like fiction and had no relationship to the real past.\(^9^1\) In *Metahistory* (1973) White put forward the poststructural view that the historian is actually producing a creative literary invention, rather than dealing in bare facts. Some of the information with which the historian deals may be factual, but it only becomes ‘history’ once it becomes part of a story, set in a structured narrative. A historian works at creating a narrative, and that narrative enables the evidence


\(^{9^1}\) Ibid., p. 121.
used to become part of what is presented as history. For White there is a distinction to be made between ‘events’ and ‘facts’. The former are what took place, the latter are simply linguistic forms that claim to describe the event. It is the objectivity of such ‘facts’ that postmodernism challenges.92

For Michel Foucault (1926-84), the influence of structuralism lay in his contention that phenomena generally seen as natural were really ‘constructed’ through language. In *Madness and Civilization* (1961) he argued insanity was not a biological fact but was conceived differently in different periods, and no story of improvement gave meaning to the history of psychiatry. The languages of psychiatry constructed mental illness as deviant and created a subtle mechanism of social control, an argument which became part of Foucault’s attack on the notion that western history was a story of progress. The shift to poststructuralism could result in methodological tension, for example differences between Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Derrida saw Foucault’s project of writing a history of madness free from the oppression of western rationalization as flawed by its reliance upon the same language of western reason. To Derrida, all thought depended on the repression of alternative languages so by simply writing about madness, Foucault marginalized it with the implication that any historical writing is an act of oppression. Foucault responded that Derrida was concerned with language in isolation, and perceived ‘nothing outside the text’. Foucault preferred to analyze language in relation to social and institutional practices and power.93

Poststructuralists criticized structuralists for attempting to reduce all languages to an identical binary structure, a move that undermines their contention that meaning is produced through difference. Saussure argued that the relationship of language to the real world was a problem, but he assumed that binary structures established signs in mutual relationship so that the concepts they referred to were equally meaningful. Derrida on the other hand argued that the connection between words and concepts,

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the signifiers and signified, is uncertain, that language operates through difference and that the meaning is deferred, incomplete, or uncertain. Derrida used the technique of deconstruction, a sort of close reading of texts for their blind spots, to demonstrate how writing was based on this futile search for ultimate truth. For him any such assumption is ‘metaphysical’ and it follows that the past too is inaccessible and any attempt to write about the past is doomed. Derrida later denied he intended to undermine the category of truth so radically, but regardless, the fact is many critics of history have interpreted and used Derrida’s original meanings. Ultimately, to Derrida, there is by extension no ‘context’ historical or otherwise, outside themselves to which texts can be referred to verify their meaning, and history, as the body of texts which represent the past remains resistant to the efforts of historians to impose truth statements upon it.

For anthropology, modernism refers to the years between the 1920s and the mid-1970s in which writings were detached and assumed a position of scientific neutrality and rationalism. Postmodernists challenged those assertions and maintain that such claims are distorted or, at best true in only a very limited sense. Hermeneutics, the study of the interpretation of meanings, does not accept the view that observers can derive neutral and objective knowledge about the world. Rather, it holds that humans cannot have knowledge about the world that is not tinged with a particular perspective or bias, because it is conditioned by culture, context and history. Because we cannot separate our ways of knowing from our language and culture it is impossible for us to interpret the world in a truly detached and objective manner. Derrida and Foucault also affected anthropology in the same manner as previously discussed.

The hermeneutic and deconstructionist approaches led many American anthropologists to question their own work and the work of others, often prominent anthropologists. Some of the most important issues addressed were fieldwork and literary techniques used in the writing of ethnographies.

94 Ibid., p. 123.
as they relate to the author’s interpretation. Fieldwork is an important area to postmodernism because information on the actual process of research was scarce. Postmodernists argue it is the process of fieldwork that is crucial to the creation of ethnographic texts with the belief that anthropologists can never be unbiased observers. The political context of fieldwork involves the investigators preferences and predilections. Ethnography, previously thought to be written by the neutral, omnipresent observer, was now questioned because the collection of data is subjective and impossible to analyze objectively.97

One characteristic of ethnographic writing is rather than saying “I am writing my interpretation of what the natives are doing, the authors claim to represent the native point of view, although they are working with selected informants. Another common rhetorical device of Anglo-American ethnography is that writers claim to describe completely other cultures or societies, even though an anthropologist actually knows only the part they personally experience. For example, “they may observe an informant put ketchup on his ice cream, a direct result of observation, but then they will make a statement that all people of that group put ketchup on their ice cream.” The omnipresent narrator heightens the sense of scientific objectivity projected by the text but also severs the relationship between what the ethnographer knows and how he or she came to know it. Becoming self-reflective of this problem, many anthropologists began to include their own experiences and feelings in their writings, and in some cases that written experience became the narrative, as we saw with Rosaldo.98

In “Hermes’ Dilemma,” Vincent Crapanzano adds another layer to postmodern understanding of interpretation. He examines ethnographies as texts and deconstructs three different accounts. His hermeneutic premise is that while the data of themselves is mute, anthropologists themselves construct meaning by writing ethnographies using certain literary conventions, which becomes the literary construction of the writer, but here he adds, the reader in turn imposes their own interpretations on the

97 Ibid. p. 575.
98 Ibid., p. 577.
author’s text, so that writing and reading of ethnographic texts involves piling layer upon layer of interpretation.99

An issue for postmodernists / poststructuralist found in both history and anthropology is that of interpretation, which they maintain that texts are the author’s interpretations which when taken as authoritative silence other voices and interpretations. Because everything is interpretation in postmodern/poststructuralist view, the only way authors can generate an interpretation that is accepted as true is to silence all other interpretations, which begs the question, can one person’s interpretation be more valid than others? Many postmodernists / poststructuralists will insist that acceptance of in interpretation is really an issue of power and wealth, which historically has been voiced by white Protestant males in Western industrialized nations which silence the voices of all others. They will ask why the Anglo-American view of events is the only acceptable interpretation and claim that deconstructing this mainstream work allows other opinions to be expressed, by asserting that in history, literature, and politics the voices of women, minorities and the poor are finally being heard.100

For history, poststructuralism / postmodernism has intersected at the Holocaust and has become the defining moment in dissecting the problems of all interpretations being equally valid. Kevin Passmore provides an excellent argument of how the Holocaust has caused poststructuralists / postmodernists a dilemma. Poststructuralists have been accused of aiding Holocaust deniers because their position states that history cannot be proven and evidence is manufactured, but he states that poststructuralist have retreated and abandoned the strongest elements of their own position and resorted to reconstructionism, by accepting the provability of ‘individual’ facts, while still maintaining the possibility of multiple emplotments and interpretations. “The same Hayden White, who claims that ‘no other discipline is more informed by the illusion that facts are found in research rather than constructed

99 Ibid., p. 577.
100 Ibid., p. 577.

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by modes of representation and techniques of discoursivization that is history, argues that the Holocaust can be considered as ‘factual statement’ which he describes as a singular existential proposition.”

Passmore says this concedes too much to the notion of a reconstructable past and to the positivist notion that fact and interpretation can be separated. There are issues of language and interpretation that come into play with the Holocaust, such as questions of the best way to interpret the evidence, but the ‘simple’ facts of the Holocaust actually consist of many other facts, with remains of gas chambers, memories of torture, court records etc., that have to be arranged in accordance with the historians hypothesis about the past. “It does not follow that any interpretation is acceptable.” Historians’ questions predict that if the hypothesis is true, certain types of evidence will be found in addition, the historian operates on probability. In this case, the evidence is so overwhelming that a Holocaust occurred that there is no possibility that the evidence was manufactured or planted as deniers maintain.

The positive effects of poststructuralism in history and anthropology will be discussed in the following pages. However, as Passmore makes clear, in history there is a continuum from facts established as fully possible in the sense that all reasonable historians agree upon them, such as the Holocaust, world wars, and the Crusades just to name a few. “The historian does not reconstruct the event, but advance more or less probable ways of making sense of what is left over from the past…just because truth claims cannot be established absolutely does not mean they cannot be established at all.”

For anthropology, McGee and Warms state that taken to its logical extreme, postmodernism is very close to turning anthropology into a subfield of literature; “if all writing is nothing more than interpretations of interpretations, then ethnography is fiction, and no conclusions can be ultimately

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102 Ibid., p. 136.
103 Ibid., p. 136.
reached about anything.” Here they note that postmodernism is a logical part of the interpretive
tendency in anthropology that goes back to the Boasians, as they advanced the perspective of cultural
relativism, some Boasians had degrees in literature, and some, like Ruth Benedict were published poets.
They see postmodernism as part of the continuing dialectic between scientific and humanist approaches
to the discipline and claim it is not the end of anthropology but part of the field’s continuing history.104

The hermeneutic and deconstructionist approaches to either anthropology or history led to
reflection on how questions are asked and about one’s own work in the process. In anthropology, the
most important issues involved are how fieldwork is conducted, with history they involve questions
about how sources are selected. Fieldwork for anthropologists and selection of sources for the historian
are critical to the validity of interpretation obtained from the literary techniques they choose to employ.
Poststructuralist/postmodernists argue it is precisely this process that is crucial in creating text. An
anthropologist or a historian can never be an unbiased observer or researcher because they are products
of his or her own cultures which determines how they observer or select questions to ask, and
information to include. The data an anthropologist or a historian collect cannot be objective because of
cultural influences on their choices and interpretations. But it is these very questions that
poststructuralist/postmodernist have posed that have enriched anthropology and history as they forced
both fields to stand back and think about how they ask questions, construct their writings and how they
determine their evidence, and to consider and include the voices that had been silenced in previous
generations.

Problems with poststructuralism/postmodernism can be seen in the Holocaust example listed
above, and it is obvious that when a poststructuralist/postmodernist’s views appear to discard the murder
of six million Jews then they change their story and make an exception. There is no shortage of critics
postmodern attacks on either side of the aisle of anthropology and history. One such critic is Roy

D’Andrade, who demonstrates his arguments against postmodernism is “Moral Models in Anthropology” published in 1995. D’Andrade begins by discussing the concerted attacks in anthropology on its objectivity, science, notions of truth, and anthropology being a type of Western colonialism, and he states these attacks are not coming from the fringe but from well-known and established anthropologists. He initially believed these attacks came from people with the same agenda as he, but who held different assumptions, however, he came to realize they had an entirely different agenda. The model they proposed transforms anthropology from a discipline based upon the objective model of the world to a discipline based upon a moral model of the world.\(^{105}\)

This is an important distinction which I believe applies to poststructural / postmodern critique of history as well, for these critiques too often passes judgment on the past while failing to observe any form of context or reasoning. D’Andrade defines his model on a set of cognitive elements used to understand and reason about something, using the term moral to refer to a primary purpose of the model which identifies what is good and what is bad and to allocate reward and punishment. “Like the usual language of philosophy, goodness and badness, like beauty and taste are considered subjective, not objective things.” He goes on the define the difference between an objective description as a description that tells about the thing being described not about the agent doing the description versus a subjective description which tells how the agent doing the description reacts to the object. According to D’Andrade, the distinction between object and subject is a basic human cognitive accomplishment, and that normal people are expected to be able to recognize the difference between their response to an object and the object itself. “Although it may be impossible to present an entirely objective account, when we want to understand something outside ourselves we use terms that, so far as possible, tell about that thing so we can understand that thing rather than our response to that thing.” Though objective

\(^{105}\) Ibid., p. 609.
accounts are not value free or unbiased, but he uses objectivity to refer to the degree which an account gives information about the object being described.\textsuperscript{106}

What D’Andrade says next is very similar to what Passmore related for history, in that one result of the attempt to be objective (to talk about the thing, not oneself) is that it is more likely that what one says can be tested to see if it is true or false, and because of this, an objective account can be attempted again and by someone else and the “replicability of the account assessed…for knowledge to accumulate, accounts must be object, but they must also be testable and replicable.” On the other hand, the subjective or moral model (as in poststructural /postmodern) is to identify what is good and bad, and allocate praise and blame and also to explain how things not in themselves good or bad came to be. Using Kenneth Burke’s “god” terms, words that stand a for thing that is an ultimate good or an ultimate evil, he proposes that this is the current moral model in anthropology. The truth of the badness of oppression is not an empirical matter; if you lack moral sense, no recounting of the facts can explain it to you and “given the ultimate badness of oppression, anything that creates or maintains oppression must also be bad. Thus colonialism is bad because it necessarily involves the use of oppression. The hegemony of Western culture is bad because it supports and maintains Western colonialist oppression. Silencing and violence are bad because they are typical means of oppression.”\textsuperscript{107}

D’Andrade continues relating the moral model in anthropology as providing a means to correct the evil which is done through unmasking the symbolic hegemony that hides and legitimates oppression and that one can actually have a moral career in anthropology based on being known for what one has denounced. He discusses demystification of buried truth as a necessary remedy for the domination of individuals, groups and classes and critical theories which do this are different from objective theories because they are reflexive and they involve ‘so called’ truth, or speaking truth to power. “But isn’t finding out the truth what science – old fashioned anthropology – does?” He offers that anthropology’s

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 610.  
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., p. 610.
call to action is clear, because it has been part of the mystification process which served the interests that oppressed others, the so-called ‘moral’ thing to do is to denounce those who maintain this mystification and transform anthropology from an objective natural science, which is seen as just a charade and a means of continuing oppression, into critical anthropology which “will help to change the world.”

D’Andrade demonstrates that it is in fact possible to have moral and objective models without having bias motivate the investigator. He uses the example of how one can investigate the biochemical basis for schizophrenia for the purpose of making better medicine – the medicine has objective language of physiology and biochemistry that describes various pathogens and how the body reacts to them. Here we have a model that describes how things work, not if the viruses etc., are good or bad. For D’Andrade, it is the moral model that determines that better medicines should be made, but these models must be understood as separate. His main argument is that anthropology’s claim to moral authority as postulated by poststructuralists / postmodernists must rest on knowing empirical truths about the world and that moral models should be kept separate from objective models because they are counterproductive to discovering how the world works. “This is not an argument that anthropologists should have no politics; it is an argument that they should keep their politics separate from the way they do science.” His position is that regardless of moralizing postmodern critiques of anthropology, empirical support for the hypothesis that science advances is simply strong evidence that scientific knowledge about the world has advanced, whether this knowledge has been used for good or evil is another question. “My own unoriginal conclusion is that, on balance, the world is considerably better off because of science…even those who disagree with this viewpoint, would have to agree that science has advanced.” Science has been a way of finding out about the world and D’Andrade is surprised by

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108 Ibid., 613.
the number of anthropologists who are attracted to philosophers and historians who flirt with the idea that there is no true progress in scientific knowledge or no way of knowing what is true.109

McGee and Warms bring up the problem of interpretation as they relate how when covering postmodernism in their theory class, “a student toppled over into a nihilistic funk. ‘Why should I have spent all this time and money getting an anthropology degree, if it is all just interpretations of interpretations and there is no objective knowledge to be gained in anthropology? Why should I not just be an English major?’ Good questions.” They ask, how does postmodernism and deconstructing of texts help us to understand the endeavor? They answer that postmodern theorist have made important contributions to anthropology and that even the most ardent opponents of postmodernism would agree that as writers of ethnographies anthropologists should be aware of rhetorical issues, and that this awareness can inform and enrich the writing and help to evaluate claims of objectivity. In addition, ethnographies are literary creations so it becomes possible to think of cultures as the poetic interplay of voices and performances, allowing us to see beyond text and understand the participation we have in the process.110

My critique of the postmodern methods employed by Limón and Saldívar in their analysis of Bourke and imperialist nostalgia is not only concerned with how they created their statements of condemnation; but also, for a concern with the fact that they are in a position to pass that knowledge on as authoritative, and their arguments will persuade students, especially those who rely on secondary sources over primary source evaluation. To put a finer point on this, I look at a website designed by students for students as they attempt to grasp the meaning of postmodernism in anthropology. Shannon Weiss and Karla Wesley have put together an excellent website that I think helps to break down the confusion. Called “Postmodernism and Its Critics” based out of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Alabama, it contains not only valuable resources for understanding the arguments, but also

109 Ibid., p. 616.
110 Ibid., p. 578.
illustrates how future generations of scholars are grappling with the complexities of poststructuralism / postmodernism. But first, I include a discussion of Gavin Kitching, a political science professor whose empirical analysis reveals the damage he believes is caused by postmodern theory to students. Limón and Saldívar’s works examined here are scholarly works that are used in research by students and scholars alike, and as such are likely to influence opinion and direction.

As the student noted above by McGee and Warms indicates, to the scholar already placed into a profession, has the privilege, opportunity and capacity to debate these issues of interpretation, also has a responsibility towards younger generations that are not only faced with unlimited of sources and scholarship about those sources, but are trying to learn in the process. It is in this learning process that some scholars have taken to be the most damaging effects of poststructuralism / postmodernism. One such scholar, Gavin Kitching is very blunt about the adverse effects he sees in current trends and though one may agree or disagree with his position, he uses empirical data to make his claims and I think illuminates some major issues that affect his field of political science but also our own in history and anthropology, issues that Limón and Saldívar demonstrate clearly in their fictioning of John Gregory Bourke.

Gavin Kitching’s is the most recent (2008) work used here as critique of postmodernism is based on his empirical findings of undergraduate theses’. Although he is a professor of political science, he believes the same problems exist for history and sociology. Kitching states the reason for the popularity of postmodernism is the supposed political and social radicalism that engages hearts and heads of young people. However, “at the heart lies a very poor, deeply confused and misbegotten philosophy, a belief with two important implications – at best, students who fall under postmodern sway produce radically incoherent ideas about language, meaning, truth and reality which become even more incoherent when scrambled together to produce broader arguments about the role of discourse in the social construction of anything from society to power to identity to gender; secondly, since such notions are often used to
support politically radical ideas and causes their basic philosophical weakness in turn weakens those political arguments, rendered implausible to even moderately reflective reader.\textsuperscript{111}

Kitching is concerned with the educational costs of postmodernism and states his is not a direct critique of the ideas of Foucault, Derrida etc., but of the failure to come to terms with the philosophical conception of language underlying postmodern theory generally and about social construction of reality specifically. It is possible, according to Kitching, to do genuinely productive and rewarding intellectual work together with theory, but “theorizing has been so fashionable for so many years that whole generations of undergraduate students have been exposed to postmodern and post-structural ideas and their arcane mysteries.” He reveals deep philosophical confusions embodied in certain uses of language (metaphors and analogies, and especially the social construction of reality and subjectivity which results in intellectual confusions (in history, sociology and politics) that he believes to be deeply damaging to many fine students.\textsuperscript{112}

The problem with ‘doing theory’ is first and foremost a problem with social construction. Gathering empirical data from undergraduate theses, Kitching states it was not his intention to present the students as willful participants in untruths and nonsense, but to relate it to a trickle-down effect on the lower levels and an allegiance of the students to their professors, resulting in “the good and sheer undiluted confusion versus anything remotely called a rational argument.”\textsuperscript{113}

His critique of postmodernism states that first persons and forms of the verb are absent – ‘I think’ ‘I feel’ are be openly introspective or reflexive; instead relies conjured world of objects affected or moved only by mechanical or inanimate forces. There is also a sense that prose itself appears to have no subject or creator. In this argument, Kitching poses questions of logic to what he feels is the worst of postmodern arguments which are hostile to subject, because the subject is socially constructed.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., pp. xii-xiii.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., pp. 9-10.
“Do abstract social forces rule people?” These arguments fill space with a kind of metaphorical mist or smoke in which objects influence, modify, and enable form. “Does language or discourse cause or determine what users will think or do? With theoretical metaphors, it makes it difficult for the reader to decide.” Qualified formulations are weakened because there are forces at work other than the discourse which might have been at work.\(^{114}\)

Relenting on the omnipresent power of discourse which in itself “actually creates social landscape, discourse actually constructs – he asks, constructs what? Discourse constructs human society itself or that it constructs understanding of society at least the dominate understandings held by these subjects who live within it?” Kitching states that within the social construction of reality – postmodernism deploys a set of metaphors, and the metaphors create a curiously alienated world and landscape in which relations of effect between and among a variety of abstract impersonal objects and relations are often represented as impersonal objects, the relations often represented in impersonal mechanical, geometrical, and physical force ways. The only people in this landscape are ‘subjects’ possessed of subjectivity, but these subjects only appear anonymously and en masse and their subjectivity is presented ultimately as an effect or creation of discourse. Kitching asks, to what extent does social landscape pre-exist discourse or discourse the landscape?\(^{115}\) “It is portentous and vague in equal parts, it cannot endorse or deny because it’s difficult to know what is precisely meant. Certainly sounds impressive, vagueness however emerges when we ask precisely what this something is.” He says that upon close examination however, empirical examples provided to support and validate generalizations are either not original or not true. “People give meaning to everything they see, hear, touch, use and experience predominantly through language and is hardly original.”\(^{116}\)

\(^{114}\) Ibid., pp. 24-25.  
\(^{115}\) Ibid., pp. 26-33.  
\(^{116}\) Ibid., pp. 33-36.
Kitching suggests that to create deeper significance we need to change imaginings: “Let us suppose that, instead of standing imminently outside society to theorize about it, the student theorist were to place him or herself in the social world space or landscape, and to invoke ‘theoretically’ what they would do in that world and how they describe what they see in that landscape.” By replacing third person forms of subject/verb with first person forms, Kitching believes they shift observational perspective – where the observer is no longer imaginatively suspended somewhere outside or above society but is within it.117

The anthropology students website was built specifically to sort out the confusion. Though it applies to anthropology, there is much that concerns history as well. Weiss and Wesley discuss postmodernism in anthropology by quoting anthropological critic Melford Spiro's synopsis of the basic tenets of postmodernism: “The postmodernist critique of science consists of two interrelated arguments, epistemological and ideological. Both are based on subjectivity. First, because of the subjectivity of the human object, anthropology, according to the epistemological argument cannot be a science; and in any event the subjectivity of the human subject precludes the possibility of science discovering objective truth. Second, since objectivity is an illusion, science according to the ideological argument, subverts oppressed groups, females, ethnics, third-world peoples (Spiro 1996).118

Weiss and Wesley then go on to discuss Pauline Marie Rosenau’s guide to deconstruction analysis:

1. Find an exception to a generalization, push it to the limit to make generalization appear absurd and use the exception to undermine the principle.

2. Interpret arguments in text being constructed in their extreme form. Avoid absolute statements and cultivate intellectual excitement by making statements both startling and sensational.

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117 Ibid. 46-47.
118 Shannon Weiss and Karla Wesley. Postmodernism and Its Critics. College of Arts and Sciences, The University of Alabama, www.as.ua.edu/ant/Faculty/murphy/436/pomo.htm
3. Deny legitimacy of dichotomies – always a few exceptions but none accepted, none rejected because it is hard to criticize if there is no clear point to be expressed.

4. Write for the greatest number of interpretations possible because obscurity protects from serious scrutiny.

5. Employ new and unusual terminology in order that “familiar positions” may not seem too familiar and otherwise obvious scholarship may not seem relevant.119

Weiss and Wesley note that postmodernism in anthropology is really more a vision than a positions based on data observations because there are numerous interpretations with no final meaning. They note the positive aspects of postmodernism in anthropology, such as demystification - uncovering and criticizing epistemological and ideological motivations in the social sciences - and its critical examination of the ethnographic explanation which creates a heightened sensitivity to how we explain other cultures. However, what they note as not being good about postmodernism is the fact it is counterproductive to discovering how the world works and that objectivity is neither dehumanizing nor impossible. Quoting Roy D’Andrade: “Science works not because it produces unbiased accounts but because its accounts are objective enough to be proved or disproved no matter what anyone wants to be true.” Similar to the arguments posed by history in the following pages, D’Andrade states that although utterly value-free objectivity is impossible, it is the goal of the anthropologist to get as close as possible to that ideal.120

This study of John Gregory Bourke and the literary creation of his nostalgic imperialism by means of more extreme postmodernism requires understanding of both the historical and anthropological aspects of postmodernism. From an anthropological standpoint, Weiss and Wesley point to Melford Spiro’s contention that postmodernists treat texts in isolation, and argue that postmodern anthropologists

are not convincing in dismissing scientific method. “If anthropology turns away from scientific method then it becomes a study of meanings that fails to discover causes which shape what it is to be human…these causal accounts of culture refer to ecological niches, modes of production, sustenance techniques and so forth, just as causal accounts of the mind refers to firing neurons, secretions of hormones etc.” Spiro relates six interrelated propositions from John Searle’s 1993 *Rationality and Realism*:

1. Reality exists independently of human representation and is an existence of a metaphysical reality.

2. Language communicates meanings but also refers to objects and situations in the world that exist independently of language, contrary to postmodern concepts such as communicative and referential functions.

3. Statements can be true or false.

4. Knowledge is objective and signifiers of truth of knowledge claim can be independent of motive, culture, and gender – knowledge depends on empirical support.

5. Logic and rationality provide a set of procedures and methods that enable access to competing knowledge claims through proof, validity, and reason.

6. Objective and intersubjective criteria judge the merit of statements, theories, interpretations and all accounts.

Spiro specifically assaults the assumption that disciplines in the study of humanity like anthropology cannot be scientific because subjectivity renders the observer incapable of discovering truth. Agreeing that social sciences require different techniques than natural sciences, he argues that “while insight and empathy are critical in the study of mind and culture…intellectual responsibility requires objective
(scientific methods) in the social sciences.” Spiro contends that without objective procedures, ethnography is empirically dubious and intellectually irresponsible.\textsuperscript{121}

Poststructuralism / postmodernism has had value for anthropology and history as it has caused both fields to reflect on how they ask questions and write their findings in text. However, the focus on text, intertextuality and open interpretation can cause problems for anthropological and historical understanding of the actual events that took place, and of the lives lived. Just as the Holocaust example illustrates, there are boundaries and realities that poststructuralism / postmodernism cannot cross and still remain relevant. As such, the methodology is best used as a tool or as a means of examining texts but not the sole means for analysis.

\textsuperscript{121} Shannon Weiss and Karla Wesley. Postmodernism and Its Critics. College of Arts and Sciences, The University of Alabama, \url{www.as.ua.edu/ant/Faculty/murphy/436/pomo.htm} taken from Melford E. Spiro, “Postmodern Anthropology, Subjectivity and Science: A Modernist Critique.” \textit{Comparative Studies in Society and History}. V. pp. 159-178.
Conclusion

The postmodern authors analyzed in chapter two take decidedly postmodern stances to history, anthropology and especially ethnography. They purposefully blur the lines of history, anthropology and literature. Reynato Rosaldo’s *Culture and Truth* is a source for both authors examined here because of his theory on “imperialist nostalgia,” and Bourke is assigned this designation by the authors because of his position in the U.S. Army and as an ethnographer. However, in the new introduction to *Culture and Truth*, Rosaldo goes much further in his analysis of the current state of cultural studies and anthropology. He states that classic modes of analysis, such as functional anthropology, no longer hold true but now share disciplinary authority with other analytical perspectives because of the infusion of minorities in academia. “The move from singular to plural forms of analysis implies a need to center and reread ethnographic classics, not to dismiss or discard them. In the humanities, social sciences, and legal studies, canonical lists of classics pose problems, not because of what they include (the books are good), but what they exclude (other good books).” He criticizes authors of bad faith for too often conflating an insistence on greater diversity with demeaning or throwing out the classics:

In my view, critical anthropology and interdisciplinary cultural studies attempt to valorize subordinate forms of knowledge. Attempts to blur boundaries of ethnography create space for historically subordinated perspectives otherwise excluded or marginalized from official discourse. Such perspectives complicate and enrich analysis, but they do not represent the one and only truth.\[122\]

In an effort to contextualize John Gregory Bourke, it is important to briefly outline the state of knowledge a nineteenth-century ethnologist would have been exposed to. History in its simplest form, is the recording of real events that happened in the past. The definition of history reflects our position in time and forms to some extent the view we take of our own society. According to E.H. Carr, the nineteenth-century was a time for fact, a cult of facts he calls it, when positivists, in an effort to prove

history as a science felt without doubt that if they only collected all the facts, they could provide a positive history based on discovered facts. Further, the nineteenth-century was a time of intellectual confidence and optimism, an “age of innocence, and historians walked in the Garden of Eden, without a scrap of philosophy to cover them, naked and unashamed before the god of history.”

It is fair to say this could relate not only to history but much of British and American imperialism of the nineteenth-century. Realities and lessons came later, but the nineteenth-century not only saw incredible acts of violence and racism, it was a time of equally incredible discovery and innovation. They were turning the world upside down, mechanizing, discovering, cataloguing, finding, describing and competing. America was in a dead heat with the British Empire to collect ‘culture.’ The authors evaluated here assign a certain shameful designation to Bourke for being hired by out of the Smithsonian Institution where he worked in the Department of Ethnology for Major John Wesley Powell, yet this is an institution our country is very proud of.

There is consensus that writing history is a reflexive activity that inevitably involves the reflection of current orthodoxies. Each period has brought into focus certain previously neglected factors which have bearing on future interpretations and diversity of opinions of the complex nature of historical change. The historian must be assessed, and primary sources continually reevaluated to obtain any conclusion about the real status of historical knowledge. The tendency to underestimate the differences between the past and present by projecting modern ways of thought backward in time discounts those aspects of past experience which are alien to modern ideas. As John Tosh and Sean Lang put it “in this way it reduces history’s social value, which derives largely from its being a storehouse of past experiences contrasted to our own.”

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125 Ibid., p. 190.
It is the social value of history that should matter most to those who speak for the historically oppressed, for when history is written out of political commitment to a social group that has been previously marginalized through historiography, “effective political action in the present requires an articulate social memory to supply this.” However, radical histories that exclude material which does not fit neatly into the political program of the writer, while uncovering those ‘hidden from history,’ turn from history to ethnic or gender particularism laced with presentism. In this way, the differences between then and now are downplayed, and the way is opened to reactive historiography “marked by a more explicit and hardnosed defense of the established orders…” with no serious efforts being made to understand the experience of other groups who participated in the story.\(^{126}\)

The more intemperate postmodernist critique becomes problematic when it blurs history, anthropology and literature as a means of proving an ethnic particularism for the sole purpose of political commitment to the present. Deconstructing the past becomes a “parade of signifiers masquerading as a collection of facts,” for which no amount of technical expertise can remove the subject and understanding of the texts. Instead, the postmodernist deconstruction allows the reader to find any meaning he or she likes, as long as there is no claim to authority – it is an open translation between the reader and the text. Tosh calls this a deception practiced on the reader and I fully agree. “Historians certainly do not regard their primary sources as infallible and they are accustomed to reading against the grain for implicit meaning; underlying their scholarly practice is the belief that the sources can yield at least some of the meaning they held for those who wrote and read them originally.”\(^{127}\)

John Gregory Bourke wrote, described and articulated a vast amount of anthropology and history in his one hundred and twenty four diaries. His work preserves observations of American, Mexican, Mexican-American and Indian cultures in the last quarter century of the American Southwest and Mexican Border region. To construct arguments for his complicity in U.S. imperialism and Indian

\(^{126}\) Ibid., p. 191.
\(^{127}\) Ibid., p. 195-196.
and Mexican hunting denies the power his writings have to secure an understanding of the past for our
present and future, and further diminishes the true importance of the work of anthropology and history
to the telling and understanding of the lives of those he cared enough for to document.
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Appendix 1


P1
Limón is “an anthropological folklorist who states he had spent a great deal of his life dealing with the central concern of his book, inscribing in various ways the folklore of the people of Mexican descent of southern Texas “my folks” an inscription conditioned always by the lower-working-class existence in which he grew up. Necessarily, these inscriptions included also an order of social domination and war extending into the present, and this book is also about that.” (p. ix)

P2
Growing up in the barrio and influenced by the Catholic Church as a boy in the 1950s southern Texas, he learned of the inseparability of precursory traditions, politics, and cultural poetics and their often paradoxical relationship. (p. x)

P3
The key tents of politically laden cultural authority inculcated in a south Texas Mexican boy coming of age in the late 1950s – the primacy of the Church; the “superstitious” character of Mexicans; the unquestioned rule of “Anglos”; the “natural” submissiveness of women; the monolithic character of Mexican culture itself – further bedeviled by his education at the University of Texas at Austin in the 1960s liberal arts education and campus activism. Here he came to know his scholarly precursors. (p. x)

P4
Probably this is the reason my folks continue to identify themselves as “mexicanos” even though this south Texas ground violently became part of the United States in 1848. When an English self-referent is needed – and the population is now predominantly bilingual – they are likely to use “Mexican-American.” I follow this usage. Finally my foregrounding of Anglo as “Anglo” is intended to suggest a political figuration and attitude, not a specific cultural reality. I have no quarrel with Anglos, only with “Anglos.” (p. 6)

P5
Also war, domination, colonialism, and cultural metaphors

(Themes of book) an ethnographic essay historical and relatively contemporaneous, on a subaltern sector of Mexican-American society in south Texas, an essay which examines a range of expressive culture concerning this sector in relations to its socially dominated condition. (p. 7)

P6 (Discussion of Experimental Moment in Anthropology)
Essay attempts to dance to the music of certain trends in cultural studies, experiment in the human sciences. (p. 7)
First, its largely anthropological participants display an intense reflexive awareness of the textual and ideological character of inquiry and writing, again principally in anthropology. Here we note a “blurring” to evoke a now famous phrase (Geertz 1980), of the textual genres of “ethnography” literature” criticism and history and cross-disciplinary appropriation such as the literary-critical use of anthropology and vice versa. This concern blurs into our second characteristic of the “moment” here we note a decided shift away from the traditional objects of anthropology – values, social structure, myth texts, systems of rules and meanings, etc., toward social process, but quite often aesthetically salient social process. We almost take for granted the ubiquitous construction of social process as “text” “drama” “symbolic action. (p. 8)

Finally always aware of the uncomfortable proximity of anthropology to Western colonialism, the “experimental moment” is deeply concerned with the status of the usually socially dominated Other in its textualizations and the critical (mis) uses of those textualizations. …recognition of the ethnography as a persuasive and political rhetoric of our culture as well as a deconstructive rethinking of the history of anthropology as cultural discourse. Here too the is two other questions: the political significance of “ethnography” in the present moment and the question of the “native” investigator. Limón shares idea that ethnography is written representation of a culture but between the culture and its written representation lies fieldwork. (p. 9)

This is a mode articulated as a mixed genre to evoke different perspectives and modeled after what Marcus calls the “modern essay.” Presumably and specifically this form eschews realist, descriptive representation followed by theoretical exposition but rather brings these textually together; finally it recognizes and textually renders the disorderly contradictions that often prevail in the world of the dominated rather than ordering them into a 1960s influenced seamless narrative of resistance. (p.10)

These pages are also offered as an invitation to the field of folklore scholarship, as I sense the neglect of folklore in general within the cultural studies enterprise, a neglect in favor of written literature and mass media cultural production. (p. 11)

Limón quotes Gramsci “Folklore must not be considered an eccentricity, an oddity or a picturesque element but as something which is very serious and is to be taken seriously. Only in this way will the teaching of folklore be more efficient and really bring about the birth of a new culture among the broad popular masses, so that the separation between modern culture and popular culture of folklore will disappear. (Gramsci, 1988) (pp. 11-12)

Limón referencing neglect to folklore addresses particular situation in Chicano cultural studies. He sees a developing field of inquiry that while claiming the rubric “cultural studies,” nonetheless focuses its attention principally on elite written literary forms or film. What I don’t see often in either the general or the particular case are integrated works addressing folkloric popular forms, scholarly discursive
practices, mass media, and written literary forms in one interpretive universe always with a close attention to political economy. (p. 12)

P12
Writing an ethnographic essay, Limón proposes to examine several distinct though interrelated sphere of folkloric symbolic action concerning the working classes of Mexican-American south Texas. (p. 12)

P13
In part I I will appear to be concerned on the surface of things with “reviewing the literature” in some academically obligatory way, that is, with examining past efforts beginning the 1890s to write ethnographies – written representations – of the expressive culture of the expressive culture of the population after periods of fieldwork largely in rural settings. These principal precursors are John Gregory Bourke, J. Frank Dobie, Jovita Gonzalez and Americo Paredes. But in the spirit of the “experimental moment” I wish to construct and deconstruct their written representation as symbolic action, as cultural practices in themselves, as expressive culture about expressive culture. As part of the “experimental moment,” which includes a growing deconstructive understanding of the history of ethnography, part I is a kind of historical ethnography of a writing (adjective) culture about South Texas Mexican-Americans. Interpreting this writerly culture in its historical moments, as we are bound to do, requires that I set out in Part I a simultaneous, if condensed, historical narrative of the historical place and people. (p. 12)

P14
This should be particularly useful for readers wholly unfamiliar with the area and serve as a “background” to the rest of the book. (p. 12)

P15
From (Stephen) Greenblatt I also borrow and now address a key interpretive concept in my subtitle – “cultural poetics” or the “poetics of culture” referring to acts of cultural interpretation focused aesthetically salient, culturally imbedded textualities and enactments, or as Greenblatt defines it the “study of the collective making of distinct cultural practices and inquiry into the relations among these practices” the scholarship I will interpret and indeed, it might be argued, the “folk” practices are themselves a cultural poetics, so that what I propose to offer in these pages is a cultural poetics of cultural poetics. (p. 14)

P16
For it is a basic premise and organizing metaphor for this essay that since the 1830s the Mexicans of south Texas have been in a state of social war with the “Anglo” dominate Other and their class allies. This has been at times a war of overt massive proportions; at others, covert and sporadic. (p. 15)

P17
My unifying concern and most general thesis is that in and through these situated renderings of expressive culture, whether scholarly or “popular” we can “see displayed” …certain cultural preoccupations. Veering away from idealist wing in symbolic-interpretive anthropology toward that of culture as practice, grounded in but not reducible to the “material” conditions of social domination and speaking to essentially political interests. Questions of power and domination, study dances away a bit from “experimental moment” my own political cultural formation and the particular and not personally separable history I will be addressing require (of me) a greater emphasis on this issue beyond that offered by the moment. (p. 14)
(Draws on Marxist cultural theory of Fredric Jameson)

Exploring what Jameson has termed the “political unconscious” the socially produced, normatively mediated and relatively unconscious ideological responses of people – scholars and “folk” – to a history of race and class domination. Auth1 employs concept of the political unconscious as defined above…addresses Jameson’s work on postmodernism, but in a revisionary manner. (p. 14)

…I shall presume to discover at the level of the political unconscious are not seamless narratives of domination or resistance relative to this working-class sector. Rather in varying historical moments, these expressive discourses give evidence, yes of resistance and domination but also of seduction, anxiety, internal conflict and contradiction in race, class, and especially gender dimensions condition always as always by a changing “Anglo” capitalist political economy. (p. 15)

Limón takes lead from Antonio Gramsci commentary on the state and society closely pursues the connections between warfare and society in an incisive extended fashion. “Gramsci show us that war, sometimes literal, sometimes only thinly metaphorical, always political and cultural, is the fundamental relationship between antagonistic, fundamentally class forces in modern societies. Within this organizing concept, Gramsci then makes a number of more specific theoretical, semi metaphorical sub contributions germane to this study. Among them are the distinction between the war of “maneuver” and the war of “position;” here at least implicitly I also take up the battlefield leadership of the intellectuals, and the tactics of mass formations and small groups. (p. 15)

(discussing the first metaphorical phase)

Mexican-American subaltern working class sector what I would now emphasize is that it is this – lowest socioeconomic class sector which has historically waged the most intense warfare and suffered the most intense defeats, including not the imposition of what I shall describe as racial and class-infected post modernity. (p. 17)

For my historical ethnographic purposes, it is important to note certain local effects of this initiating instance of political domination at gunpoint, this first American construction of the “third world.” (p. 22)

(Discusses rancheros irregulars labeled bandits like today’s terrorist inspired both fear and fascination in their American foes, resulting is still another Orientalist expressive construction, one close to Said’s) (p. 23)

Lurid description circulated of the tactics and military conduct of these south Texas rancheros, charges that would seem untenable and uncharacteristic of settled subsistence agriculturalist, Catholic, with families, defending their land from invasion.
Indeed, by all accounts, including American, these allegations are more likely psychological projections-displacements of the outrageous conduct of the American forces as it crossed the Mexican south Texas and into Mexico.

This total warfare included the wanton killing of civilians, raping, plundering, and desecrating churches (secondary source referral). The Texas Rangers, a paramilitary unit created by the new Republic of Texas played a leading role in these atrocities.

Such was the nature of the first sustained encounter between the mexicanos of south Texas and northeastern Mexico and American society. The first military step in the colonial project was, consolidated and institutionalized by the long term establishment of several military forts in the area. (p.23)

P25
Hand in hand with military institutionalization in the area, in the latter half of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, we see the continuation of such political nomenclature in civilian society. (p. 24)

P26
Based on the appropriation of mexicano land, more often by foul than fair means, this impoverishing social imposition on mexicano society continued to be ideologically sanctioned by the same continuing racism, religious prejudice, and linguistic xenophobia that had been introduces with the war (referral to secondary sources). (p. 24)

P27
For the moment, let us simply note the affirmation, that of an Anglo by way of other Anglos, of a warlike state of affairs in south Texas keyed on racist premises, massive wanton killing, and the appropriation of land. (p. 25)

P28
The Nuecestown raid by mexicanos, one of many during that period needs to be seen in the contexts of other forms of fighting over contested terrain, forms that in south Texas included journalism, labor unions, organized nonviolent politics, everyday cultural poetics, and intellectual discourse. In is in this social context that we undertake an interpretive application of the first of my predecessor in the construction of a cultural poetics of Mexican-American south Texas. (p. 26)

P29
(Speaking of John Gregory Bourke) At West Point Bourke excelled the in the study of languages, no doubt facilitated to some degree his ability to learn at least something of the language of those Indian peoples, who by the late 1880s were largely defeated, no longer his active enemies and readily available on reservations.

This same facility for languages as well as his strong Catholicism also explains why he was attracted to the Mexican-descent population that he encountered in southern Arizona and to learning Spanish.
Publications and intellectual recognition followed; he then came to the attention of scholars like Franz Boas and the influential Major John Wesley Powell an army officer assigned to be director of the Bureau of Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

Under Powell’s direction he broadened his reading in anthropology and learned as much as there was to learn of this science in that day.

At a theoretical level, he wholly absorbed and unquestioningly accepted the contemporary dominant anthropological paradigm of the day, that of English evolutionary anthropology with its central idea that different societies represent different degrees of a progressive evolutions.

Modern Western societies represented the apogee of development, while other societies and their cultural traits were viewed as less evolved and developed, as survivals in the present world of periods in history that modern Western societies had long ago left behind. (Stocking, 1987)

From Powell and others, Bourke acquired both discourse and power, for as Porter reminds us, “The Bureau of Ethnology and the Anthropological Society, under Powell’s control, set the standards that governed American Anthropology during the Victorian era. (Porter 73) (p. 12)

P30
As an evolutionary anthropologist focused on survivals, Bourke was interested in studying and recording cultures before they “vanished” under evolutionary pressure.

…he did not wholly separate the practice of anthropology from military considerations. He wanted to maintain his position as an army officer assigned to fieldwork and based in the Bureau of Ethnology, and therefore he argued that there was military value to his studies of “the people whom we so often had to fight and always to manage” (Porter 280).

Yet on the other hand, it is clear that Bourke, against strong opposition, continually advocated a humane and respectful policy toward “pacified” Indian peoples, always within the constraints of his evolutionary outlook. (pp. 27-28)

P31
With the waning of the Indian Wars and the development of harsher policies toward reservation Indians, higher authorities no longer saw the need for this linkage, between the military and anthropology, and pressure mounted for his reassignment (lost dispute sent to Southern Texas to emphasize punishment early summer 1891). (p. 28)

P32
His disfavor in Washington kept him a captain until his death after thirty years of military service – continued his twin professions of making war and making anthropology. In both cases the Other was the mexicano population of south Texas.

P33
In south Texas, however, anthropology and war were conjoined in a different way. Here the native population was not exactly on reservations.
Here anthropology and war proceeded more or less simultaneously, both conceived as “duty.” Listen to Bourke on exactly this point in the opening paragraph to one of the five articles he published on this regional culture.

Limón quotes Bourke “The following material, collected by me during the time I was in command of the post of Fort Ringgold, Texas, may be of interest from the light it throws upon the character of the Mexican population of extreme southern border…As many of these Mexicans were engaged in armed attacks upon Mexican territory, and in armed resistance to the American troops sent to suppress them, it became my duty to make as earnest a study of their character and condition as means would permit.” (1894b:119)

P33-1
What Bourke actually wrote/what was left out … (border), “but it is not to be accepted as exhausting the subject of the folk-lore of that region, which simply interminable. Other notes, equally extensive, were gathered at the same time in regard to the theatres, ballads, games, and traditions of the people, but it is impossible, on account of their bulk, to present them here.”

Next paragraph after (permit.) “In making these examinations, care was taken to preserve each statement in the words of the witness, but it is believed that what has been lost in elegance of diction has been more than counterbalanced by a faithful representation of the mode of thought of these descendants of Spaniard and Aztec.” (p. 119 “Popular Medicine, Customs, and Superstitions of the Rio Grande.” The Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 7, No. 25 (Apr. – Jun., 1894), pp. 119-146.

P34
Limón elaborates that Bourke is referring to activities of a local mexicano journalist, intellectual, and guerilla leader, Catarino Garza and his followers. “As Bourke suggests Garza was, from his base in south Texas, attempting to bring down the U.S.-supported autocratic dictatorship of Mexico’s Porfirio Diaz in 1891, the first sustained attempt prior to the Mexican Revolution.

Limón states upon acquisition of area, U.S. support of Latin American dictators in favor of U.S. investors – “Part of such support always seems to involve military assistance in the suppression of local populist guerilla movements. This is what Bourke was ordered to do against Garza, who, though a south Texan, saw it as his internationalist revolutionary duty to cross the river and bring down Diaz. Garza provided the United States with a technical excuse – violation of neutrality laws-for ordering Bourke into action against him (Yet it must be noted that Bourke himself had no use for the Diaz regime [Porter 285-86] In pursuing Garza he was carrying out his orders). (p. 29)

P35
Garza, of course, fought back, and his movement took on an anti-American dimension as well, not a difficult thing to do given the increasingly obvious Anglo domination of mexicanos. (p. 29)

P36
According to Porter, in one particular engagement, “Bourke sent patrols into the chaparral where there was a brief, vicious skirmish that included hand-to-hand encounters between the soldiers and the insurrectos…the Garzystas rallied with the cry ‘Kill the d____ Gringos,” quoting Bourke, Porter continues, specifying warfare reminiscent of reports from Vietnam: “These fights in the chaparral were
ugly and brutal; a testament to this is that some soldiers carried shotguns loaded with buckshot rather than army issue carbines or rifles” (Porter 286-87). (p. 29)

P36-1
What Porter actually states on page 286-87 after Gringos: “They shot and killed Corporal Charles H. Edstrom, and in the melee they captured Deputy Marshal Perez and an army private. Perez escaped his captors, who later released the soldier. Bourke said that two bullets passed through Edstrom’s heal, “the enemy being so close to him that his face was powder-burned.”

P37
And, also anticipating Vietnam, Bourke entered a mexicano village, Una de Gato, and “delivered bombastic and threatening speech in Spanish telling the ‘assembled…that I intended to come out and burn their huts to the ground if I learned that they harboring or aiding any of the Mexican revolutionists…” (Porter 285) Eventually assisted by his old enemies, the Texas Rangers, Bourke and his troops succeeded in violently suppressing the Garzistas but never captured Garza himself. (p. 29)

P37-1
What Porter actually says on pages 285-87 of Garza affair:
Bourke mentioned Catarino Garza by name during the summer of 1891, but his diary first referred to Garza’s “party of revolutionists” or “band” in September. His campaign against Garza would earn Bourke a permanent and controversial place in the history of southern Texas. He learned that Catarino Garza had raised an armed force to topple the government of President Porphyries Diaz in Mexico. Garza indicted the Diaz regime in his newspaper El Libre Pensador, which he had published in Eagle Pass, Texas in the 1880s and in Palito Blanco, Texas in the early 1890s. Bourke noticed that “the sympathy of the population of the Rio Grande with Garza is scarcely disguised.(Diary 106: 32, 65)

P37-2
The Mexican government demanded that the United States enforce its neutrality laws because Garza based his organization, including its armed force, in Texas. In turn, the federal government instructed the state of Texas, federal marshals in Texas, and the United States Army to stop the Garzistas from operating on Texas soil. Bourke appreciated the diplomatic rationale behind the decision of the United States government, but he did not think it was practical. He knew the population of southern Texas was largely Hispanic, and that Garza moved through his vast geographic area with impunity. Also, he pointed out, many southern Texas – Mexican-Americans and Anglos-openly supported Garza. (only two troops of cavalry and two companies of infantry were mustered to patrol an area of five hundred square miles) by October 1891 Bourke asked to withdraw his units from the field, insisting that he was only wearing out men an animals in a futile task. (Diary 106: 72)

P37-3
Initially, Bourke and other army officers were content to let federal marshals deal with Garza; however, dissension among civilian officials forced the army to become more active. Sheriff W.W. Sheely of Starr County alleged that three deputy federal marshals in southern Texas and the United States collector of customs in Rio Grande City, F.D. Jodon, actually assisted Garza . (Diary 106: 84)
Some county sheriffs, deputies, and other officials also help the Garzistas. Wild rumors flourished, and the selling of information about the Garzistas became a thriving enterprise. Informant soldier American officials and Mexican consuls false or greatly exaggerated details.

Bourke, other officers, and their units had to respond to each rumor, no matter how improbable, or be accused of laxness by the Mexican government. Bourke’s patrol to Una de Gato Ranch is merely one example of many such fruitless ventures.

On 8 October 1891, the Mexican consul in Rio Grande City sent Bourke information that “insurrectos” were hiding at Una de Gato Ranch about seven leagues north of Roma, Texas. At Four o’clock the next morning Bourke, a sergeant, three privates, and a teamster set out for Una de Gato where they found seven families.

Bourke delivered a bombastic and threatening speech in Spanish telling the “assembled...that I intended to come out and burn their huts to the ground if I learned that they were harboring or aiding any of the Mexican revolutionists in their attempt upon the integrity of the Mexican Republic with which were at peace” (Diary 106: 81)

(After inspecting for signs of hiding revolutionaries, Bourke and soldiers returned to Fort Ringgold frustrated and exhausted) “Bourke complained in November that “so many miserable lies and ‘fake’ rumors had reached me in regard to the Garza business that I felt I ought not to trust anybody, but seek knowledge for myself, (Diary 106: 72-83 )

Because of his fluency in Spanish, Bourke often gathered his own intelligence. He visited Hispanic festivals, parties, theaters, and circuses. Dressing in nondescript civilian clothes, he drank the “fiercest of mescal and the vilest of whiskey” as he eavesdropped on conversations in saloons and restaurants’ on both sides of the border.

Porter states Bourke may have been scornful of Garza believing they should not launch struggle from Texas, but initially he was also critical of the Diaz regime in Mexico. “Based upon what he heard along the border, Bourke claimed that President Diaz had ordered the summary executions of 3 Mexican Generals and 13 colonels in northern Mexico in past three years...in one month, September 1891, Mexican army officers along the Rio Grande had “shot to death without trial” twenty-six suspected Garzistas. (Diary 106: 98)

Bourke concluded that only the presence of the Mexican army prevented a majority of citizens in northeastern Mexico from openly supporting Garza. While some federal marshals were pro-Garza, Bourke discovered that the Mexican government bribed other marshals to kidnap American citizens thought to be Garzistas. These marshals took their victims to Mexico where they were interrogated and murdered. According to Bourke, the Mexican authorities had killed not less than one thousand persons along the Rio Grande in the past thirty years.

Yet even as he made war on the south Texas mexicanos, he, quite literally in his spare time from war, simultaneously carried out his other “duty” – the study of their culture, principally their folklore. His
two careers—war and anthropology—were not always separate endeavors, however. At the heart of warfare and anthropology is good intelligence. (p. 31)

P39

As I suggested earlier, there is no evidence that Bourke felt any personal, racial, or cultural animosity toward those Indian peoples he fought and studied. Indeed, there is evidence of affections, respect, and admiration. At times, according to Porter, one detects Bourke’s gnawing suspicion that these Indian cultures were humanly better that what he was simultaneously witnessing in his own white, industrializing, expansive America. Yet, even though these Indian tribes had inflicted many more casualties upon this troops that the Garzistas, his manifest attitude toward mexicanos is often markedly ethnocentric and racist. Why? Why, toward a people culturally closer to him than Indians? (p. 31)

P40

His most extended and general ethnographic description of the area begins by comparing the Rio Grande to the Nile. Like the latter, the Rio Grande has its origins in “snow-clad sierras far away” and “made its way to the sea unswelled by any affluent of importance” (1984a 591). But he changes his metaphor as the river enters southern Texas, and anthropologically “unknown region.

(quotes Bourke from American Congo)

Through the centre of this unknown region, fully as large as New England, course the Rio Grande which can more correctly be compared to the Congo that the Nile the moment that the degrade, turbulent, ignorant, and superstitious character of its population comes under examination (1894a 594)

(quote is exact)

“He is not content with the double racist thrust to the peoples of the Congo and the Rio Grande. He makes it more explicit, if that is possible, and compounds it with a highly revealing further comparison even as he introduces class into his commentary.

Quotes Bourke from American Congo)

To the Congo, therefore, I compare it, and I am confident that all who peruse these lines to a conclusion will concur in the correctness of the comparison, although stress cannot be too pointedly laid upon the existence within this Dark Belt of thriving, intelligent communities, such as Brownsville, Matamoros, Corpus Christi, Laredo, San Diego, and others, in which are to be found people of as much refinement and good breeding as anywhere else in the world, but exerting about as much influence upon the indigenes around them as did the Saxon or Danish invaders upon the Celts of Ireland. (1894a 594)

(quote is exact) (p. 31)

P41

Within this Dark Belt can be found people of “refinement and good breeding,” principally in the towns. Clearly Bourke is referring to the small upper-class mexicano society and the rapidly expanding Anglo entrepreneurial class in the 1890s. However, the national-character metaphor that he uses to make his point is striking, revealing a latent psychological-political contradiction in Bourke’s consciousness. This refined, well-bred class, Bourke tells us, exerts very little cultural influence “upon the indigenes around them,” as little influence “as did the Saxon or Danish invaders upon the Celts of Ireland.” But why this particular European comparison now after the earlier African racism? (p. 32)
I submit that we are witnessing a not too unconscious projection of Bourke’s own uneasy ambivalent ethnic identity onto the mexicanos. His deep-rooted tension and ambivalence are express stylistically by the single long, unbounded sentence which constitutes this statement; the style, perhaps, of an analysand’s outpouring to an analyst at a critical point of self-revelation, a sentence style suggesting a man caught up in a psychological contradiction which can be handled only by an unmeasured flow of words, an agitated formal expression reflecting his anxiety. There are traces of Bourke’s personal and social biography to support such a reading.

(p.32)

Bourke was born on June 23, 1846, even as Zachary Taylor’s regiments were crossing the Rio Grande into interior Mexico. Porter tells us little about his early childhood and family, but what he does say is succinctly instructive. His father was a solid, stalwart Irish Catholic immigrant who had brought his family to Philadelphia in the early 1840s, but his mother was of both Irish and English antecedents and had been reared an Anglican, becoming a Catholic upon her marriage to Edward Bourke. As noted earlier, the elder Bourke “was a student of the Gaelic folktales of western Ireland,” and “he passed his love of this lore to his children.” But, of his mother, “in later years her son remarked that he has never met a woman better grounded in English literature, history, and belles lettres. (Porter 1) (p. 32)

Although the Bourkes were better off than most Irish immigrants, to be Irish and Catholic in the northeastern United States in the mid-nineteenth century was no inconsequential matter. The Bourkes were exposed to such strong prejudice, articulated principally by the Know-Nothing party which “bitterly resented Roman Catholic immigrants” that, on occasion, “Edward Bourke took his rifle to defend his parish church against mobs bent on destroying it. (Porter 1).

This reinforced a strong sense of his Catholicism in the younger Bourke. On the other hand, on has to wonder what ambivalencies might be stirred in a young upper-class American Irish boy who sensed the non-Irish world’s contempt for those they stigmatized as, in Bourke’s words, about mexicanos, “degraded, turbulent, ignorant and superstitious…”

Porter offers no clue in his book, but consider what a well-educated Irish-American young man in his impressionable twenties would feel if he had read Matthew Arnold’s 1867 essay “On the Study of Celtic Literature.” Arnold speaks of the Celt’s sensuality, of his love for “bright colours, company and pleasure,” but also of his “failure to reach any material civilization sound and satisfying, and not out at elbows, poor, slovenly, and half-barbarous.” Arnold continues: “as in material civilization he has been ineffectual, so has the Celt been ineffectual in politics…The Celt, undisciplinable, anarchical, turbulent by nature, but out of affection and admiration giving himself body and soul to some leader, that is not a promising political temperament…” (pp. 32-34)

Substitute “Mexican” for Celt in this stereotypic formulation, as American popular cultura has indeed done, and we can surmise the possibility that in construing mexicanos, Bourke was also coping with his own repudiated and projected self-abivalencies. For even as he thought of mexicanos as degrade, he
seems at least subconsciously and critically aware that they, like Irish forbears, also were the victims of an unjust conquest and domination. He recalls the conquest of south Texas.

Two waves of North American aggression have swept across this region, bearing down all in its path...the first of the ethnic storms was the advent of the army of General Zachary Taylor...this war...although it undoubtedly resulted in the development of immense areas of most productive country, the necessity for beginning it or continuing it has been doubted by no less an authority than the late President Grant. (1894a 592) (p. 33)

Yet Bourke speaks of a second “North American aggression,” a second “ethnic storm,” And what is this? It is, for Bourke, precisely the resulting economic “development” that he recognizes as a “storm” an “aggression.” That he was now an intrinsic military agent of this continuing domination could not have escaped so well-educated and perceptive a man. (p. 33)

His ambivalence and the unconscious analogy are also registered in the following where he locates most mexicanos at a lower stage of evolution. Yet one detects almost a note of admiration for what he says of the Mexicans, he might well have said of his own Irish vis-à-vis the English.

If we enter into the homes of these people and mingle among them, it soon becomes evident that we have encountered a most interesting study in ethnology and anthropology; they constitute a distinct class, resisting all attempts at amalgamation. There are to this rule, as to all rules, notable exceptions, and there are on the river some few representatives of a higher stage of evolution; but, in general terms, the Rio Grande Mexican resists to-day, as he has always resisted, the encroachments of the Gringo, and the domination of his own Mexico. (1894a 606) (p. 34)

According to Gramsci, intellectuals play key roles in social warfare. I suggest that John Gregory Bourke, U.S. military officer and ethnologist, is a partial specimen of what Gramsci calls the “organic intellectual.” Gramsci recognizes that in moments of class warfare, “traditional” intellectuals are subject to the pressures of this warfare, and take sides.

Under “normal” circumstances, such intellectuals are defined by and ostensibly committed to a universal mission of learning and transmission of high culture. However, under the exigencies of struggle, contending groups attempt “to assimilate and to conquer ‘ideologically’ the traditional intellectuals...,” but, Gramsci continues, “this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals...”

the latter defined by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong. (p. 34)

Writing from the perspective of the twentieth-century, Gramsci clearly sees a quite conscious and specialized functioning for such intellectuals, but here greater flexibility is required of Gramsci. Bourke does, in effect, direct the stereotypic ideas of his class and culture. His published attitudes toward
mexicanos must have had their large reinforcing ideological effect on his Anglo-American audiences, especially if one keeps in mind the semi-popular circulation of intellectual discourses in his day.

This ideological circulation was supported by the most legitimizing kind of “I was there…” ethnographic authority possible in late nineteenth-century imperialist America, that a fighting soldier who had seen the “savages” close up (Clifford 1988a). However, in a revision of Gramsci’s too tight sociological categories, the development of organic intellectuals surely cannot be an ideologically seamless, coherent affair. (p. 35)

P50
As a later Gramscian, the late Raymond Williams, reminds us, cultural formations of any kind are never without their disruptions, discontinuities, and internal contradictions. The dominant culture is not fully comprehensive in its domination even within itself and always excludes, and what it excludes “may often be seen as the personal or the private or as the natural or even the metaphysical.

Usually “it is …in one or another of these terms that the excluded area is expressed. (1977:125) It is so, I think, with this Irish American soldier anthropologist whose unconscious ethnic identification with the Rio Grande mexicanos produces and ideological discontinuity and ambivalence in his work.

But thus far I have considered only Bourke’s more manifest and general appraisal of culture, although I have begun to point to its unconscious political dimensions. We can also see this ideological discontinuity registered in his cultural poetics of mexicano folklore and society.

(p.35)

P51
There is a kind of redemption that he finds in south Texas Mexicans, in the same way that so many thinkers, Matthew Arnold and Bourke’s middle class father included, Irish or not, have located a redemptive Irish “genius” in that people’s folklore in similar sociological contexts, although this is always an ambivalent identification.

Bourke never attributes genius to mexicanos, but he uses two closely interrelated scholarly strategies that, if seen in social context, have a redemptive ideological effect; even if that effect is not consciously intended. The first is the representation of sheer folkloric abundance among the people, and the second, the historical displacement of meaning through his evolutionary theory of survivals.

A reader today may be struck with the thickness of the description in Bourke’s account of those people whom he also fought. An early article is offered with the proviso that “it is not to be accepted as exhausting the subject of the folklore of that region which simply interminable. Other notes, equally extensive, were gathered…but it is not possible on account of their bulk to present them here. (1984b 119). (p. 36)

P51-1

Opening sentence before [“it] The following material, collected by me during the time I was in command of the post of Fort Ringgold, Texas, may be of interest from the light it throws upon the character of our extreme southern border,
Sentence after [here.’] As many of these Mexicans were engaged in armed attacks upon the Mexican territory, and in army resistance to the American troops sent to suppress them, it became my duty to make as earnest a study of their character and condition as means would permit.

In making these examinations, care was taken to preserve each statement in the words of the witness, but it is believed that what has been lost in elegance of diction has been more than counterbalanced by a faithful representation of the mode of thought of these descendants of Spaniard and Aztec.

P52
What he offers here, however, is not a thick description of culture as Geertz would have but rather a seemingly more conventional dense cataloging of alphabetically arranged descriptive observations in evolutionary anthropological style.

In this catalogue style, Bourke offers relatively brief but dense itemizations of folk foods (1895), language (1896), and a folk play (1893) from the mexicano south Texas border country. In one such botanical description in which his contradictory outlook reappears, he notes the mexicano’s fondness for fruits and flowers: On the southern side of the river,

Quoting Bourke:
I noted pinks, roses, bananas, geraniums, jasmines, oranges, lilies, mignonettes, lemons, peaches, grapes, forget-me-nots, tulipans, magnolias, heliotropes, carnations, and such exquisite flowers, all at their best.
In that part of Texas where the Mexicans once had settlements the same rule holds good, although I am far from attributing it to former occupancy alone. (1895 70)

(quote is exact words) (pp. 34-35)

P54
From a “modern” perspective the sheer hyperdescriptiveness of such notation may already have ideological significance, indicating the manifest presence of culture; and this claim may be true not only for Bourke but for all who practiced ethnography in this manner in the nineteenth-century. As Stocking suggests, such dense descriptive activity has its theoretical place in “the actual contact between nineteenth-century Europeans and the “savages” whose origin, status, and fate social evolutionism would attempt to explain and justify.” He continues: “From this broadly contextual point of view, as well as from the narrower perspective of the role of ethnographic data in a major theoretical reorientation, these rather concretely descriptive vignettes may carry substantial exemplary weight. (1987 80-81) (p. 36)

P55
It is as if, even while imputing a backward, degraded character to the mexicanos, his dense textual rendition of their rich abundance of such “interesting” cultural poetics absolves them of some portion of stigmatization. Even this unconscious textual compensation is not always carried out without racist overtones. Even as he notes and renders this creative lushness he is “far from attributing it to former occupancy alone.” We should note the politically critical admission that he is discussing a place “where the Mexicans once had settlements.” He cannot always sustain his redemptive description and reverts to the role of an organic intellectual of his class. The new rulers of this land are also engaged in botanical cultural poetics: of all the gardens he sees in south Texas, “most interesting of all…was the cactus garden of Mrs. Miller, near the Havana Ranch…in Starr County, Texas (1895: 70-71) (p. 36)
The element of political unconscious in textual abundance takes on greater saliency in the context of Bourke’s evolutionary anthropology everywhere evident in his writings. In this evolutionary view, these abundant folkloric practices acquire part of their interest and fascination because they are to be seen as “survivals.” (p. 36-37)


Page 70 prior to [“I] “But there are very few towns which do not maintain public flower gardens in the main plazas; some of these, notably that of Mermosillo, in Sonora, when I was last there; that of Chihuahua, and those of San Luis Potosi, Linares, and many other places were well worthy of imitation; there were growing maguey, bananas, dates, oranges, and lemons, roses, oleanders, jasmins, lilies, and many others. (Bourke FN 1: Madame Calderon de la Barca alludes to the tenacity with which the Mexicans adhere to the Aztec custom of using flowers on all occasions, and the decorating of the church alters with them. See her Life in Mexico, London 1843 page 95”

Following [occupancy alone which Bourke wrote solely] San Antonio, Houston, Victoria, San Diego, Laredo, Corpus Christi, each claims the banner. The “Battle of Flowers” in San Antonio, held on the first day of May or the last of April, is a sight well worth miles to travel to see. All equipages are decorated from pole to hind wheel with beautiful buds and foliage; the horses are equally favored, and the ladies and gentlemen driving wear boutoniers and bouquets, or wreaths or parasols of flowers. It is one of the great attractions of Texas.

Most interesting of all these gardens, to my mind, was the Cactus garden of Mrs. Miller, near the Havana ranch, on the Rio Grande, in Starr County, Texas. This indefatigable and intelligent lady keeps under cultivation no less than seventy-eight different varieties of this wonderful family. I was astonished at what she had to show, and would certainly enter into a longer relation of all that I there noted, did I not know that the more prominent cactologist of the United States and Canada are now in correspondence with her.

From here, Bourke discusses in the remaining four paragraphs of the article the area he had described in the article from river Nueces, in Texas, to and below San Luis Potosi, in Mexico, about a thousand miles, and how within just two years was a sealed book to botanists, anthropologists, folklorist and explorer. Bourke also discusses extension of train lines and problems of colonization of these areas.

What is more important to context though is Bourke’s opening paragraphs explaining why he was gathering this information.

Bourke writes on page 41

*It was with no intention of invading the literary province which Brillat Savarin has made so eminently his own that I began the compilation of this series of notes upon the habits of life of the race which almost exclusively populates our southern boundary; my purposes were more strictly military that those*
which animated the brilliant author of “La Phisiologie du Gout.” I figured to myself that should history repeat itself, and an army from Europe attempt to overthrow the government of Mexico, it should be again the policy and duty of the Americans of the north to push to the rescue of the sister to the south, and aid her in her struggle upward and onward in the path of civilization. It might perhaps happen that an officer would find himself beleaguered, and supply trains cut off, in which case there would be no alternative of surrender or retreat, unless he could provide food for his troops from the resources of the country.

P56-5

Could all this thorny jungle and chaparral have been created in vain? No, I answered to myself, the more we examine into the great scheme of nature, the more do we see that nothing has been made without some purpose. What all these woods can supply I will try to discover. And thus I began, and continued in a more less desultory way, to learn little by little, and not always with intelligent certainty, what that vast country was good for; and then the thought came to me that after all man’s noblest pastime is not in constant and irritating preparation for war, but in adding all in his power to knowledge which might, to some extent, make men wiser and happier.

Bourke then relates a brief history of geographical movement of fruits and other plants.

P56-6

pp. 45-46. An example of interpersonal relationship of Bourke

Chie is a peculiar seed, not unlike our linseed, but possessing properties worthy of commemoration. Several years since, I was paying a visit to the ruins of the gran old monastery of Atononilco, and was received most cordially by the priest in charge, Padre Silva, who seeing my heated and exhausted condition, - I had made a long ride over from San Miguel de Allende, _ declined, to my great surprise, to let me have a drink of cool water from the “aljibe” (cistern).

That is always the way with you Americanos,” he said gently; “you come down here and rush all over the country in the hot sun and dust, and when you reach a house the first thing you do is to call for cold water, and drink a quantity of it; the stomach cannot stand such treatment and rebels against it, and the sick man blames our climate. Now let me show how we Mexicans do; take it easy; take off your coat and collar and cool off, while I send Pepe here after some Chi-e.” Pepe soon performed his errand, and brought back from one of the Old Indian women a small package of the seeds, which the padre immersed in a cup fill with water; the seeds swelled up and the water became slightly mucilaginous.

“Now,” said the padre, “you must not gulp down this mixture all at once; it would give you a chill if you did; take one third at this moment; another third in ten minutes, and the remainder in ten minutes more.”

The results surprised me very much; not only were my feverish symptoms alleviated, but my voice became very clear and strong. What this chi-e was I never could ascertain. The Padre told me that the plant grew all over northern Mexico and, he thought, in southern Texas also, but I never had another opportunity to learn anything about it.

“The Chiricahua Apaches, who have lived nearly always in Mexico, and pretty far down in the Sierra Madre, have a gens name the “Chi-e,” a word which I never could get interpreted to my satisfaction; it has probably some connection with the plant which I am here attempting to describe.”
P56-7
Of note on Bourke’s idea of Mexican race: p. 55
“The Mexican is tenacious of old usages; this is because he is the descendant of five different races, each in its way conservative of all that had been handed down from its ancestors; these races, it needs no words to show, were the Roman, the Teuton, the Arab, the Celt, and the Aztec.”

P56-8
Bourke on his sources: p. 55

“He who has “nosed around” Mexican towns, as I have without a guide-book, and generally without a companion, is sure to yield to the temptation of indulging in historical retrospection and conjuring up in memory those centuries when the Spaniard was essentially the Roman, and the Roman had degenerated into a creature of “panem et circenses.”

Bourke then discusses briefly circuses, bread and open air concerts, “The music is never really bad, and very frequently is as good as can be found anywhere, and no words of praise seem to me to be excessive for a policy which affords the poor as well as the rich the most refining of all enjoyments, as well as an opportunity of coming in contact with one’s neighbors. But to this policy we cannot give more than brief reference, and must pass on to describe the vendors of street foods, who on such occasion throng the streets, and afford the traveler, the anthropologist, and the folklorist a never-ending source of interest and reflection in their wares, their usages, and their cries.”

P57
“Applied here and perhaps everywhere in the nineteenth-century evolutionary studies, the construct of “survivals,” for all of its enthocentric bias, may participate in a redemptive mission. For Bourke, much of what he is observing in south Texas has historical meaning beyond itself, and once again we find ourselves in a rhetorical poetics of Orientalism.”

“As one of his subtitles succinctly proposes, Bourke wants to think of many of these practices not as present-day inherently Mexican (which is to say, degraded) but as traces of an older, higher, even more interestingly exotic, though still barbaric, civilization – not Aztec, but Arabic via Spain – survivals in a sense continue to valorize the present culture (1896).”

“I offer two of many of his “examples,” selecting these largely because of their pertinence later in this study in Chapters 6 and 9. Bourke comments on a famous folk healer of south Texas, whom he identifies as “san Pedro of Los Olmos,” and notes him as a survival: “Such prophets, semi-prophets, and inspired healers correspond closely to the Mahdes who since A.D. 685 have arisen periodically among the Moslems…” (1896 114). And, on a more profane level, he “explains” the local custom of eating with one’s fingers from a common dish as also ancient Arabic (1896 88).” (p. 37)
The abundance and longevity of their folklore are the principal specific figurations through which Bourke unconsciously offers his readers and himself this redemptive sense of the otherwise socially “degraded” mexicanos. The specific strategies are also in the service of a larger authorial narrative strategy, also subconscious, through which Bourke articulates his ambivalence on a larger scale. He, we need to think of Bourke’s entire career and writings as a continuous narrative discourse in which ideological meaning is articulated formally as well as manifestly.

Hayden White has offered a complex scheme for grasping the ideological underpinnings of historical narrative discourse (1973). To make my case for this anthropological discourse, let me loosely draw on White’s pertinent critical concept of this scheme—the emplotment or narrative organization of intellectual discourse. “If, in the course of narrating his story,” White tells us,

…the historian provides it with the plot structure of a Tragedy, he has “explained” it one way; if he has structured it as a Comedy, he has “explained” it another way. Emplotment is the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind. (1973: 7) (p. 38)

Of a particular kind here refers not only to the generic style—Tragedy, Comedy—but also to the different explanatory and ideological effects achieved by each of these as well as two more possible choices, Satire and Romance. To a large degree, Bourke’s life narrative was cast in the form of Romance which, for White, is “fundamentally a drama of self-identification symbolized by the hero’s transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it…” (1973:8).

“Here is an anthropologist who starts out from a specific problematic world of Irish experience and English authority to some degree represented respectively by his father and mother. It can be argued that his simultaneous careers of anthropology and war both respond to these primary influences and transcend them but always in tension and ambivalence. He becomes an anthropologist, a professional student of socially marginalized cultures, and a soldier of an imperial power, representing the source of that marginalization. In both cases he lives up to and indeed transcends his marginalization. In both cases he lives up to and indeed transcends his parent’s expectations and those that society ascribed to the Irish. (p. 38)

The archetypal Romance is the knightly quest, against all adversity, for the Holy Grail (White 1973: 8-9). For Bourke, the adversity may be the socially problematic side of his Irish identity, itself already a product of a nineteenth-century Irish political economy dominated by England. This was an identity which might have been projected unto Southern Protestant Confederates or American Indians were they not so Other to his experience. Of greater service to his ambivalence were those semi-Others: those darkish, non-English speaking Catholics along the Rio Grande against whom, by the logic of an American political economy, he came to make war. Yet even as there adversaries, for this Irish-American anthropologist, they also possessed a Holy Grail, a rich treasure trove of folklore which he claimed, ostensibly in the service of scholarship, but more fundamentally to redeem them and himself. (p. 38)

Bourke’s redemptive ambivalence is evident in two major folklore encounters he had with informants in south Texas, although viewed from another angle these might actually belie my thus far romantic
reading of Bourke. For there is in these more than a hint of another Bourke, a pre-postmodernist anthropologist before his time, sensitive to domination, to the dialogic, to irony, and to a nonunitary sense of culture. The first of these-in two examples-is compelling, for here, unlike the rest of my precursors, this very masculine captain, this nineteenth-century officer and gentleman, works closely with a female informant, Maria Antonia Cavazos de Garza, a curandera (healer). Their first interactively generated and inscribed subject broaches questions of gender and sexuality that recall Bourke’s affiliation to Freud. (pp. 38-39)
Appendix 2


P1
In addition to locating the study of Chicano/a literature in a broad cultural framework, this book looks at the recent theorizing about the U.S. –Mexico border zone as a paradigm of crossings, intercultural exchanges, circulations, resistances, and negotiations as well as of militarized “low-intensity” conflict. (p. ix)

How do discursive spaces and the physical places of the U.S.-Mexico border inflect the material reality of cultural production?

By analyzing a broad range of cultural texts and practices (corridos, novels, poems, paintings, conjunto, punk and hip-hop songs, travel writing and ethnography) and foregrounding the situated historical experiences facing Chicanos/as, Border Matters puts forth a model for a new kind of U.S. cultural studies, one that challenges the homogeneity of U.S. nationalism and popular culture.

The seven chapters argue for inclusion of the U.S. – Mexico border experience within cultural studies and strive to show how to treat culture as a social force, how to read the presence of social contexts within cultural texts, and how to re-imagine the nation as a site within many “cognitive maps” in which the nation-state is not congruent with cultural identity.
(2 pp. ix-x)

P2
Although what follows is not a definitive statement about border discourses on a global scale, it is an attempt to place the histories and myths of the American West and Southwest in a new perspective – what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak calls “the emerging dominant” in American studies. (1995, 179).

[discusses his reasoning for book – primarily legitimate and real concern with national hysteria/crisis with immigrant crossings]

P3
How can we begin making the connections between moral panic about border-crossing migrations and the drift into a militarized law-and-order society? Can these events be linked and articulated together in the construction of a narrative of reality in which “illegal aliens” become the signifiers of the present crisis in U.S. society? If the crisis is not a crisis of “ethno-race,” is ethno-race the lens through which this crisis is seen in the American West?

In this time of anti-immigrant hysteria, when as the border ethnographer Ruth Behar puts it, “stories of homelessness, violence, and suffering are falling on ears that no longer bear to listen” border discourses about the United States and Mexico are destined to become more central in remapping American studies. I have written this book about the U.S. Mexico border precisely because the government is gearing up to implement a new “battle plan” against border-crossers from the South into the North, a plan involving a complex network of support from the military, the National Guard, and local police...
departments. The border-control program, at a cost to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of $2.6 million a month, will militarize areas along the border in California and Arizona. The militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border xi as the historian Timothy Dunn has documented in detail, has broader historical and political context, for “three different U.S presidential administration from the two major U.S. political parties” have implemented a doctrine of “low-intensity conflict” to enforce immigration and drug laws.

P4
If (since Frederick Jackson Turner’s 1893 address, “The Significance of the American Frontier in American History”) the frontier field-Imaginary in mainline American culture has become, in the historian David Wrobel’s words, “a metaphor for promise, progress, and ingenuity” (1993 145), the Chicana/o studies invocation of la frontera has a “more realistic” potential for understanding what the historian Patricia Nelson Limerick calls “the legacy of conquest” in the American borderlands, where “trade, violence,…and cultural exchange” shaped nineteenth-century American and where “conflicts over the restrictions of immigration, disputes over water flows, and…a surge of industrial developments [such as maquiladoras, or assembly factories] punctuated late twentieth-century America” (Grossman, 1994, 90). (p. xii)

P5
For many new, the field Imaginary of Chicano/a studies has begun to redress what the literary historian Amy Kaplan sees as “the conceptual limits of the frontier, by displacing it with the site of the borderlands” (1993, 16) For Kaplan, Chicano/a studies links “the study of ethnicity and immigration inextricably to the study of international relations and empire” (16). In other words, invocation of the U.S.-Mexico border as a paradigm of crossing, resistance, and circulation in Chicano/a studies has contributed to the “worldling” of American studies and further helped to instill a new transnational literacy in the U.S. academy. (p. xiii)

If the Chicano cultural critic Rafael Perez-Torres is correct that “the borderlands make history present…the tensions, contradictions, hatred, and violence as well as resistance and affirmation of self in the face of that violence” (1995, 12) a quick look at the way in which the paradigm of the borderlands has traveled, shifted, and been appropriated by official U.S. culture indicates how enmeshed the American frontier field-Imaginary continues to be in our culture.

P6
With these criticisms and lessons in mind,(book title) begins by mapping a discourse about the U.S.-Mexico borderlands that has emerged from the historical experience of the American West, to provide a broad genealogy in which a range of border writings operate across both nineteenth-century and late twentieth-century contexts. Indeed this book is fundamentally shaped by Michel Foucault’s famous statement that “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are jointed together. And for this very reason, we must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse of the dominated discourse; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. (1980, 100). (p. xv)
It is precisely this uneven discursive terrain of the border in the American western field—Imaginary of the American West that *Border Matters* reconstructs; the things said and concealed about migration and immigration; the enunciations required and those forbidden about the legacy of conquest in the Americas. In my view, border discourse not only produces power and reinforces it but also undermines it, makes it fragile, and allows one to map and perhaps thwart the cultures of U.S. empire. Because this message about the legacy of conquest has not gotten through to official American culture, *Border Matters* joins the dynamic work of new western American historians, new Americanists, and cultural studies workers in critiquing how the American imaginary continues to hold to the great discontinuity between the American frontier and la frontera. (p. xiv)

If the book’s first six chapters announce the post-contemporary coming of age of the U.S.-Mexico border as a paradigm of crossing, circulation, material mixing, and resistance, chapter 7, “Remapping American Cultural Studies,” delves into an extended discussion of U.S.-Mexico border writing within the context of nineteenth-century U.S. cultures of imperialism. It provides another comparative focus by studying the uneven modernist writings of two chroniclers of Gilded Age Americanism, John Gregory Bourke and Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton. (p. 13)

Bourke, a soldier-anthropologist, in 1894 produced one of the first ethnographic studies of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, and essay symptomatically entitled “The American Congo.”

If the force field of American border studies was hegemonically conceived by Bourke on the swirling countercurrents of the Rio Grande in South Texas in the American age of empire, Chicano/a cultural studies has had to contest Bourke’s crude and violent mappings and representations of empire. Against Bourke’s cultures of U.S. imperialism, I pose Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), a historical romance about Alta California and the American 1848. (p. 13)

In my attempt to suggest a historical and intercultural approach to U.S. Mexico border writing and cultural studies, I use some terms and concepts that require additional defining. “Transfrontera” contact zone refers to the two-thousand-mile-long border between the United States and Mexico and to other geopolitical border zones, such as Raymond William’s border zone between Wales and England. This zone is the social space of subaltern encounters, the Janus-faced border line in which peoples geopolitically forced to separate themselves now negotiate with one another and manufacture new relations, hybrid cultures, and multiple-voiced aesthetics. I borrow the term contact zone from Mary Louise Pratt’s colonial discourse coinage which owes much to sociolinguistics and improvised languages that develop among speakers of different native languages in which the term is “synonymous with colonial frontier” (1992, 6). Transfrontera contact zone is an attempt to invoke the heterotopic forms of everyday life whose trajectories cross over and interact. (p.14)

Rather, I have sought to use U.S.-Mexico border writing as much to construct a non-Eurocentric perspective about cultural studies as to unify a rhetoric or syllogism of the border. By examining the contact zones of the U.S.-Mexico border, the spaces where the nation either ends or begins, we can begin to problematize the notion that the nation is “naturally” there: these are spaces within this stable,
naturalized, and hegemonic status of the national by looking at the assumed equivalence we make between the national and the cultural. (p.14)

P12
How do U.S.-Mexican border paradigms strive for comparative theoretical reach while remaining grounded in specific histories of what Jose Marti called “Nuestra America,” Our American? What do such projects tell us about the cultures of U.S. imperialism and the cultures of displacement? In addition to these questions, this chapter focuses on two late-nineteenth-century articulations of an uneven and contradictory frontier modernism, one situated along the riverbanks of the Rio Grande in South Texas and the other located in the ranchos of Alta California – fin de siglo quests for empire, politics, and subaltern difference. (p. 159)

P13
(Saldívar background) Culturally I write these days as a teacher and avid consumer of U.S.-Mexico border texts, musics, and cultural performances. Like many U.S. Latino/a intellectuals, I have lived both in the North and in the South, and in the South in the North, as Ruben Martinez once put it. While I now find myself in what some one hundred fifty years ago was call the northern frontier of Alta California, I spent the first half of my life at the mouth of the Rio Grande in South Texas. My quest for a new mapping of American cultural studies necessarily entails worries about the politics of location.”

P14
Occasionally, as in the work of a Gilded Age, frontier Americanist-ethnologist like Capt. John Gregory Bourke-commissioned as a first lieutenant at West Point Military Academy in 1869, an Indian and Mexican hunter, and later a friend and colleague of the Smithsonian Institution’s Maj. John Wesley Powell and follower of Franz Boas and Hubert How Bancroft—all of these force fields embodied simultaneously.
Bourke’s American studies in the 1890s, I want to suggest, allows us to begin asking, to what extent did disciplines such as anthropology, ethnography, and travel writing legitimate the imperializing project of the U.S. government?
(p. 161)

P15
Bourke’s eminent career as a frontier “Americanist” requires a more precise exploration, which I will elaborate below, but even in modest outline form his project as a soldier-ethnologist is a rich and intricate thematization of the famous frontier field imaginary of the United States. As his biographer Joseph Porter puts it, Bourke’s “fascination with the land, the history and the peoples of the Southwest” not only “compelled [him] to keep extensive diaries” (1986: 4) but to reproduce in the writing of cultural poetics the paradoxes of Gilded Age imperialist formation.
(p.161)

Porter, page 4: “A fascination with the land, the history, and the peoples of the Southwest, a habitual tendency to observe and study, and boredom with military routine compelled Bourke to keep extensive diaries. As soon as he arrived in New Mexico, he began to make descriptive notes. By 1872 the diaries had settled into a careful pattern of detailed observations and personal opinion. Bourke made rough notes during the hectic rush of the day which he later organized and rewrote into his diary. Fellow officers recalled that during onerous Indian campaigns Bourke would be working on his diary each night when others were dropping away from exhaustion. An Apache considered it bizarre that Bourke
was always “writing, writing, writing.” Who did Bourke think he was, the warrior demanded, “a paper medicine man?” (Diary 59: 93-96)

P16

After graduating from West Point Bourke was ordered by the War Department to Fort Craig, New Mexico where he began his military and ethnographic espionage, observation, and destruction of Pueblo Indian cultures.

It was during his “after hours” that he wrote his prodigious diary entries, “studied up” the native American Indians of the region, and mastered the Spanish vernacular language of the Nuevo Mexicanos. According to Porter, a pattern developed in New Mexico after Native American Indian (and later Mexican) hunting, Bourke “stoically worked on his diary, recording incidents and details of that day’s march noting the natural scenery, and making cartographic and geological notes (Porter:16) (pp. 161-162)

Porter page 16: (after discussing Bourke joining a military column in December, 1871 on a punishing march across the San Pedro River toward Saddle Mountain, where the long hours, cold weather, and the terrain made terrible demands on the men’s stamina)

Despite his exhaustion at the end of each day, Bourke stoically worked on his diary, recording incidents and details of that day’s march, noting the natural scenery, and making cartographic and geological notes. After one hard march the soldiers and Indians were dismayed to find that their daily issue of beans was two-thirds dirt; enraged, Bourke condemned the offending contractor and asserted that “for this item of rascality his name should never again be allowed to appear on an army contract in Arizona – The officer who rec[eive]d such stuff should be cashiered.” Bourke fretted that his column would see no fighting. (Diary 1)

On 16 December an advance party of Apaches from Bourke’s unit surprised a camp. The hostile Indians fled, and everything in their rancheria fell into the hands of the army, depriving the Indians of food and clothing during the coldest part of the year. After the soldiers and warriors destroyed everything, the Apaches began a victory celebration. Some of the dancers dressed themselves in calico captured in the camp and “feigning the manners of women received the advances of their male companions.” Shocked but nonetheless intrigued, Bourke carefully recorded the details of the elaborate victory dance in his diary.

P17

Throughout much of the 1870s Bourke waged a war against the American Indian tribes of the southwestern United States and was primarily responsible for what his biographer called “the only successful campaign against the Apaches since the acquisition of the Gadsden Purchase. (Porter:20)

Porter page 20:

On 3 February 1873 they met Cochise in a canyon in the Dragoon Mountains. Bourke found Cochise to be a handsome man of about ‘fifty winters, straight as a rush, six feet] in stature, deep chested, roman nosed, black eyes, firm mouth, a kindly and even somewhat melancholy expression tempering the determined look of his countenance. He seemed much more neat that other wild Indians I have seen and his manners were very gentle,’ Bourke wrote. Cochise politely greeted Bourke and the others. Cochise said that he did not approve of Chiricahua raids into Mexico; however, the Mexicans had killed many of
his people, and his younger warriors wanted revenge. If the Mexicans wanted peace, asked Cochise, why did they not approach him as the Americans had done through Howard?

“After the inconclusive meeting with Cochise, Bourke retruned to the war against the hostile Apaches. The major offensive ended 6 April 1873 with the surrender of Chalipun, a powerful chief, and three hundred of his followers at Fort Verde. Although some columns remained in the cordillera searching for a few holdouts, the campaign was over. Bourke wrote, ‘Thus terminated the first and only successful campaign against the Apaches since the acquisition of the Gadsden Purchase.’ Diary 79. He had good reason for his ebullient mood. After three years of fighting the Apaches, the peace meant that he could begin to study these people who so fascinated him.

Now a fully developed “hero of the American frontier,” as Porter characteristically phrased it, Bourke traveled from New Mexico to Omaha in 1875, where he was ordered to escort the U.S. Geological Expedition to the Black Hills.

This statement by Porter does not exist anywhere in the text concerning U.S. Geological Expedition to the Black Hills, before or after.

The soldier-ethnologist and newly self-made “engineer officer” thus turned his attention to the Lakota and Cheyenne peoples and their native cultures. Typical of his diary entries during this period of ethnographic writing and military conquest is the following: “the sooner the manifest destiny of the race shall be accomplished and the Indian as Indian cease to exist, the better” (Porter:49). (p. 162)

Porter page 48-49: (Spring-Summer 1876 Plains Indians Wars)

Despite his relative tolerance, Bourke could not accept some things about Plains Indian culture. Although he had witnessed the violence of war since his sixteenth year, Bourke was sickened at the Plains Indians’ practice of mutilating their foes. He witnessed several examples of mutilation during and after the Rosebud fight. He recalled one wounded Lakota warrior who fell into Crow hands: ‘They said life was not yet extinct and the Sioux was moving when they came up. He was not moving much when the left. My informant told me they cut of the legs at the knees, the arms at the elbows, broke open the skull and scattered the brains on the ground.’ The mutilation of fallen enemies sparked his ambivalence toward the Indians. During ‘my intercourse with various tribes of the American aborigines, I have not seen enough nobleness of mind among them all to make a man as good as an ordinary Bowery tough[;] the sooner the manifest destiny of the race shall be accomplished and the Indian as Indian cease to exist, the better.’ In anger he wrote; ‘After a contact with civilization of nearly 300 years, the American Tribes have never voluntarily learned anything but its vices.’ Having vented his anger, Bourke temporized. He excused the behavior of the Crows and Shoshonis, charging that it was ll the fault of the Lakotas and Cheyennes in the first place.

P18

Curiously enough, Bourke’s destruction of “the Indian as Indian” occurred at the very same time that he was busy collecting notes, plants, animals, and pictographic artifacts of American Indian and Mexican American cultures—which he readily preserved by sending them to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

In other words, Bourke, together with Major Powell, who in 1879 became the director of the Bureau of Ethnology at the Smithsonian, displayed almost avant la letter what Renato Rosaldo calls “imperialist nostalgia,” nostalgia “for the very forms of life they intentionally altered and destroyed” (Rosaldo, 69). (p. 162)
Porter page 59: The end of the Sioux War signaled a shift in Bourke’s relationships with Indians. After 1876 he came as a student of their cultures, not as an enemy soldier. Reminiscent of his change of heart toward the Apaches, Bourke had similar experiences with each Plains tribe that he met. When encountering them during war, he had held uninformed opinions that evolved into grudging respect for the warriors...his transformation from a brash young officer who believed that the ‘only good Indian was a dead Indian’ to a serious ethnologist and an advocate of Indian rights was tentative at first, but after a winter spent with the Lakotas, the Cheyennes, and the Aprapahoe in 1876-77, his conversion was complete. By 1886, within a decade after the smoke drifted away from Morning Star’s burning village, Bourke enjoyed an international reputation as an ethnologist, and his demands for justice for the Indians were jeopardizing his military career.

P19
In 1881, Lt. Gen. Philip Sheridan readily agreed to Bourke’s personal request to be reassigned as an “ethnologist” for the Third United Cavalry, for he concurred with Bourke’s assessment that there was institutional value in documenting what we now call the cultural poetics of “the people whom we so often had to fight and always to manage.”

Porter page 280:
In page 279 leading up to Bourke’s statement, Porter outlines how in 1890, Bourke was fighting reassignment out of Washington. Crook had passed away, there was no longer concern by Washington for the Chiricahua, whom Bourke continually tried to get released, and that Nelson Miles wanted Bourke gone. By this time Bourke’s health was failing and after successfully publishing several books, and in the middle of three book, Bourke firmly believed that his years (nearly 28 in active service, over 20 yrs in combat) of frontier duty entitled him to a comfortable station and he did not want to give up his scholarly life for garrison duties back the frontier. In trying to make his case Secretary Proctor “He stressed the personal danger and hardship involved in doing research among tribes like the Lakota, Cheyenne, Apache, or Navajo. No one ‘questioned General Sheridan’s right to make such a detail or envied me my acceptance,’ Bourke argued, finding it paradoxical that there was no military value to his books about the ‘people whom we so often had to fight and always to manage.’ Proctor said only that others had raised the question and Bourke and that it now must be faced.

P20
From Chicago, he embarked on a fin de siglo tour that took him to Idaho, Texas, and New Mexico. In Santa Fe he began his fieldwork at the Pine Ridge Agency, observing and writing an account in his diary of the sacred Oglala Sun Dance. As Porter writes, Bourke was “amazed, moved, and impressed by what he saw. (Porter:93).

Porter page 93:
Bourke was amazed, move, and impressed by what he saw, but with his intellectual mind-set he was not confused or puzzled. He perceived ‘parallels’ in other cultures to the various phenomena of the Sun Dance. The content of Bourke’s anthropological beliefs prompted his use of the word ‘savage’ which was a classification of one of the stages through which societies ‘progressed.’ As already noted, these theories prompted both ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. This can be seen in an exchange between Bourke and an Oglala chief, Red Dog. Worried that Bourke would not comprehend the Sun Dance, Red Dog said, ‘My friend, this is the way we have been raised, Do not think us strange. All men are
different. Our grandfathers taught us to do this. Write it down straight on the paper.’ ‘You speak truly. All men are different. This is your religion, the religion of your grandfathers,’ Bourke responded, as he watched a warrior tear himself free of the sacred tree. ‘Our grandfathers used to be like yours hundreds of thousands of years ago, but now we are different. Your religion brought you the buffalo, our brought us locomotives and the talking wires.

These and other extended military and ethnographic search and destroy missions allowed Bourke to write up his first ethnographic studies of American Indian people, The Dance of the Moquis of Arizona (1884).

Later, after he crossed the present-day U.S.-Mexico border near Guaymas in pursuit of the Chiricahua, he completed An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madre (1886), a book largely chronicling his military travails and travels in the western American frontier. [footnote only lists the books Bourke wrote, not anything in those books]

For the remainder of his career as a soldier-ethnologist Bourke traveled to and from Arizona, Texas, and Washington, D.C. Although many of his Washington friends attempted to secure for him various positions in the War Department offices, Bourke eventually was ordered in 1891 to rejoin the cavalry unit in South Texas. (p. 163)

José E. Limón offers us in his cogent and provocative (Auth1 book) the first detailed metacommentary on Bourke’s ethnographic writings about the South Texas-Mexico border. For (Auth1), Bourke’s interests and fascination with Mexican border culture and folklore stems from a “not too unconscious projections of [his] own uneasy and ambivalent ethnic identity onto the mexicanos” (1994, 4). Bourke’s double career as a “literal warrior turned anthropologist.” (Auth1) suggests, is not completely an example of colonialist desire, for as a Catholic Irish American Bourke shared the same ethno-racial contradictions of domination as his objects of study. (17). (p.163)

Some of Bourke’s most engaging ethnographic writing about the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, (Auth1) asserts, unconsciously, represented the mexicanos of South Texas as suffering from the very same hegemonic forces that his own Celtic forebears had earlier experienced under the Saxon and Danish invaders of Ireland. In thus “constructing the [cultural poetics of] mexicanos, Bourke was also coping with his own repudiated and projected self-ambivalences. (33). (p. 163)

Be that as it may, my own view of Bourke’s writing of U.S.-Mexico border culture, elaborated below, focuses more specifically on the molecular and molar dialectics of the cultures of U.S. imperialism.

If U.S. imperialism was also a cultural process, imagined and energized through recognizable signs, metaphors, tropes, and master narratives, Bourke’s project of U.S. empire was expressive and “constitutive” (to use Raymond William’s term) of imperial relations in themselves. (p. 163)
P24
Through his official military reportage and documents relating to the uneven modernizing process of
governing well from Fort Ringgold, Rio Grande City, Texas, Bourke situated hemispheric and global
colonialism’s cultures and narratives in terms of what he embodied-a military captain and agent of U.S.
empire, a travel writer, and an ethnographer of South Texas border culture. Here in Bourke’s frontier-
not frontera-cultural work, my coordinates travel, nativist modernity, anthropology and the cultures of
U.S. imperialism can be seen as constitutive of each other. (p. 164)

P25
Just three years after Jose Martí warned us of the profound gap between the two Americas, Bourke
collected, gathered, and published his first so-called empirical studies of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

Part travel writer and part participant observer of the Rio Grande Valley from “Point Isabel to Roma,”
Texas, Bourke wanted his travel writing/ethnographic work to shed light “upon the character of the
Mexican population of our extreme southern border” (1894, 119).

Like a latter-day Perry Miller in the African wilderness, Captain Bourke traveled up and down the Rio
Grande into what must have been for him and his readers the American heart of darkness.

This river project led Bourke, not to Perry Miller’s displaced discovery of American studies as Amy
Kaplan (1993) has brilliantly shown, but to the discoveries and trespasses of an imperial American
border studies, a project overwhelmingly grounded in a rhetoric of “turbulence,” “ignorance”
debasement, and negation.

Like many ethnographers, Bourke began his project by traveling and looking: “As the Rio Grande is the
main line of communication, a trip along its waters will be necessary for anyone who desires to become
even fairly well acquainted in the general character of the country and that of the people living in it”
(1894a, 594-595). (p. 164)

P26
Bourke’s 1894 Scribner’s Magazine essay, symptomatically entitled “The American Congo,”
demonstrates how U.S. culture in the Gilded Age was already a global phenomenon, or at least already
an extralocal and transregional project.

While a good part of Bourke’s essay is structured around the “being there” of travel writing and
ethnographic thick description, it is also entirely underpinned with the theories of Franz Boas’
anthropological project.

Anthropology for Boas and his generation, as Nicholas Thomas puts it, was “a modern discourse that
ha[d] subsumed humanity to the grand narratives and analogies of natural history” (1994), 89).

Not surprisingly, “The American Congo” represents the U.S.-Mexico border zone exclusively in terms
of its exoticized landscape, its unceasing mesquite, its noisy urracas (magpies), and its fantastic javelinas
(p. 164)
A sympathetic reading of “The American Congo” might therefore stress how Bourke was merely following Boas’ famous dictum that “cultures differ like so many species, perhaps genera, of animals” (quoted in Thomas 1994, 89).

In other words, in “The American Congo” there is no a simple, smoothed-over colonial discourse but a highly ambiguous and ethnically fraught study of Mexican pelados and peones who are represented by a Catholic Irish-American gunfighter like newly discovered species, as the bearers of particular characters, physiques, dispositions, political organizations, and juridical practices. (p. 165)

My own reading of Bourke’s “The American Congo” however is less idealistic, though I hope not uncharitable.

Bourke is to be congratulated for showing how two imperializing hemispheric events made the Rio Grande borderland and its local population “a sealed book.” (1894a, 592)."

Two “ethnic storms,” he writes, had erased for the rest of the United States the Greater Mexican population from the national imaginary. The first was Zachary Taylor’s “march from Point Isabel, near the mouth of the Rio Grande, to Camargo” and then to Saltillo; the second was “our own Civil War, when the needs of the Confederacy suggested the transportation of all available cotton…across the Rio Grande to the Mexican side, and then down to Matamoros, there to be placed on steamers to Nassau and Liverpool. (592). (p. 165)

"o his great credit, Bourke shows, in decidedly spatial terms, how U.S. imperial culture is irrevocably local and global, for what makes the U.S.-Mexico borderland and its inhabitants “a sealed book” are the competing mappings of global capital, the multiple roots and routes of the black Atlantic, and the submarine discourses of what Glissant calls Antillean discourse.

More locally, Fort Ringgold, Fort McIntosh, and Fort Brown in South Texas were part and parcel of Zachary Taylor’s Military campaigns of U.S. empire that resulted in what Limon calls “the American incorporation of the Southwest. (1994, 22). (p. 165)

“If the force field of American border studies in the United States was conceived by John Bourke, a soldier-ethnographer, on the swirling countercurrents of the Rio Grande in the 1890s, Chicano/a cultural studies-from Americo Paredes in the 1930s to John Rechy and Helena Maria Viramontes in the 1990s- has had to challenge and undo Bourke’s plethora of imperializing crude acts constituted in classic American frontier chronicles like “The American Congo,” “Popular Medicine, Customs, and Superstitions of the Rio Grande,” and “The Miracle Play of the Rio Grande. (pp. 165-166)

Bourke’s title “The American Congo” immediately allows us to metonymically and synecdochically associate his brand of “American studies” with immediate acts such as conquest, underdevelopment, intervention, intrusion, and domination of the local mestizo/a inhabitants. (p. 166)
At the beginning of the essay, for example, Bourke recalls how a few years earlier, from his military post at Fort Ringgold, he had written about the borderlands of Nuestra America to the War Department in Washington D.C.: “I compared the Rio Grande to the Nile in the facts that like its African prototype, the fierce River of the North had its legends as weird and improbable to be found in the pages of …Herodotus. (1894a, 592)

Almost in the very next sentence, however, Bourke corrects his rather baroque comparison of the Rio Grande to the Nile by writing that the border zone between the United States and Mexico can be better “compared to the Congo that the Nile the moment that the degraded, turbulent, ignorant, and superstitious character of its populations comes under examination. (594).

One of the first constructions of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands of Nuestra America is therefore cast in a literalized episode of rhetorical and anthropological war between the two shifting Americas, built on what Jacques Derrida called the “violence of the letter” by one culture on the other. (1976, 107).”

Culture in this light is the nimbus perceived by one group when it comes into contact with and observes another one. It is the objectification of everything alien and weird and exotic about the contact group.

Everything about “The American Congo” from this point draws attention to Bourke’s nativist, modernist, and politically unconscious representations and the gross imperial inequities in the dominance of Nuestra American and Africa by the cultures of U.S. and European imperialism. (p. 166)

While Bourke painstakingly surveys the landscape, flora, and fauna, he remains oblicious to his project of imperial gazing-collecting, organizing, and aestheticizing the landscape, flora, and fauna.

His work as travel-writer-ethnographer of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands enable and informed the imperial cultures of the United States to see the Mexicans of the borderlands as pelados, as “lawless (“The Rio Grande Mexican has never known what law is”) and as culturally inferior “fatalist” who indiscriminately practice what he calls a “weird pharmacy” and therapeutics of curanderismo (folk-healing medicine) (606). (p.167)

The American Congo” gives us a commonsense understanding of the emergent cultures of U.S. imperialism. His mirroring of the African jungle and the frontera of Nuestra America all but effaces the local inhabitants of both continents. The geopolitical contact zone, moreover is all too much like the underdeveloped continent of Africa for Bourke.

The site-specific borderland of the Rio Grande Valley is at once a “Dark Belt” grounded in “chocolate soils,” marked by the unspoken signs of the melancholy, the agachado mestizo (stooping mestizo), the white man’s burden, and the nativist modernist dialectics of barbarism and savagery.

The American Congo” thus founds and enacts a paradigmatic American studies traveling tale: the construction of the ethno-racial male soldier-culture collector in the wilderness frontera surrounded by exotic animals, plants and human cultural practices. (p.167)
Moreover, we can also see Bourke embodying the desire for what Richard Slotkin (1973) calls “regeneration through violence.”

The captain of Fort Ringgold, after all, is in South Texas to hunt down border-crossing revolutionaries like the journalist Catarino Garza, who, as (Auth1) writes, “attempted to bring down the U.S. supported autocratic dictatorship of Mexico’s Porfirio Diaz in 1891 (1994, 29) – coincidentally the very same year that Marti published his incisive critique of the Diaz regime in “Nuestra America.” As Marti puts it, “Some of the sleeping republics are still beneath the sleeping octopus.” “But others,” he angrily criticized, “forgetting that [Benito] Juarez went about in a carriage drawn by mules, hitch their carriages to the wind, their coachmen [to] soap bubbles (1994, 826). (p. 167)

I am fully in agreement with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s challenge that “transnational Cultural Studies must put [transactions between the Americas] into an international frame” (1993, 262). Here I am supplementing my provisional 1991 reading of Marti’s Nuetstra America by bringing Bourke, Marti, and Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton together in an attempt to begin re-conceptualizing American cultural studies. (p. 167)
Vita

Toni K. McNair was born in Washington, Iowa. She entered the United States Army in 1983 and served twenty years active Federal service, sixteen of those as a Career Counselor and Noncommissioned Officer, and all of it as a soldier. She retired from the Army September 1, 2003 as a Master Sergeant, with various stateside assignments in Georgia, California and Texas, and overseas in Germany, and three tours in the Republic of Korea. She began her academic studies part-time while serving on active duty, entering Troy State University in 1994, completing her A.S. in 1996. Upon arrival to duty at Fort Bliss, Texas, she began online coursework at American Military University (AMU), working towards a B.A. in business management. Taking an elective in Medieval Military History with AMU, she decided to change majors and as a senior entering the University of Texas at El Paso, changed to history with a minor in anthropology. The majority of her research has been in the area of pre-gunpowder technology history and pre-history, though the last two years of graduate studies firmed up a solid background in modern history. Her undergraduate fieldwork includes the UTEP Three Rivers Archeological Dig, summer 2005, and during the same summer, ethnographic interviews with Apache Indians of Mescalero Apache Tribe. Graduate fieldwork includes studying history and archaeology in Rome, summer 2008 and monthly research with the Mescalero Apache Tribe, fall 2008-fall 2009. She graduated Cum Laude with a B.A. in Multidisciplinary Studies that combined her many years of study in Business, History and Anthropology, December 1996. In the fall of 2007, she entered the Graduate School at the University of Texas at El Paso, majoring in history.

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