

Challenging Conventional Recreations of the Western Past: Frank Bergon's *Shoshone Mike*

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The rise to prominence of “new western history” since the late 1960s promoted an increasing demand for truth, fact, and credibility in postfrontier western writing. Despite the extraordinary popularity of traditional views of the myth of the West, an important group of contemporary imaginative authors started to write about this territory with greater insight into the reality behind the myth. They intended to depart from the historical inaccuracy of old western literature, from its narrative improbabilities and its predictable stockpile of characters. Nevertheless, the interaction between myth and reality in the West is so strong in the American imagination that both elements will often remain intertwined in new western fiction. As Frank Bergon and Zeese Papanikolas have noted, “because the West has become so overlaid with legend, it is popularly assumed that a stripping of its mythic veneer would reveal the ‘real’ West. Nothing could be less true.... The West surely created myths, but myths themselves just as surely created the West ... and it is for this reason that the real West can be seen as what Archibald MacLeish called ‘a country in the mind.’”² The resilience of the myth of the West among new western writers and the recognition of the existence of complex interdependencies between the mythic West and the historic West cannot hide the fact that postfrontier fiction tends to break with traditional visions of western mythology. In the following I argue that Frank Bergon’s critically acclaimed novel *Shoshone Mike*³ exemplifies one of the main features of new western fiction: the revision or deconstruction of the myth of the West in order to expose its artificial and ethnocentric dimensions, with a concomitant emphasis on realism and multicultural diversity. I examine Frank Bergon’s novel as a major testimony to the increasing demand for truth, fact, and verisimilitude in recent western fiction, focusing on Bergon’s insightful approach to the interplay between myth and history in the West and on his challenging of stereotypical recreations of the western past.

¹ The research for this article was carried out within the framework of the project 1/UPV 00103.130-H-15287/2003.

² Frank Bergon and Zeese Papanikolas, “General Introduction,” *Looking Far West: The Search for the American West in History, Myth, and Literature*, ed. Bergon and Papanikolas (New York: New American Library, 1978) 2.

³ Frank Bergon, *Shoshone Mike* (New York: Viking, 1987). Subsequent references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text.

New western authors treat old myths in fresh new ways, often debunking conventional constructs of the western past and exposing the limitations of heroic western narratives. These writers are aware of the fact that the Old West has been mythicized almost beyond recognition, and because of that the myth no longer becomes a serious handicap for their writing. In this sense they differ from old western writers, committed to transmitting the cowboy myths of taming the American West. As William Kittredge aptly recalls, "the myth has been an insidious trap for those who would write about the American West, a box for the imagination. For a long time it was as if there was only one legitimate story to tell about the West, and that was the mythological story."⁴ New western fiction does not exploit the myth of the frontier, but revises or reinterprets traditional Anglo-male visions of the Old West, focusing on the tension between the historical West and the mythic West. Certainly, due to the pluralistic condition of this fiction, any attempt to define its main features may become a risky overgeneralization. However, the following list provided by Michael Johnson to explain the essential differences between old western literature and the new western literature may be regarded as an accurate summary of the basic characteristics of contemporary western fiction: "an emphatic attention to history as what did happen rather than as what should have happened; to the *staying* of Western people rather than their going, to their efforts at community rather than their individualistic spirit, to the possibility of stewarding the land rather than destructively exploiting it."⁵

The above defining concerns of new western fiction are present in a significant number of contemporary western novels and short stories centered on the Old West and its legacy. We may even find in postfrontier western writing one of the most impressive fictional approaches to the overlapping of the real and the mythic in the West: Frank Bergon's *Shoshone Mike*. Bergon, born in Nevada in 1943 and of Basque heritage, is regarded as one of the most significant voices in contemporary western writing. His brilliant novelistic definition of Nevada's character is captured in books such as *The Temptations of St. Ed and Brother S*,⁶ or *Wild Game*,⁷ and, above all, in his renowned *Shoshone Mike*. This historical novel has won wide critical acclaim mainly because of Bergon's outstanding skill in recreating the so-called last Indian battle or last Indian massacre, a tragic incident that occurred in northwestern Nevada in 1911 in which Shoshone Mike and most of his band were slain in revenge for the murder of four stockmen (in all thirteen people were killed). *Western American Literature*, for example, has called Bergon's novel "the best Western since Clark's [*The Ox-Bow Incident*] to explore the darker side of Nevada justice, to universally indict

⁴ William Kittredge, *Owning It All: Essays* (Port Townsend, WA: Graywolf Press, 1987) 171.

⁵ Michael L. Johnson, *New Westers: The West in Contemporary American Culture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996) 111.

⁶ Frank Bergon, *The Temptations of St. Ed and Brother S*. (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1993).

⁷ Frank Bergon, *Wild Game* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1995).

the frailties of man.”⁸ The novel has been listed among the top twelve westerns in Oxford University Press’s *Good Fiction Guide*,⁹ alongside Stephen Crane’s “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky” (1898), Owen Wister’s *The Virginian* (1902), Walter Van Tilburg Clark’s *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1940), E. L. Doctorow’s *Welcome to Hard Times* (1960), and Larry McMurtry’s *Lonesome Dove* (1985).

Shoshone Mike illustrates the increasing interest among western writers to recreate different episodes of the history of the Old West, often focusing on conflicts between Indians and European settlers, in this case “the last Indian battle in the United States.” This violent event in northern Nevada provided Kenneth D. Scott with the basic plot for his historical novel *Frozen Grass* (1960).¹⁰ The book tried to offer a balanced, unbiased interpretation of this tragic episode in American history. Eight years later, Effie Mona Mack published a straightforward historical account of the killing of the four stockmen (three Basque sheepmen and an Anglo-American cattleman) and the subsequent shooting of Shoshone Mike and his band by a white posse. The title of Mack’s book, *The Indian Massacre of 1911*,¹¹ already reflects the increasing pro-Indian sentiment in western history since the late 1960s: “the last Indian battle or war” becomes “the Indian massacre of 1911.” Mack’s study is more balanced than a later account of the event in Dayton O. Hyde’s *The Last Free Man: The True Story Behind the Massacre of Shoshone Mike and His Band of Indians in 1911*.¹² In this book, published in 1973 and also purported to be a historical study of the massacre, Hyde stands strongly on the side of Shoshone Mike and shows little sympathy for the stockmen. Their killing of these men is presented as somewhat justified because, as the author claims, offering only hearsay evidence, some Basque sheepmen must have molested Shoshone Mike’s daughters. Without evidence, Hyde also speculates that these Indians must have been Bannock rather than Shoshone because, he says, Shoshone were docile reservation Indians friendly to whites and the Bannock were hostile, brave warriors. Hyde’s account of the event may be regarded as a simplistic inversion of the stereotypical split between whites and Indians, between good and evil, this time with the Indians as the heroes of the story. The author even defines the death of Shoshone Mike as the death of America’s last free man, concluding his book with the mournful cry, “Oh, where have all the Indians gone?”¹³ In general, the book shows how the perception of a historical event may be shaped by changing notions of historical truth and historiography.

⁸ Ann Ronald, rev. of *Shoshone Mike*, by Frank Bergon, *Western American Literature* 23.3 (Fall 1988): 251.

⁹ Jane Rogers, ed., *Good Fiction Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 136.

¹⁰ Kenneth D. Scott, *Frozen Grass* (New York: Carlton Press, 1960).

¹¹ Effie Mona Mack, *The Indian Massacre of 1911* (Sparks, NV: Western Printing and Publishing, 1968).

¹² Dayton O. Hyde, *The Last Free Man: The True Story Behind the Massacre of Shoshone Mike and His Band of Indians in 1911* (New York: Dial, 1973).

¹³ Hyde 235.

The perspective of Hyde's book, with its simplistic view of history and its defamation of both Basques and Shoshone, encouraged Bergon to begin his own historical search for Shoshone Mike. As Frank Bergon himself explained to me in an interview held in Vitoria-Gasteiz (Spain) in 2000, "the massacre of the Shoshone occurred not far from my Basque grandmother's house in Nevada in the same year my mother was born.... In the 1970s a so-called history of the event was published which was more fantasy than fact. It maligned both Shoshone Indians and Basques. At that time I was conscious of my Basque heritage, and I knew something about Native American history. The book offended me. I returned to Nevada and ... I grew excited at the possibility of telling the story while drawing from the first-hand account of living witnesses."¹⁴

Bergon's original project was to write a nonfictional account of this violent episode in Nevada's history. However, he soon realized that he could never know exactly what had happened in 1911 because, as he noted in a paper delivered at the 1992 meeting of the Western Literature Association, "what we call history is nothing more than an interpretation of unreliable facts."¹⁵ Instead, he became more concerned with the emotional truth of this story, with the feelings of its protagonists, than with the facts. Thus, the book became a novel, defined by Bergon in its afterword as "a rendition of a story—or a series of stories—surviving in the minds and words of people I have met" (287). Bergon dramatizes the historical events on which his novel is based freely and with imagination, even altering at times the chronology of certain episodes. However, one of his main aims is to provide his story with verisimilitude, refusing always to distort historical probability. Bergon writes, "I based the personalities of people on reports of witnesses, newspaper accounts, letters and diaries, but I freely invented how those personalities might have spoken and behaved in particular situations.... A distinction I made in my own mind is that the burden of the historian is verification, while that of the novelist is verisimilitude."¹⁶

The interplay between history and fiction is also present in the novel through two maps of the landscapes over which Shoshone Mike and the posse traveled. Mapping, a dominant practice of colonial and postcolonial cultures, becomes a fundamental historical and imaginative act for Bergon,¹⁷ who, like other contemporary western novelists, is aware that maps may inscribe ideology on territory in numerous ways. Bergon and other new western authors also understand the artificial and arbitrary dimension of such actions as mapping and

¹⁴ Frank Bergon in David Rio, "Basques in the International West: An Interview with Frank Bergon," *Western American Literature* 21.1 (Spring 2001): 61.

¹⁵ "Reshaping Native American History," Reno, NV., 9 October 1992.

¹⁶ Bergon in Rio 61.

¹⁷ See Gregory Morris, *Frank Bergon*, Western Literature Series 126 (Boise, ID: Boise State University, 1997) 14.

naming. As one of the characters in Cormac McCarthy's *The Crossing* explains, "the world has no name.... The names of the cerros and the sierras and the deserts exist only on maps. We name them that we do not lose our way. Yet it was because the way was lost to us already that we have made those names. The world cannot be lost. We are the ones. And it is because these names and these coordinates are our own naming that they cannot save us."¹⁸

In telling the story of "the last Indian massacre" Bergon uses a rotating point of view that allows readers to see different perspectives on Shoshone Mike's story. The novel, structured into four distinct sections, often follows a nonlinear chronology. Within each section, the narrative focus shifts among the several characters of the story. In this way Bergon provides the reader with perceptive psychological studies of the main characters of the novel: Winnemucca's Sheriff Lamb (who represents generous and reflective law), Captain Donnelley of the Nevada State Police (the leader of the vengeful posse), Mort West (a member of the posse who desperately pursues the fantasy of becoming a hero), Father Enright (the tormented parish priest), Jean Erramouspe (the son of one of the murdered shepherders), and, of course, Shoshone Mike (a man trying to preserve the way of life of his ancestors against the advance of "civilization"). The most challenging task for Bergon is to cross racial and cultural boundaries to present Shoshone Mike's perspective, to portray the point of view of the Other. On this matter, Bergon has stated the following in an article entitled "The Search for Shoshone Mike": "I hesitated doing so, but I realized that a failure to try to imagine him and his world would only reinforce the cultural barriers and lack of imagination that led to the massacre."¹⁹

Bergon's novel focuses particularly on the conflicting views of Shoshone Mike originating in the cultural collision between whites and Native Americans in the West. As Elleke Boehmer has noted, "cultural representations were central ... to the process of colonizing other lands."²⁰ In the particular case of the American West, there is a clash between two different cultural worlds—the civilized and the barbaric. The myth of the West, with its profound ethnocentric dimensions, relegates the Indians to the role of dangerous savages and encourages their annihilation. Dehumanizing the Other, in this case the Shoshone, becomes a way of legitimating persecution and murder.²¹ One of the newspaper articles included by Bergon in his novel states: "they were real savages, unmixed of blood, who had carried into these days of civilization all the savagery of the days before the white man's coming.... As long as they were free to move about, no man in all that wide country might feel safe to leave his ranch

¹⁸ Cormac McCarthy, *The Crossing* (New York: Vintage, 1994) 387.

¹⁹ Frank Bergon, "The Search for Shoshone Mike," *Nevada Magazine*, Nov.-Dec. 1987: 54.

²⁰ Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 5.

²¹ See David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London: Routledge, 1995) 10.

or to follow his occupation." (256). By calling the Indians "savages" or "outlaws," by stereotyping them, the whites define themselves as the opposite. The practice of negating or excluding the Other defines the self of those who are included—the whites, who represent civilization. This cultural conflict becomes a fundamental factor in "the last Indian massacre" because Shoshone Mike's behavior is misunderstood by most white people. As Bergon himself explains in "The Search for Shoshone Mike," "to many people in 1911, Shoshone Mike was just an outlaw, a renegade who had killed four stockmen. What they didn't know was that he had left his traditional range after horse thieves murdered his son. He killed one of the thieves in retaliation. But no one was going to believe that an Indian was justified in such an act."²²

In *Shoshone Mike* the myth of the Indian renegade becomes more powerful than the reality of Shoshone Mike's former peaceful coexistence with white ranchers in the area. In fact, violence grows out of a series of tragic misunderstandings, whose origins are closely linked to the inevitability to overcome stereotypes that "only obscure our vision of Indians as people, with the virtues and faults of people, and the differences of culture."²³ Stereotypes are often the result of the fears and anxieties produced by the presence of the Other, regarded as a threat because of its opposition to the mainstream. In the case of the American Indians, these stereotypes were created by a series of mythic views that still prevailed at the beginning of the twentieth century. In fact, the different seventeenth- and eighteenth-century views of the Indians with their dialectic between the Indian as devil and as noble savage were replaced in the nineteenth century by a definition of the Indian way of life as an inferior and earlier stage of civilization. This redefinition of the Indians turned them into an obstacle to progress and justified their assimilation or murder.²⁴ "The last Indian massacre," however, was precisely not inevitable. It is a terrifying example of colonial conquest and the victimization of the American Indian. The novel challenges fatalistic visions about the inevitability of the destruction of the Indian, a common premise in conventional stories of the American West. There was no need to kill the Shoshone because their existence posed no threat to the white "civilization." Bergon himself claims that "the massacre didn't have to happen. If the massacre had been inevitable, it wouldn't have been tragic. History, in hindsight, only seems inevitable. The massacre was the result of attitudes, perceptions, and values that might have been different... Tragedy is the consequence of choices. Other choices might have been made."²⁵ This view is

²² Bergon, "The Search for Shoshone Mike" 53.

²³ Bergon and Papanikolas, "General Introduction" 5.

²⁴ See Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1953), and also John G. Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1971) 37.

²⁵ Bergon in Rio 62–63.

clearly exemplified in the novel by Sheriff Lamb's comments about the massacre: "Nothing is inevitable, especially that" (282).

One of the most ironic and bizarre characteristics of the tragedy portrayed by Bergon in *Shoshone Mike* is the fact that the massacre takes place in the name of "progress," a basic value of the New West. In this sense, we cannot forget that the massacre happens in 1911, at a time in which common attitudes and modes of the Wild West were supposed to have disappeared under the pressure of progress. As Bergon points out, "a few years earlier, this crazy chase and massacre might have been just another forgotten incident in the pioneering history of the West, but in the light of the 20th century, it achieved a surreal glow."²⁶ The incident may be regarded as a reminder that the thought that technological progress equals cultural progress is erroneous. Violence is justified by a traditional idea both in American political thought and in the conquest of the West, the belief that force generates peace and order. The novel may be viewed as an engaging exploration into the failure of New West attitudes and values to eradicate Old West ways of life. The vengeful attitude of the vigilante posse makes the reader aware that the differences between the New West and the Old West are not so clearly defined. It is interesting to remember that vigilantism, a phenomenon that has been part of the American experience since colonial days, reached its highest expression in the nineteenth century. At this time vigilantism became, in Richard Brown's words, "the lazy way, the careless way, the cheap way by which Americans often dealt with the problem of disorder."²⁷

In Bergon's novel the white vigilantes seem to represent civilization and progress, but their behavior places them very close to the savagery and primitiveness they are supposedly bound to eliminate. As Father Enright claims in the novel: "We said they were savages. We said they were going to destroy our homes, our families, our laws, everything that made us people. Then we ... did to them exactly what we said they were going to do to us. What does that make us?" (269). This remark contains an implicit allusion to the fact that in the eyes of the European settlers, the Indians were not considered "people" because they were not part of what the settlers considered "civilization," because they lacked everything that made one "people" (fixed homes, nuclear family structures, written laws, and so forth). Hence, in the novel northern Nevada's public opinion regards Shoshone Mike and his band as deviant, imperfect, marginal beings, whose destruction is justified due to their refusal to conform to the rule of Western civilization. However, Bergon emphasizes the blurring line existing between the barbaric and the civilized in a West in transition, where its

²⁶ Bergon, "The Search for Shoshone Mike" 54.

²⁷ Richard Brown in *The New Encyclopedia of the American West*, ed. Howard R. Lamar (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998) 1168.

inhabitants are trapped between the past and the future, and where opposite values coexist in a conflicting tension.

“Shoshone Mike,” the name of the historical figure, was chosen by Bergon as the title of his novel mainly because of its hybrid connotations. Certainly, Bergon managed to discover Mike’s two real Shoshone names in the course of his historical research for the novel and both names appear in the book: *Tosaponaga*, meaning “split white,” and *Ondongarte*, meaning “sitting light.”²⁸ Nevertheless, as the title for his novel he preferred the hybrid moniker “Shoshone Mike” because this name symbolically underscores Mike’s divided existence between his Native American heritage (even if Shoshone is not really an Indian word) and the modern Anglo world he is forced to live in.²⁹ Admittedly, Shoshone Mike and his family try to minimize interaction with the white world when they see their ancient way of life and their own existence threatened by the expansion of “civilization.” Their aim is to erect a boundary that may assure their alienation from the white society and entitle them to a protective space: “they wanted to go home, Henie said. They just wanted to be left alone, to live as they had” (285). The subordinate, or the subaltern, to use Gayatri Spivak’s terminology,³⁰ resorts to isolation to avoid acculturation and to pursue self-fulfillment and self-preservation. This formula turns out to be a failure because the world outside penetrates the boundaries that seem to keep both worlds apart. In this context it is also worth remembering Homi Bhabha’s views about the problematic definition of the border that separates the colonizer from the colonized: “the place of difference and otherness, or the space of the adversarial ... is never entirely on the outside or implacably oppositional. The contour of difference is agonistic, shifting, splitting, rather like Freud’s description of the system of consciousness which occupies a position in space lying on the borderline between outside and inside.”³¹

Bergon’s novel also provides the reader with insight into the transformation of the archetypal figure of the western hero. In fact, in *Shoshone Mike* there are no heroes in the traditional western mythic sense. Sheriff Lamb, for example, the emblem of law, fails to fulfill a standard duty of the western mythic sheriff: to eliminate the savagery that has disrupted the community. He cannot avoid the posse’s taking of the law into its own hands, and, despite his faith in the justice system, he appears to be a man trapped between the Old West ways and the New West ones in a world that “isn’t simple any more” (115). He even has to face spiritual confusion, represented by doubt about his marriage, a situation that also undermines his self-confidence. In this sense, Sheriff Lamb symbolizes the

²⁸ Bergon, “The Search for Shoshone Mike” 69.

²⁹ Rio 69.

³⁰ Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Triffin (London: Routledge, 1998) 218–19.

³¹ Homi Bhabha, “Signs Taken for Wonders,” *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* 32.

increasing demythification of the western hero in contemporary western fiction. In Rita Parks's words, "gone is the assurance, the command, the cool moral certainty of the classical hero. He is now bewildered, confused and beleaguered by forces that he cannot even identify, much less control."³² This demythification or deheroification process is even more evident in Bergon's depiction of the behavior of the members of the posse. Although newspaper accounts elevate the protagonists of the Indian massacre to the category of heroes ("it was a chapter in the world's story of heroism and devotion," 258), even Jean Erramouspe, whose father had been killed by Shoshone Mike and his band, is able to see the true inglorious nature of the posse's actions: "there were no heroes; the whole thing was stupid, mishandled" (263). The glorification of the traditional western hero is replaced by a more realistic portrait of western types and by an ironic perspective on the mythic views still prevailing in the West.

Frank Bergon's impressive reconstruction of the last days of the Wild West in *Shoshone Mike* also contributes to a realistic view of the Old West through its emphasis on its multicultural condition. Thus, the novel exemplifies the increasing visibility of Basque immigrants and their descendants in contemporary western writing, in particular after the success of Robert Laxalt's *Sweet Promised Land*,³³ a moving biography of the author's father and the archetypal story of the Basque sheepherder in the American West. Until then these immigrants had often been overlooked as heroes and protagonists in western literature, especially in the formula western, a genre focused on the celebration of the cowboy. However, in *Shoshone Mike* one of the main characters is a Basque American, Jean Erramouspe, the son of one of the murdered Basque sheepmen. Bergon focuses on Jean's alienation and his inability to come to terms with his ethnic heritage. He symbolizes in the novel the struggle for acceptance of descendants of Basque immigrants in the American West at the beginning of the twentieth century. Jean not only resents his confinement to the work typical of Basques at that time (sheepherding and working the mines), but also his immigrant label: "I'm as American as anyone else" (46). Bergon also utilizes Jean Erramouspe to illustrate the extension of prejudice and discrimination against the Basques in the American West in the early twentieth century. Thus, the novel contains different references to the rejection of foreign sheepherders (45–46) and a series of insults related to the Basque language (103), to the sexual life of the sheepherders (108), to their smell (108), or to their ethnic features (262). We can trace a certain parallelism between Basques and Native Americans in this novel in terms of their roles as victims of social prejudice and discrimination, though Bergon stresses, above all, the plight of the Indians, who are viewed as dangerous savages. In this respect, Bergon himself has stated the following: "Prejudice against the Basques at the turn of the century generated the

³² Rita Parks, *The Western Hero in Film and Television: Mass Media Technology* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982) 116.

³³ Robert Laxalt, *Sweet Promised Land* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

derogatory term *Black Bascos*, which implied a similarity between Basques and African Americans then tagged with the racial slur *niggers*.... Prejudice and discrimination against Basques certainly existed, but in no way did they equal the virulent treatment of Indians."³⁴

In *Shoshone Mike* Bergon demonstrates his first-hand knowledge of the experience of Basque Americans in Nevada not only through interesting insights into their work in the mountains or in the mining camps, but also through vivid portraits of their life at the Basque hotels (cf. 43–44). Bergon's commitment to provide the reader with an authentic portrait of the Basques in Nevada may be also noticed in his use of a few Basque terms and phrases in different sections of the novel, such as *txakurak* (dogs), *artzainak* (sheepherders), *astakilo!* (stupid!), or *zer gertatzen da?* (what is going on?). These Basque terms exemplify the vanishing legacy of the Basque language in the American West in the first decades of the twentieth century.

With *Shoshone Mike* Bergon sets a high standard for contemporary fiction focused on the historical West. In an unembellished but evocative prose style Bergon's novel calls into question some of the most fundamental assumptions about the myth of the West, emphasizing the need of coming to terms with the region's past in a realistic way. His concern is with the past, but also with "the ways in which the past moves troublingly into the present."³⁵ The book dramatizes a West in transition: immersed in new values and cultural models, yet unable to rid itself of its mythological burden. *Shoshone Mike* also abandons archetypal male-biased imagery and ethnocentric prejudices to focus on the pluralistic condition of the West and on traditionally neglected groups. In fact, the novel reflects the increasing multicultural awareness in contemporary western literature, departing from limited monocultural depictions of the western experience. Overall, *Shoshone Mike* exemplifies the growing weight of concepts such as hybridity, interdependence, and transculturation in postfrontier literature, and illustrates the complexity of the interaction between place and fiction, contributing to the end of traditional scholarly prejudices against western literature.

³⁴ Bergon in Rio 63.

³⁵ Morris 25.