Postmodern aspects in Larry McMurtry's Lonesome dove, Streets of Laredo, Dead man's walk, and Comanche moon

Abstract
At least a decade of my early life was spent on a dusty, fenced-off comer of the Swenson Ranch, the SMS, in Stonewall County, Texas. Scarcely 100 miles northeast, in Archer County, Texas, lived Larry McMurtry, six years older and light years ahead of me in understanding where we were and what was happening to the place we both lived. He saw western movies portray the gun as an icon of the cowboy, rather than the horse, which he recognized as the true attraction. He objected, perhaps, to the portrayal of our ancestors that he saw in film and fiction. The passing of the west was an issue McMurtry used as a background motif for his first novel, published in 1961, Horseman Pass By. He would return to the idea in Leaving Cheyenne, and then explore it even more fully in Lonesome Dove. From the time he began it, McMurtry spent more than two decades, intermittently, in writing his Pulitzer-Prize-winning epic western novel Lonesome Dove. It was begun as a movie script for John Wayne, James Stewart, and Henry Fonda and abandoned when Wayne failed to appreciate its story (Busby 179). McMurtry's ambivalence toward his home state has been well documented. He recognized early the empty page as his home but the west as his heritage: "I missed [the ranching life] by the width of a generation, and as I was growing up, heard the whistle of its departure. Not long after I entered the pastures of the empty page I realized that the place where all my stories start is the heart faced suddenly with the loss of its country, its customary and legendary range" (74G 140) Chiasmus has been traditionally a major motif in his writing. McMurtry's novels are characterized by the same ambiguity that drives him in his work, few clear-cut distinctions exist. I believe an understanding of the conditions in Texas in the 1870's could further an appreciation of McMurtry's Lonesome Dove novels. Texas after the Civil War was filled with wild, fleet, long-homed beasts which offered little meat and enormous challenge. Unclaimed, the cattle belonged to the entrepreneur who branded them In a 1986 essay, McMurtry himself explains: "No one knows how many cattle ran free in south Texas at the time of annexation, but by the 1860's their numbers had swelled to between three and four million—a free resource, waiting to be exploited" ("So Long" 10). McMurtry heard stories of past cattle drives from his uncles, saw first-hand what the ranching industry had become, how motion pictures and television portrayed his region, and perhaps wanted to tell a realistic western story. While he did not necessarily disdain the entertainment value of the stories, he did feel entitled to comment. McMurtry said in 1988 that his purpose in Lonesome Dove was to dispel the cowboy myth. "I'm a critic of the myth of cowboys . . . I don't feel that it's a myth that pertains, and since it's part of my heritage I feel it's a legitimate task to criticize it . . . The myth of the clean-living cowboy devoted to agrarian pursuits and the rural way of life is extremely limiting" (qtd. in Busby 183). A "bookish" lad, he also realized that he did not fit into the lifestyle. His own appreciation of his homeland, his "heart's country," and his inclinations away from the pastoral and toward the academic planted the seeds of an ambivalence that would drive him to create a new and postmodern literature about our mutual and mythic land.

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Followed by. Streets of Laredo, Dead Man's Walk, Comanche Moon. Lonesome Dove is a 1985 western novel written by Larry McMurtry. It is the first
published book of the Lonesome Dove series, but the third installment in the series chronologically. The story focuses on the relationship of several retired
Texas Rangers and their adventures driving a cattle herd from Texas to Montana. McMurtry originally developed the tale in 1972 for a feature film entitled The
Streets of Laredo (a title later used for the sequel), which would have been directed by Peter Bogdanovich and would have starred Jam... See Postmodern