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David King Dunaway and Sara Spurgeon, eds. *Writing the Southwest*.  
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It is perhaps the incidental conversation, the intimate details, or the added conversations with the authors about the idiosyncrasies of life that most enrich the pages of *Writing the Southwest*. David King Dunaway and Sara Spurgeon provide us with a complete set of interviews with major Southwest authors: Tony Hillerman, Paula Gunn Allen, Denise Chávez, Barbara Kingsolver, Simon Ortiz, and Joy Harjo, to name some. With a foreword by Rudolfo Anaya (also interviewed in the collection), acclaimed author of *Bless Me Ultima*, one of the early traditional canonic pillars of Chicano literature, and a preface by Paula Gunn Allen, the book is a definite jewel in literary history, important because it inscribes the study of authors less known to American mainstream literary audiences, and renowned Southwest authors, including them as established.

The body of the book, a collection of interviews with fourteen renowned authors, is embraced by a hefty introduction and selected bibliography by the editors. The introduction provides the reader with a historical background, a multicultural background and an understanding or clarification of a body of authors who were cradled by a richness of culture, non-traditionally thought of as “culture”: folktales, cuentos, proverbs or dichos, and religious-based folk dramas. It places the authors in the book within a historical context in its “Recent Southwestern Voices” and provides for a critical analysis of the literature’s background.

The introduction is invaluable in understanding the corpus of Southwest writing and the culturally rich background of the authors. The introduction also includes a discussion paralleling the oral tradition with the literary one in the section “Radio and Literature: ‘Writing the Southwest,’” where the editors attempt to explain the origin of the idea for the book, emerging from a radio program series. It finally closes by exposing a number of literary currents specifically nascent or originating in the Southwest as are the following: the territorial attachment to place in “A Sense of Place,” and “Culture and People in Transition,” “Myths and Stereotypes of the Southwest,” and “Finding Audiences for Southwest Literature.”

The interviews consist of a well-considered introduction, describing the author, his/her importance in the literary world and unique contribution to American literature, the circumstances under which the interview was produced, and finally, excerpts of acclaimed work by the author. These regional characteristics of Southwest literature packaged to us thematically and by author are some of the unique literary strategies that particularly enliven *Writing the Southwest*. What especially enlivens

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any book in the era of technology is what is included inside the body of the book, as part of the book, and that is an electronic version of excerpts from the interviews with the authors in the form of an accompanying 74-minute CD: essential in any classroom. Authors include Ed Abbey, Rudolfo Anaya, Denise Chávez, Joy Harjo, Tony Hillerman, Linda Hogan, Barbara Kingsolver, Terry McMillan, John Nichols, Simon Ortiz, Alberto Ríos, Stan Steiner, Luci Tapahonso, and Frank Waters. ✱