

Contents

Acknowledgments ix

1 Belief, Ethnicity, and Self-Definition 3

Ethnicity, Ethnicization, and the Ethnic Writer 12 / *Power through Cultural Self-Definition* 17 / *Power through Individual Self-Definition* 21

2 A Witch and Her Curse: External Definition and
Uncrossable Boundaries in Lee Smith's *Oral History* 26

Appalachian Women and Belief 28 / *Granny Younger as Storyteller* 30 /
The Making of a Witch 33 / *The Making of a Curse* 41 / *Uncrossable
Boundaries* 45

3 Predator, Scavenger, and Trickster-Transformer: Survival
and the Visionary Experience in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* 52

Survival and the Visionary Experience 53 / *Fleur as Predator* 56 /
Pauline as Scavenger 65 / *Nanapush as Trickster-Transformer* 75

- 4 Calling Tayo Back, Unraveling Coyote's Skin:
Individuation in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* 82
Connections, Boundaries, and Divisions 83 / *The Early Years: Poised between Worlds* 89 / *The War and Its Aftermath: Cloaked in Coyote's Skin* 94 / *Tayo's Cure: Unraveling Coyote's Skin* 100
- 5 Modern Rationality and the Supernatural:
Bridging Two Worlds in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* 109
Alternative Realities: Willow Springs and New York 110 / *Mama Day: Listening, Observing, and Believing as Ways to Power* 112 / "The Other Place": Bernice's Belief in External Forces 117 / *Cocoa's Illness: George's Belief in Self* 120 / *Cocoa as the Future: Bridging Two Worlds* 125
- 6 The Ghost as Demon and Savior:
Confrontation with the Past in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* 129
Separation and Connection 130 / *Beloved as Mirror of the Other* 133 / *Sethe: Protective Mother and Abandoned Daughter* 137 / *Denver: Separation and Responsibility for Self* 141 / *Paul D: Freedom, Desire, and Manhood* 145 / *Community: Accusations, Sins, and Atonement* 150
- 7 Warring with Ghosts: Power through Individuation
in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* 154
Living among Ghosts 155 / "No Name Woman": *Ghost of Silence* 159 / *Moon Orchid: Ghost of Craziness* 163 / *Fa Mu Lan: Spirit of Rebellion* 168 / *Brave Orchid: Exorcist and Nightmare* 173 / *Ts'ai Yen: A Voice Transcending Difference* 178
- 8 Boundaries and Belief 181
- Notes 191
- Index 211